

# EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS BRIEFING

## COMMUNICATION AND LITERACY

**This PDF supports the short video about communication and literacy skills and it's one of nine paired videos and PDFs on Tunnelworks, each covering a common employability skill.**

The main aim with these resources is to help you understand what these skills are, and how they are used. You might be surprised to realise that you're probably using many of these skills in your school, social and family lives already.

So, even if you don't have lots of working experience, you do have relevant work skills to talk about when applying for jobs. Use these resources to help identify your skills and practise writing and talking about them. Then you'll be interview ready!

### **What is a good general definition of communication and literacy skills?**

A good definition of communication skills is the ability to convey information to another person effectively and efficiently so that they understand the information you want to give them. Listening is vital too and you should always make an effort to listen and understand what people are telling you, as it might affect what you say or do next.

You need literacy skills in order to effectively carry out your job or study for a course and these include not only reading and writing, but also listening, speaking, problem solving and critical thinking skills.

### **What does that mean in practice on the Thames Tideway Tunnel project?**

The Thames Tideway Tunnel project is a large and complicated construction project where lots of things have to happen at the same time. Different forms of communication take place all the time, sometimes between just a couple of individuals but sometimes between departments and with organisations outside the company.

It's really important that the communities affected by the Tunnel are communicated with effectively and regularly so that they are kept aware of progress. The communication methods used could include written material e.g. emails, letters and pieces of literature, as well as meetings and presentations. So it's vital that employees have great literacy skills as well as great communication skills.

### **What are two typical examples of communication and literacy skills in action on the Thames Tideway Tunnel project?**

One example might be when the PR & Communications team need to inform the local community of the latest Tunnel developments. They might need to drop a leaflet through the front doors of the local community and invite them to a special meeting where they can then present to

the community and handle any questions and feedback. The team will need to ensure they communicate the right information in the right way.

Another example might be when the project engineers need to inform the Tunnel workers that there's been a change of plan with an aspect of the tunnelling. The project engineer would need to contact the general foreman, explain what the change is, and ask for a meeting so that the issue can be explained more fully and discussed in detail.

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#### **What are the individual elements in communication and literacy skills?**

Individual elements of communication skills include: identifying information that needs to be communicated to others; thinking about the best way to deliver that communication e.g. in writing or in person; thinking about who the audience is; using listening skills and considering feedback to the communication.

The individual elements of literacy skills include: thinking about how the communication needs to be delivered e.g. email, letter, an advert or online; thinking about the tone of voice e.g. formal or informal, serious or humorous; ensuring your message is easily understood by the audience; checking your piece of writing (proof-reading).

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#### **At school or at home what sort of activities might help me to develop communication and literacy skills?**

If you've worked successfully with a group of classmates or friends or family then you will have developed and used communication and literacy skills. Typical communication skills you might have used include: giving a presentation during one of your lessons; speaking with your parents about a party you'd like to go to; talking with your tutors about your school progress or exam results; writing essays; writing blogs or post via social media. Literacy skills would include: writing as part of your day-to-day learning at school/college; creating a poster or leaflet for a school project e.g. school prom or party; creating blogs or posts on social media; filling out an application form e.g. for driving lessons or for a job application.

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#### **If I'm applying for a job and the employer says they want individuals with good communication and literacy skills, how can I talk about things I've done and make them relevant?**

Think about and write down things you have done or situations that demonstrate your communication and literacy skills. Practice and be ready to talk about them in an interview.

You could give an example of when you had to communicate effectively with the other students at your school as you had to promote a school fundraising event to them. Explain how you created a leaflet to hand out to students and created a Facebook post to promote the event on your school Facebook page. You could explain that you also spoke during your school assembly to give your fellow students a reminder about the event.

Another example could be that you created a presentation and handout for a school project. You could explain how you had to consider the audience (your tutor and classmates) and ensure your presentation was lively, informative and effective at getting the message across. Explain how the leaflet you created backed up the presentation, was fully proof-read, and that as well as being grammatically correct, was interesting, clear and could be easily understood by the audience.