



75 Social Skills Examples

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SOCIAL SKILLS

Social skills refer to the skills that you need in order to successfully communicate and work with others in a functioning society, community, or culture.

EXAMPLES

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Social skills refer to the skills that you need in order to successfully communicate and work with others in a functioning society, community, or culture.

You need social skills both in schools and in the workplace.

Great examples of social skills for students include collaboration, cooperation, and the ability to take feedback.

As you move into your career, examples of social skills or the workplace might include the ability to give [constructive criticism](#), manage a team, work within a team toward common goals, and remain professional in tense situations.



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Social Skills Examples

1. Verbal Communication

While most people can communicate verbally, there is a wide spectrum of skillfulness in speech.

For example, as a trainee teacher, I had to train myself to speak slowly and explicitly. If you are not explicit in what you say, you leave room for interpretation that can lead people into twisting or misinterpreting your words.

The [flaws in verbal communication](#) are demonstrated in the famous game of telephone. Our words are often misunderstood and misheard, so the skill in speaking clearly and choosing your words wisely can help you immensely in social situations.

2. Cooperation

Cooperation skills emerge in childhood at about age 4 and a half, with the emergence of children's [cooperative play](#). From here on, we learn to cooperate with others to achieve common goals.

The ability to cooperate is an essential social skill for the vast majority of jobs in today's world.



A person working in teams will need to be able to work with their teammates to work toward a common goal. This may require putting aside differences, finding commonalities, and making concessions.

Similarly, if you're in a company that works with outside stakeholders, you'll need to be able to cooperate with other companies to reach common financial goals (see also: [collaboration](#)).

3. Leadership

[Leadership skills](#) are advanced social skills. They involve the ability to manage teams or individuals so that they reach their greatest potential.

There are multiple theories of good leadership, but in general, a good leader is seen as a person who has high expectations of their group, can manage the internal personal dynamics well, and can ensure the team is moving toward its common goals.

Good leaders are often [charismatic](#) (which helps convince people to follow them), attentive to the needs of their group, and capable of motivating their followers.

Leadership skills are usually developed in adulthood when people are given opportunities to take on supervisory and managerial roles in organizations.

4. Empathy



Empathy refers to your ability to relate to the emotions of others. This is an excellent social skill because it helps you to reach mutual understanding during interactions.

For example, if you come across a person who has made a mistake, your empathy may help to manage the situation well. If you are an unempathetic person, you might chastise and belittle the person.

But if you are an empathetic person, you are likely to see that you, like them, have made mistakes, and can recall that terrible personal feeling you have when you've made a mistake.

This will help you to work with the person who made the mistake so they can rectify it, leading to better outcomes for all.

5. Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution refers to the ability to find common ground or resolution between two competing parties.

Conflicts can occur for a range of reasons, such as resource scarcity, [ideological disagreements](#), or conflicting goals.

A person with strong social skills will have the ability to defuse a situation, lower the intensity of emotions, and help the two conflicting parties achieve positive mediation.

This is an important social skill for people working as teachers, lawyers, therapists, police, and in managerial roles in workplaces.

6. Active Listening



Active listening is a social skill that can be explicitly learned and practiced. It involves being an engaged listener that turns listening into a two-way communication approach.

Active listeners use strategies like nodding, maintaining eye contact, and using facial expressions to demonstrate their engagement to the person they are listening to.

It can also involve non-invasive verbal cues like saying “yes” intermittently to show the speaker that you are following along.

Once the speaker has stopped speaking, an active listener will often ask [open-ended questions](#) to achieve clarification.

7. Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is understood to be a social skill because you send a lot of signals to people you’re talking to through your body language and signs.

For example, a person with great social skills will walk into a room with excellent posture. They will make eye contact with others and shake hands firmly. A person with poor social skills will walk into the room slouched, stand in the corner out of fear of others, and not extend their hand to shake hands when others approach.

Other examples of non-verbal communication include your smile, the way you dress, pointing, and even sign language.



8. Humor

Humor is an advanced social skill that can be used to diffuse tense situations and endear others to you.

For example, a witty joke at just the right time can help everyone around you to relax. It may set a friendly atmosphere or help tone down the level of formality.

However, a bad joke at the wrong situation can be fatal for a conversation and even your reputation!

So, humor is truly a social skill in the sense that if you've got *good* humor with *good* timing, you can go a long way in life. Yet, if you use humor poorly, it can demonstrate your lack of social skills.

9. Giving Constructive Criticism

Constructive feedback refers to feedback that is honest and helpful. It doesn't shy away from pointing out areas for improvement, but is never cruel or condescending.

The ability to give constructive criticism can get you a long way in life. In school and the workplace, you need to be able to give good feedback that doesn't offend and leaves the person thinking that you wish them well. This will help to maintain social relationships in the long-term.

As you move into leadership positions, you'll reach a point where you give constructive feedback regularly. Here, to become a trusted and respected leader, you need to be able to give that feedback in a way that ensures people know you have high expectations and [unconditional positive regard](#) for them.



10. Waiting Your Turn

In some societies, such as the United Kingdom, the ability to wait your turn is incredibly important. In fact, not waiting your turn may be a [social taboo](#).

This is a basic and fundamental part of social awareness. In everyday situations where you are in crowds of strangers, you'll need to respect this social convention.

Common examples of times when you use this social skill might be at the doctor's office, waiting for a bus, lining up to buy tickets, or waiting to be served at a cafe or restaurant.

11. Using Manners

Good manners is a basic social skill. Without them, you contravene [social mores](#) that are required in order to get re-invited to social gatherings or even a second interview for a job.

Manners does, however, change depending on the context. For example, good manners in some countries is to not finish all the food on your plate to demonstrate that you're full. By contrast, in other countries, it's considered bad manners to leave food behind.

Therefore, this social skill also requires cultural competency in order to fully pull it off.



12. Compromising

The ability to compromise helps prevent unnecessary conflict and achieve common goals.

This social skill is particularly important in business. For example, if you are trying to secure a contract to sell products to another business, you might not be able to agree on the price.

To reach a common compromise, you might need to agree to a lower price for your goods, but in return, the person buying your goods might agree to buy more goods overall.

Compromise is also a necessary social skill in group work situations, such as when you're working in a group on a university task. Not everyone will perfectly agree on what to do, so some give and take may be necessary.

However, compromise doesn't just mean meeting half way. It usually means coming up with a creative solution so everyone feels happy with the result. You may give up one aspect in exchange for keeping another.

13. Being Patient

Patience is a necessary social skill in jobs where you're working with others. For example, it's an extremely important soft skill for teachers.

Teachers need patience because almost by definition the people they're teaching don't know or understand what they are saying.



The teacher is, ideally, teaching *new* knowledge.

Thus, patience is required while the teacher waits for the students to come to a point of understanding.

14. Receiving Feedback

The ability to humbly and graciously receive feedback is a social skill that needs to be developed in childhood, but is one we often work on our whole life.

Feedback can be hard to hear. It often involves being told about your weaknesses, vulnerabilities, and blind spots.

But the trick to receiving feedback is keeping in mind that the feedback is very valuable for your own self-development. If you can listen to the feedback with a mindset of being grateful for hearing about ways you can improve, it will be easier to hear, and you'll start to seek out feedback rather than being offended by it.

15. Sharing Resources

Sharing resources is a social skill that children begin to develop around the ages of 4-7. Before then, they generally experience egotism and high amounts of selfishness.

Resource sharing is a characteristic of emerging cooperative play, where children also begin to share common goals and see benefits in working as a group.



As we move into adulthood, sharing resources becomes an important groupwork skill because we come to realize that sharing is mutually beneficial, both because it encourages reciprocation, and because we can often get more done when pooling resources than working independently.

16. Finding Common Interests

The ability to find common interests with others helps to break the ice and identify areas where two people can find mutually enjoyable conversation.

This can be as simple as sharing experiences, thoughts, and ideas on the same topic during small talk. However, common interest can lead to greater cooperation and the development of genuine partnerships.

Indeed, friendships often form as a result of common interest. For example, we befriend peers at school because we have shared experiences in the classroom. As we move into adulthood, our friendships often cohere around workplace, hobby, and religious groups because of the shared common interests within each of those in-groups.

17. Asking For Help

Asking for help is a social skill that many adults still struggle with. This can be due to anxiety and even fear that asking for help is a sign

of weakness.



However, the act of asking for help has substantial personal benefits that make it an important and valuable trait to have. But knowing how to ask for help is equally important.

Asking for help should be preceded by attempts at finding answers yourself. For example, before asking a teacher for help, a student should ideally conduct independent research and brainstorm answers.

If the student still needs answers, then asking the teacher might be the right solution.

Here, we can see that you don't need to just be capable of asking for help, but also be strategic in using this strategy to make sure it's socially appropriate.

18. Online Etiquette ([Netiquette](#))

In the digital age, online etiquette has become an increasingly important social skill – and one many people fail at.

As an online teacher, I have often written about my surprise at students' lack of understanding of how to send a professional email, which should involve a salutation and a sign-off.

Similarly, on social media, online etiquette may involve only saying things online that you'd also say face-to-face, having the self-awareness to restrain yourself from saying things in the heat of the moment, and being able to step away from a negative social media interaction.

19. Persuasion



Persuasion is an advanced social skill that might be useful in sales jobs. It involves being able to convince someone through reasoning, argument, and even emotional appeals.

We can see persuasion at work during debates. Each opposing person gets a chance to explain their side of the argument. The way the frame your perspective, the evidence you provide, and the emotional connection you make can help sway observers to your side.

In fact, school debate teams are often set up primarily as a means for helping students to [develop skills in persuasion](#) through verbal argument.

20. Delegation

Delegation is a leadership skill that refers to the ability to distribute tasks among a group in order to most effectively complete a larger project.

For example, if you are a group leader, you might set up [group roles](#) such as 'researcher', 'writer', or 'IT specialist' in order to ensure each person knows exactly what they are doing.

When in leadership roles, you might also need to think about how to delegate tasks to get the most out of your team. You would want to delegate a task to someone who you think will be best at that task and try to get the best out of each team member.

21. Social Awareness



Social awareness refers to the subtle and implicit contextual signs in a social situation that you need to be aware of.

An example might be:

- **Knowing when to leave:** If you're invited over to dinner and your host starts clearing the table or appears tired, you'll read that social cue and start getting ready to leave.
- **Knowing the atmosphere:** If you're in a very formal situation, it may be inappropriate to make a joke.
- **Reading emotions:** Having social awareness might also involve being able to see when a person is feeling sad and anxious. If you can read their emotions, you'll know how to act respectfully around them.

22. Tolerance

Tolerance today is generally referred to the ability to tolerate someone else's culture. But it can also simply mean being able to accept people around you who you don't agree with.

In the first definition, it may mean that you will see people who practice a different religious or cultural practice to you and you'll still be okay with interacting with them politely and professionally.

In the second definition, it may mean working with someone who has a different approach or opinions to you. Instead of being rude to them, you may decide to be tolerant of their approach and accept that they have the right to their perspective.

23. Agreeableness



Agreeableness refers to a person's ability to engage in civil and polite conversation.

Generally, it means you avoid controversial topics. When the controversies arise, agreeable people have a capacity to navigate them without offending others, while still not compromising on their own beliefs.

By contrast, a person with low agreeableness might regularly respond to questions with “No”, “I disagree”, or “That’s wrong”.

One way to increase your agreeableness is to hedge your statements. This means that instead of saying “I disagree”, you might say “that’s an interesting perspective. How did you come to that conclusion?” This continues the conversation without lying or causing an argument.

24. Public Speaking

People who are good public speakers often rise to positions of leadership and power, while people who lack this social skill may find it hard to move up the social hierarchy.

We can see the some of the most inspiring people in history used their public speaking skills to rally people behind them. Examples include Winston Churchill, Barack Obama, and Volodimir Zelenski.

A good public speaker is able to use their tone and speed of voice to compel people to listen. They may be good at constructing an engaging story and be

able to mix up humor and seriousness to keep people engaged.



To learn public speaking, you need to practice it. There are many ways to do this – from joining a Toastmasters group to starting a podcast!

Social Skills For Kids

- Playing alongside each other ([parallel play](#))
- Playing together on shared games (cooperative play)
- Observing others
- Waiting your turn
- Asking politely
- Refusing politely

- Self restraint
- Respecting personal space
- Respecting personal property
- Voice control ('inside voice')
- Following rules
- Applauding performers

- Greeting strangers
- Communicating emotions
- Non-verbal communication
- Choosing
- Expressing gratitude
- Making eye contact

Social Skills For Students

- Working toward common goals



- Collaboration
- Etiquette
- Netiquette
- Respecting elders
- Knowing when to stop
- Active listening

- Dressing appropriately for school
- Exercising patience
- Organizing a team
- Negotiating with peers
- Cooperation
- Written communication
- Asking engaging questions

- Volunteering to participate
- Speaking in group settings
- Vocabulary selection for the context
- Compromise
- Receiving constructive criticism
- Giving constructive criticism
- Consoling others

Social Skills For Teens

- Agreeableness
- [Being a team player](#)
- Taking a supporting role
- Empathizing with peers
- Prosocial behavior



- Walking away
- Contextually appropriate humor
- Accepting the umpire's ruling
- Losing humbly
- Winning gracefully
- Turning the other cheek
- Holding your tongue

- Overcoming egocentrism
- Offering encouragement
- Adhering to social norms
- [Reading social cues](#)
- Social awareness
- Offering suggestions

Social Skills For Adults

- Leadership
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Setting the example
- Modeling behaviors
- Teaching

- Conflict resolution
- De-escalation
- Public speaking
- Tolerance
- Self-advocacy



- Protecting the weak
- Taking a stand
- Persuasiveness
- Community building
- Cold introductions to strangers
- Altruism
- Inclusion of outsiders

Why Are Social Skills Important In The Workplace?

Social skills are increasingly important in workplaces because modern workplaces tend to involve teams of people working on complex projects.

Economies of the 21st Century are increasingly focused on difficult problems that can't be solved individually. To get things done, you have to work within and across teams. This means you'll be in social situations constantly.

As a result, employers tend to seek out people with strong social skills who can navigate tricky professional social situations. Importantly, an employee with good social skills should be able to work toward common goals within a team, be a constructive team member, and be supportive of other people within the team.

Conclusion

Social skills overlap with a range of other important skillsets for successful students and employees. For example, you will also need [organizational skills](#), [communication skills](#), leadership skills, and digital skills (as you can see, there's

big overlap here – to the extent that communication skills could be considered an example of social skills). Combined, the ability to apply a range of professional, personal, and social skills in the workplace and as a student will help you to succeed and develop important social capital.



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Dr. Chris Drew is the founder of the Helpful Professor. He holds a PhD in education and has published over 20 articles in scholarly journals. He is the former editor of the Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education.

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