

VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTIONS

Soft Skills

Setup: Hang the Soft Skills and Technical Skills Posters in the front of the room. Desks should be arranged in a U shape or square with a large opening in the center. Assemble and place the two ring toss bases in the center. Try to have equal distance from all desks. Put 8 rings of the same color and one soft skills/technical skills card at the starting point of each of the 5 teams. There will be two teams for each ring toss base.

Goal: Students will learn the difference between soft and technical skills with the focus on the soft skills.

Introduce yourself and briefly share your career/education background.

Opening Remarks: (5 minutes)

- **What are soft skills?**
 - A soft skill is a personal attribute that allows someone to work well with others.
- **Can you give me some examples of soft skills?**
 - Examples:
 - Communication (listening, public speaking)
 - Teamwork (respecting and working well with others)
 - Work ethic (accomplishing tasks)
 - Attitude (positive, eager)
 - Professionalism (being on time)

Refer to the Soft Skills Poster and discuss the skills listed. Explain that most soft skills cannot be taught by an employer, which is why they are so important.

- **What are technical skills?**
 - A technical skill is having the ability and knowledge needed to perform specific tasks.
- **Can you give me some examples of technical skills?**
 - Examples:
 - Computer skills
 - Typing skills
 - CPR
 - Speaking multiple languages
 - Auto mechanic skills
 - Social media skills (editing/video uploading)
 - Refer to the Technical Skills Poster and discuss how students may be developing and learning these skills currently (sports, music, school, clubs, social media).

We want the students to realize that many of these soft and technical skills they already have and use on a daily basis. These skills are not only important to an employer, but also important to the activities they are currently involved in (sports, music, school, clubs, social media).

Activity 1 – Self Evaluation: (5 minutes)

- Hand out the Soft Skills Self-Evaluation Form. Students may keep their forms at the end of the activity for personal reference. Students may also use the downloaded document on their device.
- Have the students read and complete the form at their desk.
- After completion, explain that the skill with the most checkmarks in the **Always column** is a **strong soft skill** for them. The skill with the most checkmarks in the **Rarely column** is a **weaker soft skill** that they may want to work on developing.

Activity 2 – Soft Skill/Technical Skill Scenarios: (5 minutes)

STEPS:

- Divide the class into four teams by counting them off 1 to 4. Have them separate into their groups.
- Give each group a Soft Skill and Technical Skill scenario card. Have one member from each group quietly read their Scenario Cards to the other group members, students can then discuss their answers amongst themselves. They should raise their hands when they are ready to check their answers with you.

Below are the scenario card questions with the answers in red:

Soft Skills Scenario One:

Alexis got a job at a clothing store and has just completed her first week. Her boss has noticed that Alexis checks her phone constantly, every time it rings or chimes, even when she's helping a customer. Which soft skill does Alexis need to improve? (Professionalism - Alexis can do this by putting her personal life on hold during work hours)

Technical Skills Scenario One:

Julia is the Assistant Choral Director for her church children's choir. When the director had to take an urgent call, he asked Julia to continue to teach the song to the children. Julia looked at the music but couldn't play the notes on the piano for the children to hear. What technical skill does Julia need to improve? (Piano Skills – If Julia had the skills to play the piano she would be able to accompany the children by playing the song)

Soft Skills Scenario Two:

Darin takes orders at the fast-food restaurant he has been working at for six months. He has always worked hard and had a cheerful attitude. Recently, he has been staying up late doing schoolwork, and he's tired. His boss notices that Darin has been impatient and rude to customers. Which soft skill does Darin need to improve? (Attitude - Darin needs to improve his attitude or he will hurt his personal reputation and the company's reputation)

Technical Skills Scenario Two:

Jacob was asked to tutor a group of students from the elementary school. In his group, one of the students asked for help with his kid writing. He wanted to write a story about his new dog getting loose. The boy wrote his story and drew a picture to go along with it. When he was finished, Jacob was able to proof the story and make corrections. What technical skill(s) did Jacob use to help tutor the boy?

(Writing and Grammar Skills – Jacob was able to use his writing skills as an example for the boy to see)

Soft Skills Scenario Three:

Abby got a job helping out at a community center. She went through training but she still doesn't know the daily routine or where things are kept. She's embarrassed to ask because she doesn't want to look helpless or lose her job. Which soft skill does Abby need to improve? (Communication - Abby can do this by speaking up if she is confused)

Technical Skills Scenario Three:

Brenna was asked to care for her neighbor's rabbit while they were away for the weekend. On the list of instructions was measurements of the amount of food the rabbit should receive. Unfortunately, she didn't know the amount of food to feed the rabbit. What technical skill was needed for Brenna to complete her commitment? (Math – Brenna needed math skills to complete the measurements needed to feed the rabbit)

Soft Skills Scenario Four:

Max got a job as a junior referee for the Youth Soccer League. The head referee notices that Max is late to every game, which delays the start of the game and affects all of the following games. Max also forgets to wear his referee uniform and bring his whistle. Which soft skill does Max need to improve? (Work Ethic - Max can do this by being on time and prepared with what he needs to do his job)

Technical Skills Scenario Four:

Connor was working hard on his English essay. It was finally complete and he emailed the assignment to his teacher just in time for her deadline. The next day in school, the teacher said she had not received his assignment and it was now marked as late. When he checked his sent emails, Connor discovered he had typed the teacher's email address incorrectly and his email was undeliverable. What technical skill should Connor try to improve? (Typing – Had Connor typed his teacher's email address correctly, his assignment would have been received on time.)

Activity 3 – Soft Skills vs. Technical Skills Ring Toss: (15 minutes)

STEPS:

- Have the students form 5 Teams and stand behind their desks. Example: 1's - red rings, 2's - blue rings, 3's - yellow rings, 4's - green rings, 5's - Purple rings
- Hand the first student in each group the Soft Skills/Technical Skills Answer card and their teams colored rings
- Read the following instructions to the students:
We will be playing a Soft Skills vs. Technical Skills ring toss game. I will read a specific skill card. The first person of each team with the ring will stand with their back to me. They will hold up their soft skills/technical skills answer card with TWO hands showing me whether they think the answer is a soft skill or a technical skill (their answer should be facing the base/volunteer). If the answer facing me is correct, you get to throw a ring. If you make a ringer, your team gets a point. Then pass your team's skill card and rings to the next person on your team. If your answer is incorrect, pass your team's skill answer card and rings to the next person.
- We will play and earn points until everyone has gone twice.
- Shuffle your set of skill flashcards and begin the game!
- After all students have gone twice, add up the points (rings) for each ring color and let them know who won.
- If a tie breaker is needed, do the following read an additional skill flashcard. The team to answer the additional skill card first and correctly wins!!!

Closing/Talking Points:

Remind the students that many of these soft and technical skills they already have and use on a daily basis. These skills are not only important to an employer, but also important to the activities they are currently involved in (sports, music, school, clubs, social media).

They will continue to learn and strengthen their soft and technical skills through the upcoming years and each of these skills will help them grow into the student, volunteer, employee and teammate they will become.

End of Day Clean-Up Checklist – Place the following back in the bin:

- **Soft Skills and Technical Skills Posters (2)**
- **Pencils**
- **Scratch Paper**
- **USB drive with Opening Video**
- **QR code for Opening Video**
- **Tape**
- **5 Sets of 8 each Toss Rings**
 - (ring colors vary per bin, so just make sure each bin has 5 different colors of rings)
- **Ring Toss Cones (2)**
- **4 Soft and Technical Skills Scenario Sheets (front and back)**
- **Set of 42 Skills Flashcards (1 set)**
- **Volunteer Instructions Folder**
 - **Volunteer Instructions with Soft/ Tech Activity Answers (5 Sheets)**
 - **Soft/Tech Skills Answer Cards (5)**
 - **Recap Question Card (1)**
- **Thank the teacher for allowing JA in their classroom today.**
- **Return Bin to JA staff in hospitality area.**

Smile. You made a difference today!