



# Understanding Essential Skills

## Essential Skills

1. Reading
2. Document Use
3. Numeracy
4. Writing
5. Oral Communication
6. Working with Others
7. Thinking
8. Computer Use
9. Continuous Learning

### What are Essential Skills in Canada?

Essential skills are the basic skills that help people deal with the increasing and ever-changing demands of home, work and community life. People say they are the “Velcro” to which other learning and training sticks.

Essential skills help people advance in the workforce, take advantage of new opportunities, take a more active role in their community and successfully deal with daily tasks.

Human Resources Canada adopted nine essential skills people require for home, work and community life. Canada is not alone in using essential skills. Other countries use them too, however their list of essential skills may be slightly different.

### Why Essential Skills?

Essential skills development is much more than work-skills training. It is important that literacy practitioners, employers and others recognize that developing essential skills can be very positive for adult learners and employees.

Research indicates that essential skills development is associated with:

- \* Greater independence
- \* Increased self-respect
- \* Effective problem solving and communication
- \* Better overall health and well-being
- \* Higher learning and earning potential
- \* An increased ability to use technology
- \* Flexibility and the capacity to adapt to change





# Essential Skills



1. **Reading Text:** Refers to reading books, information sheets and pamphlets.



2. **Document Use:** Refers to understanding documents that have graphs, symbols, numbers, colours, shapes and text together.



3. **Writing:** Refers to writing letters, memos, emails and filling in forms.

4. **Numeracy:** Refers to using numbers and thinking in quantitative terms.

5. **Oral Communication:** Refers to talking to give and get information.

6. **Thinking Skills:** Refers to problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, job task planning and organizing, significant use of memory, finding information from people, text and the computer.



7. **Working with Others:** Refers to how people work together to carry out their tasks.

8. **Computer Use:** Refers to the variety and complexity of computer use.

9. **Continuous Learning:** Refers to acquiring and applying new skills and knowledge.



## Essential Skills Profiles

Essential skills profiles describe how workers in a particular occupation use each of the nine essential skills. Approximately 250 essential skills profiles have been developed for various occupations. You can view these profiles on the HRDSC website at [http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/ES\\_Profiles\\_e.shtml](http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/ES_Profiles_e.shtml). These profiles are very useful to both employees and employers.

For more information on essential skills and profiles go to:

- <http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/login.jsp>
- [http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/hip/hrp/essential\\_skills/essential\\_skills\\_index.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/hip/hrp/essential_skills/essential_skills_index.shtml)
- [http://esl.vcc.ca/eslvoc/ESLWEB/Essential\\_Skills\\_for\\_the\\_Workp/essential\\_skills\\_for\\_the\\_workp.html](http://esl.vcc.ca/eslvoc/ESLWEB/Essential_Skills_for_the_Workp/essential_skills_for_the_workp.html)
- <http://www.esportfolio.com/ESPORT/english/>