

Professional Workplace Basics

Learning Goal: *Students will organize their time, navigate workplace culture, and represent themselves professionally in person and online.*

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide pairs each skill with everyday tasks your student can practice on the job and questions you can ask to deepen their reflection. You don't need a formal lesson — just notice, name, and ask.

NOTICE growth as it happens · **NAME** the skill being demonstrated · **ENCOURAGE** reflection · **CELEBRATE** progress

Prioritization

Organizing tasks by importance and urgency, and adjusting that order as the day changes.

GRADE 9 Learns to create and prioritize a task list.	GRADE 10 Keeps a running priority list; adjusts for new assignments.	GRADE 11 Produces an effective, flexible priority list.	GRADE 12 Executes priority list with minimal support; anticipates roadblocks.
WAYS TO PRACTICE & SUPPORT - Have the student write out today's task list in order of priority before starting. - Midday, check in and ask them to reorder the list based on what's changed. - Give them two competing tasks and have them decide, with your input, what comes first.		QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE WITH THE STUDENT - How did you decide what to do first today? - What changed your priorities partway through the day? - What would you do if two urgent things landed on your list at once?	

Time Management

Estimating, planning, and using time effectively to complete work on schedule.

GRADE 9 Estimates task time; completes half; on time, limited phone use.	GRADE 10 Completes tasks efficiently without cell phone distraction.	GRADE 11 Completes all tasks; asks for more; manages multiple projects.	GRADE 12 Proactively requests work; self-sufficient, foresees roadblocks.
WAYS TO PRACTICE & SUPPORT - Ask them to estimate how long a task will take, then compare it to how long it actually took. - Set a phone-free work block together and check in afterward on how it went. - Give them a task with a deadline and let them manage their own pacing.		QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE WITH THE STUDENT - Was your time estimate close? What surprised you? - What got in the way of finishing on time, if anything? - What would help you manage your time better tomorrow?	

Navigating Office Norms

Understanding and respectfully participating in the spoken and unspoken rules of a workplace.

GRADE 9 Learns basic norms; understands casual vs. professional.	GRADE 10 Identifies chain of command; asks questions with an open mind.	GRADE 11 Confident navigating a variety of departments/office cultures.	GRADE 12 Active participant who positively influences workplace culture.
WAYS TO PRACTICE & SUPPORT - Walk them through your team's chain of command and who to go to for what. - Invite them to a team meeting or activity and debrief the "unwritten rules" you noticed. - Ask them to describe the difference between casual and formal settings at your workplace.		QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE WITH THE STUDENT - What's something about our office culture that surprised you? - Who would you go to if you had a question about that? - What's a "norm" here you've picked up on that no one told you directly?	

Confidentiality & Data Privacy

Understanding what information must stay private and handling it responsibly.

GRADE 9 Understands and applies confidentiality to documents/conversations.	GRADE 10 Deepens understanding of confidentiality for tasks/data they handle.	GRADE 11 Understands breach impacts; applies confidentiality rules in complex situations.	GRADE 12 Robust understanding of confidentiality, data privacy (incl. HIPAA basics), and consequences.
WAYS TO PRACTICE & SUPPORT - Walk through a real, de-identified example of confidential information they might encounter. - Ask them to explain, in their own words, what should and shouldn't be shared outside the office. - Discuss a real or hypothetical confidentiality-breach scenario and its consequences.		QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE WITH THE STUDENT - What kinds of information here need to stay confidential? - What would you do if a friend asked you about something confidential at work? - Why do you think confidentiality rules exist here?	

Online Presence

Managing a personal and professional digital footprint that reflects well on the student.

GRADE 9 Basic social media training; understands digital footprint concept.	GRADE 10 Uses professional platforms as a tool for information/opportunity.	GRADE 11 Uses online presence to build/maintain network; posts reflect brand.	GRADE 12 Robust, post-grad-ready professional online presence; brand established.
WAYS TO PRACTICE & SUPPORT - Review their LinkedIn or professional social profile together and suggest one improvement. - Discuss the difference between their personal and professional online presence. - Ask them to find one professional account or company page worth following, and explain why.		QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE WITH THE STUDENT - What would someone think of you based on your online presence right now? - What's one post or profile update that reflects your personal brand well? - Where's the line between personal and professional online, in your view?	

Marketing Oneself

Clearly and confidently describing who you are, what you do, and the value you bring.

GRADE 9 Delivers an "about me" pitch (name, school, job, one task).	GRADE 10 Pitch includes their contribution and how they are growing.	GRADE 11 Articulates professional identity/contributions to unfamiliar adults.	GRADE 12 Polished, authentic narrative for interviews, networking, scholarships.
WAYS TO PRACTICE & SUPPORT - Have them practice their elevator pitch on you, then on a new visitor. - Ask them to describe one accomplishment in a way that shows impact, not just effort. - Role-play introducing themselves at a networking event or interview.		QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE WITH THE STUDENT - What makes your pitch memorable? - What's one accomplishment you're proud of that you haven't mentioned yet? - How would you introduce yourself differently to a client versus a coworker?	