

Putting Your Skills to Work

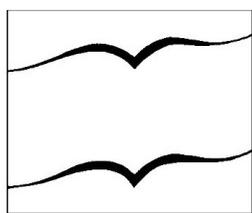
A Guide for Job Seekers

PEI Literacy Alliance
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Putting Your Skills to Work

Table of Contents	Page
Part 1 - You Have More Skills Than You Think	3
Part 2 - Creating a Functional Resume	6
Part 3 - Essential Skills for the Job Interview	8
Appendix A - Identifying Your Essential Skills	10
Appendix B - Example of a Functional Resume	18
Appendix C - Functional Resume Tips	19
Appendix D - Tips for the Interview	20

We have created a 3-part video series with the same information in this guide. Visit our website www.peiliteracy.ca/myskills or YouTube PEI Literacy channel at www.youtube.com/user/literacypei to view them.



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PEI Literacy Channel

Part 1 - You Have More Skills Than You Think

If you are re-entering the workforce, changing careers, have little job experience or have never had a job, having the confidence to apply for a new job can be hard. You might not think you have the skills and experience it will take to get the job you want. You will be surprised to find out just how many essential skills you already have that can be used in the workplace.

What are Essential Skills?

Essential Skills are the basic skills needed to learn all other skills. We call them Velcro skills that all other skills stick to.

There are nine essential skills as defined by the government of Canada.

1. Reading is the ability to understand text written in sentences or paragraphs.

2. Document Use is the ability to find, understand or enter information. Completing a form, checking off items on a list of tasks, and plotting information on a graph are all examples of document use.

3. Numeracy is the ability to use and understand numbers. Numeracy skills are used to do things like: budgeting, managing money, baking, taking measurements and doing calculations.

4. Writing is the ability to get an idea across by arranging words, numbers and symbols, on paper or a computer screen. Writing skills are important for communicating effectively at work.

5. Thinking is the ability to find information, identify and evaluate solutions to a problem, make decisions, and plan and organize daily tasks.

6. Oral communication is the ability to use speech to share thoughts and information. Oral communication skills are used to present your ideas clearly.

7. Working With Others is the ability to work with others to carry out tasks. This might mean that you are reporting to others, working with a team or working in a leadership role.

8. Computer Use indicates the variety and complexity of using computers at work. Some examples are using cash registers, sending and receiving emails, using word processors, and using the internet.

9. Continuous Learning is about expanding your ability to learn by regularly upgrading your skills and increasing your knowledge

For more information about Essential Skills visit our website at www.peiliteracy.ca

Identifying Your Essential Skills

You've got more skills than you think and we can help you put them to work. We've created an essential skills identifier activity that is easy to do (See Appendix A)

Hobbies

The first part is about your hobbies.

Read over the list of hobbies, put a check mark beside the hobbies you do and how often you do them.

For example: If you were to play on a sports team every Saturday you would check the "Once a Week" box beside "Fitness".

Computer Use

The next part is about computer use.

Look at the list of computer activities and put a check mark beside each activity you do and how often you do it.

For example: If you check your facebook account everyday you would put a check mark in the "Very Often" box beside "Use Social Networking Sites".

Home Management

The next part is about home management.

Read over the list of home and family management. Put a check mark beside each activity you do and your level of responsibility.

For example: If you are responsible for grocery shopping and cooking in your house you would check the "Mostly or Equally Responsible" box beside "Household Food Management".

Identifying Top Leisure and Home Activities

The last section will help you identify what your top leisure and home activities are. Follow the directions and write your top activities in the appropriate boxes at the bottom of the page.

Essential Skills Profile

Now you are ready to find out what Essential Skills you use for each of your activities.

First choose one of your top activities from the previous page and write it down in the activity box. Next, think about what tasks you do for this activity and list those tasks next to the appropriate Essential Skill.

Let's go back to the example of playing on a sports team to give you an idea of how to fill out this sheet.

1. First, write the name of the activity in the activity box. For this example you would write Soccer.
2. If one of the tasks for soccer is creating a schedule for games and practices you would write that down in the Document Use box.
3. If playing on a team means that you will need to talk to team mates and coordinate your efforts, you would write that down in the Oral Communication box.
4. If one of the tasks for soccer is planning and scheduling by email, you would write that down in the Computer Use box.
5. If you are a team player you would write that down in the Working With Others box.

You can use the same Essential Skills Profile Sheet to identify essential skills you have gained from past job experiences, volunteer work and your education.

Part 2 - Creating a Functional Resume

Once you have identified your Essential skills using Your Essential Skills Identifier you are ready to link your skills to work.

We will help you create a functional resume that will highlight your essential skills.

What is a Functional Resume?

A functional resume is not limited to listing job experience and education as most traditional resumes are.

A functional resume is also called a skills based resume because it focuses on skills you have developed from places like your job experience, education, hobbies, volunteer work, and home management.

Linking Your Skills to Work

Knowing what skills you have will help you decide what kinds of jobs you qualify for.

All jobs posted on the Government of Canada's Job Bank include a list of skill requirements. This will make your job of creating a functional resume much easier. You can compare your skills with the skills listed in the job advertisement to see if you qualify for the job.

You can search for job advertisements on the job bank website at:
www.jobbank.gc.ca

Using the National Occupational Classification or NOC profiles can also help you. Each profile highlights the most important essential skills needed to be successful in that job.

You can find out more about NOC profiles by visiting www.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC or by visiting our website at www.peiliteracy.ca/myskills

Your Functional Resume

Now that you know what your skills are and what skills are required for the job you can create a resume that will show employers that you are a qualified candidate.

Here are some items you should include when creating your functional resume:

Name Header	Include your name and contact information.
Job Title	Clearly state the position you are applying for and if you are applying for full or part time work.
Qualifications	Include a summary of your qualifications that are related to the job.
Relevant Skills	Include a list of skills that you have developed that are directly related to the job.
Employment History	Include a list of your previous jobs stating job title and employer.
Education	Include the highest level of education that you have completed.
Other options	This could include listing your volunteer work, community involvement, professional development and hobbies.

We have included an example of a functional resume (See Appendix B). As well as a resource sheet with tips for creating a functional resume (See Appendix C)

Resources

There are lots of resources and services available to help you in your job search. Places such as Career Development Services, Skills PEI and Workplace Learning PEI Inc are available to help you prepare for and find employment.

Please visit our website at www.peiliteracy.ca/myskills for a listing of local organizations that help job seekers.

Part 3 - Using Your Skills for the Job Interview

Now that you have identified your Essential Skills and created a skills based resume. You are ready to use your skills for the job interview.

The 4R's of Successful Interviews

There are 4 key steps to a successful interview, we call them the 4 R's.

Research

It's important to research the prospective employer to learn about the workplace and what they do.

There are lots of ways to gather information, here are some ideas to get you started.

Use your oral communications skills to talk to other employees from the organization. Ask questions about what their workplace is like.

Use your computer skills to search the internet. Visit their website and their social networking sites.

You can use your document use and reading skills to gather information from their brochures and advertisements.

Taking the time to research will allow you to ask informed questions at the interview and shows the employer that you have an interest in the job.

Rehearse

Use your computer skills to find potential interview questions and tips about the best answers. Try doing a Google search for "job interview questions".

Have a friend or family member ask you these potential questions in a mock interview. Use your communication and thinking skills to answer the questions as best you can.

Write down some of your own questions to ask at the interview, this shows that you have critical thinking and decision making skills.

Relax

You may have a hard time relaxing before an interview. Using your thinking skills to plan and organize ahead of time may help you feel more comfortable and confident.

Here are some planning tips:

Dress appropriately, it's better to be overdressed than underdressed.

Be on time. Make sure you know where you are going and how long it will take to get there. Try to be there 10 minutes before the interview is scheduled to start.

Stay Calm. Use your communication skills to listen carefully to each question and take a breath before you answer.

Show what you know. Use the research you have done when answering interview questions. Discuss your skills and demonstrate how they match the skill requirements for the job.

At the end of the interview, use the interviewer's name when saying thank you and goodbye and make good eye contact. You can ask when you will hear back from them before you leave.

Review

Always follow up a job interview.

Ask your interviewer for their business card. You can use this information to learn the proper spelling of their name and mailing address.

Use your writing skills to send a hand written thank you card to the interviewer, this courtesy will be remembered.

We have created a resource sheet with tips for the interview. (See Appendix E)

We wish you the best of luck in your job search and hope this guide has been helpful.

You can watch the full series of “Putting Your Skills to Work” short videos on You Tube at youtube.com/user/literacypei and on our website at peiliteracy.ca/myskills

Identifying Your Essential Skills

There are five parts to this exercise:

1. Identify hobby activities
2. Identify personal computer use activities
3. Identify home and family management activities
4. Identify top leisure/home-based activities
5. Essential Skills Profile



Identifying Your Essential Skills

Part 1 - Hobbies

Directions: put a check mark in the box that explains how often you do the following hobbies.

Hobby Activities	Frequency			
	At least once a day	At least once a week	At least once a month	At least once a year
Animals – bird watching, dog shows				
Art – Painting, drawing, sculpting				
Automotive – cars/bikes, collecting, restoring, racing				
Collecting – stamps, coins, memorabilia				
Crafts – scrapbooking, knitting, quilting				
Cultural – museums, galleries, theatre				
Fitness – sports, working out				
Food & entertaining – hosting parties, cooking,				
Gambling – bingo, casino, cards, horse racing				
Gardening/landscaping – flowers, vegetables, lawns				
Home improvement – renovating, decorating				
Hunting & game – fishing, trapping				
Music – instrument, choir				
Photography/video – digital or traditional				
Puzzles – crossword, Sudoku, jigsaw				
Reading – books, magazines, poetry				
Research – geneology, history				

Hobbies Activities (continued)	Frequency			
	At least once a day	At least once a week	At least once a month	At least once a year
Electronic toys & games – Nintendo, Playstation, Wii				
Traditional toys & games – board games, playing cards				
Travel – tours, vacationing				
Woodworking				
Writing – poems, stories, journals				
Other:				

Identifying Your Essential Skills

Part 2 - Computer Use

Directions: put a check mark in the box that explains how often you do the following computer activities.

Personal Computer Use Activities	Frequency			
	Very often	Often	Once in awhile	Never or hardly ever
Bank online				
Use ATM for updating bank books, making deposits and withdrawals, etc.				
Search websites to find information				
Delete your browsing history to prevent others from accessing the information				
Install software				
Install hardware				
Download applications and programs				
Use the standard features of word processing software. For example, to prepare a cover letter when applying for a job or to write a letter				
Shop and purchase items online				
Send and receive emails				
Use standard features of spreadsheet and/or database programs				
Set desktop preferences to arrange icons or set backgrounds and screen savers				
Use accounting software to complete personal income taxes				
Use graphic design software to create cards, labels, etc.				

Personal Computer Use Activities (continued)	Frequency			
	Very often	Often	Once in awhile	Never or hardly ever
Use standard media software to create presentations, slide shows, etc.				
Use Instant Messaging (IM) to communicate with friends online				
Bookmark/Add to Favourites a website address for future reference				
Post a message on a blog				
Use social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or MySpace				
Other:				

Identifying Your Essential Skills

Part 3 - Home and Family Management:

Directions: Put a check mark in the box that indicates the level of responsibility you have for each activity.

Home and Family Management Activities	Level of responsibility			
	Mostly or equally responsible	Responsible but with some help	Help sometimes but not responsible	Not involved in this activity
Child care - caretaking, feeding, cleaning, shopping for, talking with others about the child				
Child care - educational support, reading books, teaching skills, helping with homework				
Home repairs and maintenance				
Household financial management: banking, paying bills, budgeting				
Household food management: cooking, planning, shopping				
Household planning and scheduling: making appointments, planning activities, trips, projects, general shopping				
Household cleaning: laundry, etc.				
Pet care				
Outdoor work				
Vehicle care and maintenance				
Other:				

Identifying Your Essential Skills

Part 4 - Identify top leisure/home-based activities

Directions:

1. Pick three hobbies from section 1 that you participate in the **most frequently** (for example, daily or weekly). Enter them in the table below.
2. Pick two Home and Family Management activities from section 2 that you are **most responsible** for. Enter them in the table below.
3. Pick one Personal Computer use activity from section 3 that you do **most often**. Enter them in the table below.

Note: If there are several activities to choose from and you don't know which to pick, ask yourself:

- How long have I been doing the activity
- What activity brings me the most pleasure?

Top Leisure/Home-Based Activities					
Hobby 1	Hobby 2	Hobby 3	Home/Family 4	Home/Family 5	Personal Computer Use 6

Activity Essential Skills Profile



1. Choose an activity from page 7. Write it in the purple activity box below.
2. Use the chart below to explain how you use each of the Essential Skills when you do this activity. Break the activity down into small tasks. It is okay if you don't use all of the Essential Skills.

Activity:

Essential Skill	Tasks done when doing this activity
Reading text	
Document use	
Numeracy	
Writing	
Oral communication	
Working with others	
Thinking skills	
Computer use	
Continuous learning	

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Job Title

I am applying for a full time position as a Sales Associate

Summary of Qualifications

Organized and detail oriented

Excellent abilities in verbal communications

Strong skills in time management and prioritizing tasks

Relevant Skills

Oral Communications and People Skills

Consistently maintains a positive attitude and enjoys helping people

Works cooperatively with others to accomplish any task

A patient listener who is able to fully focus on the person speaking

Organization and Thinking Skills

A problem solver who can manage tasks efficiently

Able to understand and follow complex instructions

Successful management and organizing of personal time and work

Computer Skills

Very fast and accurate keyboarder

Familiar with point-of-sale systems

Employment History

Petite Boutique Sales Associate 2010 - 2012

Lucky Ducks Cashier 2009

Education

Tinytown Regional High 2007-2009

Volunteer Work

Meals on Wheels 2008 - 2010



Functional Resumes

A functional resume is also called a skills based resume. This is because it focuses on the skills that you have developed from your employment, education, volunteer work and hobbies, instead of focusing on the jobs you have done.

You should consider using a functional resume if:

- ✓ You are entering the workforce for the first time.
- ✓ You are changing careers or applying for a job with no formal training.
- ✓ You have gaps in your employment.
- ✓ You have skills related to the job that are not from your employment.

Item	Detail
Name header	Your name, address, phone numbers and email
Job Title	This is good to include in case the employer is hiring for more than one position.
Highlights of qualifications	A summary of skills and achievements you have related to the job.
Relevant skills	List all the skills you have you have developed related to the job.
Employment history	A list of previous jobs stating job title, employer and his address.
Education	A list of your schools, programs, date completed and other courses you did.
Other options	This can include volunteer work, community involvement, professional development, awards and hobbies



For more information on functional resumes please visit: www.peiliteracy.ca/myskills

Essential Skills for Job Interviews

What Employers Say About Essential Skills

- 73% said basic writing and math skills are very important
 - 81% said basic reading skills are very important
 - 91 % said basic oral communications skills are very important
- Courtesy of QUILL Network



	Step	Essential Skills Used	Activity
1	Research the prospective employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Oral communication ✓ Document use ✓ Computer use 	Learn about the organization, what they do and their reputation
2	Practice potential interview questions and answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Oral communication ✓ Thinking skills ✓ Working with others ✓ Computer use 	Use internet resources and the library to find potential questions and tips for answering
3	Get ready for the day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Thinking skills Decision making Job task planning and organization 	Make sure you have the correct address. Dress appropriately.
4	Be on time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Thinking skills Job task planning and organization Finding information Significant use of memory 	Make sure you know where you are going and how long it will take to get there
5	Stay calm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Oral communications ✓ Thinking skills Significant use of memory 	Listen to each question carefully. Take a breath and answer.
6	Show what you know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Thinking skills Job task planning and organization Significant use of memory Critical thinking Decision making Problem solving 	Mention any related experience you have had either through employment or volunteer experience. If you are willing to learn, say that.
7	Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Oral communication ✓ Computer use ✓ Thinking skills Job task planning and organization 	Ask when you will hear back from them. Thank all the people on the interview team. Maintain good eye contact and smile.
8	Follow up and thank you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Writing ✓ Thinking skills Finding information 	Send a thank you card shortly after the interview. People will remember your courtesy.

