



**Essential
Skills Day**

Since 2010

Essential Skills Day 2020 Event Guide



Essential Skills Day is an annual initiative taking place each September to raise awareness about the importance of workplace literacy and essential skills training. The initiative was created by ABC Life Literacy Canada in 2010.

The nine Essential Skills, identified by the Government of Canada, are the foundation for all other skills and enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change. These skills include:



Reading

The ability to understand reading materials in the form of sentences or paragraphs. We use this skill to scan for information, skim for overall meaning, evaluate what we read and integrate information from multiple sources.



Writing

The ability to write text and documents; it also includes non paper-based writing such as typing on a computer. We use this skill when we organize, record, document, provide information to persuade, request information from others and justify a request.



Document use

The ability to perform tasks that involve a variety of information displays in which words, numbers, symbols and other visual characteristics are given meaning by their spatial relationship. We use this skill when we read and interpret signs, labels, lists, graphs and charts.



Numeracy

The ability to use numbers and think in quantitative terms. We use this skill when doing numerical estimating, money math, scheduling or budgeting math and analyzing measurements or data.



Digital technology

The ability to use different kinds of digital technology including computer applications and other related technical tools. We use this skill when we operate cash registers, use word processing software, send emails and create and modify spreadsheets.



Thinking

The ability to engage in the process of evaluating ideas or information to reach a rational decision. We use this skill when we solve problems, make decisions, think critically and plan and organize job tasks.



Oral communication

The ability to use speech to give and exchange thoughts and information. We use this skill to greet people, take messages, reassure, persuade, seek information and resolve conflicts.



Working with others

The ability to work with other workers to carry out tasks. We use this skill when we work as a member of a team or jointly with a partner, and when we engage in supervisory or leadership activities.



Continuous learning

The ability to participate in an ongoing process of acquiring skills and knowledge. We use this skill when we learn as part of regular work or from co-workers and when we access training in the workplace or off-site.

The importance of Essential Skills

Essential Skills are used in every job to varying degrees and at different levels of complexity. They provide the foundation for learning all other skills and enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change.

In Canada, the number of people who struggle with literacy skills has increased to almost one in two the past decade. As a result, these Canadians may be unable to meet the skills demands required in today's workforce.

Improving the Essential Skills of workers can have a major impact on businesses bottom lines. Furthermore, individuals who have these skills are more likely to have higher salaries, better overall health and higher levels of participation in their community.



Essential Skills facts

Even modest investments in workplace literacy and essential skills training can translate into substantial gains in workers' skills and job performance, as well as increases in employment, earnings, job retention, productivity, and costs savings from reduced errors and waste. (UPSKILL Health – Technical Report on worker and business outcomes: Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 2016)

Workers who had undergone essential skills training were nearly 25 per cent more likely to report a reduction in their work-related stress levels than those who had not. (UPSKILL Health – Technical Report on worker and business outcomes: Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 2016)

According to the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, on average, a one-dollar investment in training returns a benefit to the employer of \$1.38. (Apprenticeship – Building a Skilled Workforce for a Strong Bottom Line, R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, 2006)

FAQs

What is an Essential Skill?

An Essential Skill is a necessary developed ability or capacity that allows people to carry out complex activities or job functions involving ideas, things, and/or people.

Why are these Skills “essential”?

Essential Skills are the skills that people need for work, learning and life. They provide the foundation for learning all other skills.

Why are Essential Skills important to industry?

These skills are used in nearly every job and at different levels of complexity and they enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change.

Essential Skills and the Trades

Good Essential Skills means you will understand and remember concepts introduced in technical training. The level of Essential Skills required for most trades is as high or higher that it is for many other jobs.

Activity ideas

Here are some ways your organization can celebrate *Essential Skills Day*:

Run an Essential Skills Competition

Skills competitions bring together a number of workers to showcase each person's skills and knowledge. The competition provides an opportunity for a competitive yet friendly environment for employees to show off their know-how while also providing a team-building experience. Here are some ideas on activities for a competition:

- Create teams of four. Three team members are blindfolded and one team member gives them verbal directions to successfully navigate a series of obstacles/challenges (one obstacle at a time).
- Team members are shown several different objects filled with different types of smaller objects (i.e. candy in a jar or toothpicks in a cup) and are asked to estimate how many items are in each object. Points will be awarded according to how close each team's guess is to the actual number of smaller objects.
- Each team member is asked to locate ten key areas on the map provided. The objective of this challenge is to correctly identify as many areas as possible on the map within a given time frame.
- All team members stand on a flat tarp or large piece of fabric on the ground. The team's objective will be to turn the tarp/fabric over, without having any of its members' body parts (i.e. arms feet, etc.) ever leave the tarp/fabric. In order for the task to be completed successfully, the tarp/fabric must be turned over completely.
- Divide the team into pairs. Each pair is given a shoe with untied laces. Each pair will have to tie the shoe using only one teammate's left hand, and the other teammate's right hand. In order for the task to be completed successfully, both sets of shoelaces will need to be tied within an allotted time frame. *SOURCE: How to Run an Essential Skills Day Competition, Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, ESDC*

Praise colleagues

Ask employees to write an informal letter of recognition about a colleague. Ask them to highlight how this colleague uses their Essential Skills to succeed on the job.

Create presentations

Ask employees to get into 9 groups. Ask each group to research and put together a presentation on one essential skill. Ask each group to do a 10-minute presentation on each skill and why they're important to your place of work.

Host an open house

Host an open house for local businesses to talk about the importance of skills training. Demonstrate the impact training has on improving productivity, health and safety, and retention rates, among other things. Let them know what training opportunities and services are available to them.

Join the conversation

Follow ABC Life Literacy on social media @abclifeliteracy. Participate in the conversation using the hashtags #ESD2020 and #SkillsForSuccess.

Social media guide

In the weeks and days leading up to September 24, we encourage you to join the conversation with the hashtags **#ESD2020** and **#SkillsForSuccess**.

- #DYK that 66% of employers feel that youth are inadequately prepared for the workforce? Get the skills you need to succeed with Essential Skills. #ESFacts #ESD2020 #SkillsForSuccess @abclifeliteracy @Skills_Canada
- #DYK that 28% of your earnings is directly related to your Essential Skills? Nothing else - not even education and experience - contributes as much to income. Learn more at EssentialSkillsDay.ca #ESD2020 #SkillsForSuccess @abclifeliteracy @Skills_Canada
- #DYK that apprentices who have the Essential Skills for their trade are 8 times more likely to pass their technical exam? #ESFacts #ESD2020 #SkillsForSuccess @abclifeliteracy @Skills_Canada
- Investments in Essential Skills training can improve workers' skills & job performance, and increase things like employment, earnings, retention, productivity and costs savings #ESFacts #ESD2020 #SkillsForSuccess @abclifeliteracy @Skills_Canada
- Workers who have Essential Skills training are nearly 25% more likely to report a reduction in their work-related stress levels than those who don't have training. #ESFacts #ESD2020 #SkillsForSuccess @abclifeliteracy @Skills_Canada
- According to the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, on average, a one-dollar investment in training returns a benefit to the employer of \$1.38. #ESFacts #ESD2020 #SkillsForSuccess @abclifeliteracy @Skills_Canada
- Essential Skills Day celebrates the 9 Essential Skills one needs to succeed at work. Don't know what they are? Learn more at EssentialSkillsDay.ca #ESD2020 #SkillsForSuccess @abclifeliteracy @Skills_Canada
- Essential Skills are foundational to everything we do in the workplace. How do you use the 9 Essential Skills during your workday? #ESFacts #ESD2020 #SkillsForSuccess @abclifeliteracy @Skills_Canada

