

# TARGETcareers lesson plan – transferable skills and competency questions



Supported by



<p><b>Aims</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To introduce students to the concept of transferable skills.</li> <li>• For students to learn about different transferable skills and the types of activities that can help to develop them.</li> <li>• For students to identify which transferable skills they already possess and which activities have helped to develop them.</li> <li>• For students to identify any sought-after transferable skills they don't yet possess, and consider what activities might help to develop them.</li> <li>• To introduce students to the concept of competency questions and how they are used on online application systems and in job interviews.</li> <li>• For students to consider how they would use their own skills and experiences to answer competency questions.</li> <li>• <b>Optional if time:</b> For students to practise answering competency questions using their own skills and experiences.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources needed</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet access for each student.</li> <li>• Flipcharts or sugar paper and marker pens for each group.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Background</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lesson is suitable for students in Year 10 to Year 13.</li> <li>• It is designed to fit into two periods of 45 minutes to one hour each and to be 'stand-alone' – it doesn't require students to have taken part in any previous careers lessons or guidance.</li> <li>• The lesson draws upon the content of the TARGETcareers website for 15–18 year olds and can be delivered by a teacher with no careers guidance experience.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adapting the lesson to your needs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The content can be delivered across two different lessons (for example a week apart), the first covering the transferable skills tasks and the second covering the competency questions tasks. Alternatively, it can be delivered as one long session.</li> <li>• Several of the activities are optional and can be added in or taken out depending on the time available and how much of a challenge your students would like.</li> <li>• For students who may need extra support, you may wish to replace the independent learning element in 'competency questions task one – online research' with a teacher-led explanation of competency questions based on the summary in the additional resources sheet.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Lesson introduction</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher to introduce the lesson: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This lesson will introduce the concept of transferable skills, explore what transferable skills you already have, and look at how they will be useful to you when you apply for a job or apprenticeship.</li> <li>- Transferable skills are important both for graduate jobs and for apprenticeships/other opportunities that you can apply for at 16 or 18. So the content will be relevant to you whether or not you want to go to university before getting a job.</li> <li>- If you go to university, you'll need to carry on gaining skills and experiences outside of your studies in order to be a strong job applicant when you graduate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Transferable skills – introduction</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher to introduce the concept of transferable skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The terms 'transferable skills' and 'soft skills' are used to describe skills that are useful in lots of different situations, such as teamwork, communication and problem-solving.</li> <li>- Employers really like these skills. When you apply for a job or apprenticeship they will often want evidence that you have them. For example, they might ask you on application forms or in interviews about times when you have used these skills.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Transferable skills task one – online research</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students to read two TARGETcareers articles: 'The top ten skills that'll get you a job when you leave school' and 'Five skills I've developed through my work experience placement'.</li> <li>• The URLs are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="https://targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice/skills-and-experience/40-the-top-ten-skills-that-ll-get-you-a-job-when-you-leave-school">targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice/skills-and-experience/40-the-top-ten-skills-that-ll-get-you-a-job-when-you-leave-school</a></li> <li>- <a href="https://targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice/skills-and-experience/385897-five-skills-i-ve-developed-through-my-work-experience-placement">targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice/skills-and-experience/385897-five-skills-i-ve-developed-through-my-work-experience-placement</a>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Encourage students to take brief notes, particularly on the list of ten skills, to help them in subsequent discussions.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Transferable skills task two – small group discussion on skills they already have</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students to work in groups of two to four people, ideally with those they know fairly well.</li> <li>• In these groups, brief students to discuss the following and make notes on their flipchart/sugar paper:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Different activities that you take part in or have taken part in that might be good opportunities to develop transferable skills.</li> <li>- What skills you feel you have developed through them.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Activities might include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lessons in school</li> <li>- activities you take part in outside of lessons, such as drama, playing sport or music, doing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award</li> <li>- work experience you've done</li> <li>- part-time jobs, if you've had one</li> <li>- voluntary work</li> <li>- events you've been involved in</li> <li>- responsibilities you have at school, at home or in your community, such as helping to care for a family member</li> <li>- anything else you can think of.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Encourage students to ensure that everyone in their group gets a chance to talk about their activities and skills, and to listen to what others say.</li> <li>• Encourage students to help others out if they get stuck. You can brief them as follows:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perhaps you know about activities that others in your group are involved in that they haven't thought of.</li> <li>- Perhaps they can't think of any skills they could have developed from a particular activity but you can.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Transferable skills task three – small group discussion on skills to develop</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remaining in their groups, teacher to brief students to discuss whether there are any skills they don't yet feel they have, and ways in which they may be able to develop them. For example, is there a new activity they could get involved in, or a new responsibility they could volunteer for within an existing activity?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transferable skills task four – whole-class reflection on transferable skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students to come back together for a whole-class discussion facilitated by the teacher.</li> <li>• Volunteers from each group to share examples of their activities and the skills they've developed from them, using their flipchart/sugar paper notes as visual aids.</li> <li>• Teacher to encourage class to reflect on whether the exercise has helped them to think of:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- skills that they might not have realised they had</li> <li>- activities they've been involved with that they might not have thought could help them in getting a job</li> <li>- skills they'd like to develop in future and how they might do so.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Competency questions – introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher to introduce the topic of competency questions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is a style of question that is often used on job application forms and in job interviews.</li> <li>- It involves answering questions about your skills – very often your transferable skills.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Competency questions task one – online research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher to brief students to read the following articles and take brief notes to aid subsequent discussion. It is worth mentioning that while the TARGETjobs website is written for graduates, the advice on competency interviews is equally applicable to apprenticeship interviews.</li> <li>• Students to read TARGETcareers article on ‘How to perform your best in your school leaver programme interview’, focusing particularly on the section on competency interviews, and the TARGETjobs article ‘How to answer typical competency-based interview questions’.</li> <li>• URLs are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="http://targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice/applications-and-interviews/46-how-to-perform-your-best-in-your-school-leaver-programme-interview">targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice/applications-and-interviews/46-how-to-perform-your-best-in-your-school-leaver-programme-interview</a></li> <li>- <a href="http://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/interview-types/456283-how-to-answer-typical-competency-based-interview-questions">targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/interview-types/456283-how-to-answer-typical-competency-based-interview-questions</a>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Competency questions task two – consolidating learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students to regroup for a whole-class discussion.</li> <li>• Teacher to ensure that students have understood what competency interviews are and fill in any gaps in their understanding. The additional resources sheet gives a summary of the key points; if it is required it can either be used by the teacher to explain concepts or handed out to students.</li> </ul>
<b>Competency questions task three – small group work answering competency questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students to return to their small groups.</li> <li>• Teacher to brief students as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find your list of the top ten skills that are popular with employers.</li> <li>- Write out a competency-style interview question for each skill.</li> <li>- For each question, think of a specific example of a time when one of your group has shown this skill, which you could use to answer the question.</li> <li>- You’ll probably want to think back to the activities you came up with in your skills discussions but you might need to highlight specific instances.</li> <li>- For example, if you are involved in a drama club, you might have said when discussing transferable skills that it has helped you develop your teamwork skills. Can you go further and think of one time when this was particularly important? Perhaps in the middle of a live performance one of the actors in your scene forgot to come on stage and the rest of you had to work together and improvise to get through the scene without them.</li> <li>- Or if you are doing your Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, you might have said that it has helped you develop problem-solving skills. Can you think of one particular time when this really mattered? For example, perhaps your tent got damaged when you were out on an expedition and you had to think of a way to fix it or make yourself a shelter out of something else.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Teacher to show sample question and answer – see additional resources sheet.</li> <li>• <b>Optional if time:</b> Students to write out their answers to each question.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Competency questions task four – whole-class reflection plus optional role play</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole class to regroup.</li> <li>• Students to share examples, facilitated by the teacher.</li> <li>• <b>Optional if time:</b> Students to role play answering one of their competency questions, with the teacher or a fellow student playing the role of the interviewer.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wrap up</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity for students to ask any relevant questions not already answered.</li> <li>• <b>Optional if time:</b> Each student to share one thing they've learned that they will use in future, or one skill they would like to develop and how they will go about it.</li> </ul>