

# **What Work Requires of Schools**

## **SCANS Report Summary**

### **High School**

8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**WHAT WORK REQUIRES OF SCHOOLS**  
**U.S. Dept. of Labor**  
**Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)**  
**June 1991**

Three conclusions of the study are:

1. A new set of competencies and foundations skills should be required of all high school students
2. Companies need "high performance" workers who are:
  - Comfortable with technology
  - Comfortable as members of a team
3. Schools must be "relentlessly committed to producing skilled graduates as the norm, not the exception."

The Commission posed a three-part foundation consisting of:

1. **Basic Skills:** Reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens and speaks. These skills include:
  - *Reading:* Locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents, such as manuals, graphs, and schedules
  - *Writing:* Communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing; creates documents, such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts
  - *Arithmetic/Mathematics:* Performs basic computations and approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques
  - *Listening:* Receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues
  - *Speaking:* Organizes ideas and communicates orally
2. **Thinking Skills:** Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, know how to learn, and reasons
  - *Creative Thinking:* Generates new ideas
  - *Decision Making:* Specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks, and evaluates and chooses best alternative
  - *Problem Solving:* Recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action
  - *Seeing Things in the Mind's Eye:* Organizes, and processes symbols, pictures, graphs, objects and other information
  - *Knowing How to Learn:* Uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills
  - *Reasoning:* Discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationships between tow or more objects and applies it when solving a problem
3. **Personal Qualities:** Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty
  - *Responsibility:* Exerts a high level of effort and perseveres towards goal attainment
  - *Self-Esteem:* Believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive sense of self
  - *Sociability:* Demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings

- *Self-Management*: Assesses self accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress and exhibits self-control
- *Integrity/Honesty*: Chooses ethical course of action

In addition to this three-part foundations, SCANS identified five competencies that all graduates should have in order to be successful in the work world:

1. **Resources:** Identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources
  - *Time*: Selects goal-relevant activities, ranks them, allocates time, and prepares and follows schedules
  - *Money*: Uses or prepares budgets, makes forecasts, keeps records, and makes adjustments to meet objectives
  - *Material and Facilities*: Acquires, stores, allocates, and uses materials or space efficiently
  - *Human Resources*: Assesses skills and distributes work accordingly, evaluates performance and provides feedback
2. **Interpersonal:** Works with others
  - *Participates as Member of a Team*: Contributes to group effort
  - *Teaches Others New Skills*
  - *Serves Clients/Customers*: Works to satisfy customers' expectations
  - *Exercises Leadership*: Communicates ideas to justify position, persuades and convinces others, responsibly challenges existing procedures and policies
  - *Negotiates*: Works toward agreements involving exchange of resources, resolves divergent interest
  - *Works with Diversity*: Works well with men and women from diverse backgrounds
3. **Information:** Acquires and uses information
  - *Acquires and Evaluates Information*
  - *Organizes and Maintains Information*
  - *Interprets and Communicates Information*
  - *Uses Computes to Process Information*
4. **Systems:** Understands complex inter-relationships
  - *Understands Systems*: Knows how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operates effectively with them
  - *Monitors and Corrects Performance*: Distinguishes trends, predicts impacts on system operations, diagnoses deviations in systems' performance and corrects malfunctions
  - *Improves or Designs Systems*: Suggests modifications to existing systems and develops new or alternative systems to improve performance
5. **Technology:** Works with a variety of technologies
  - *Selects Technology*: Chooses procedures, tools or equipment including computes and related technologies
  - *Applies Technology to Task*: Understands overall intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment
  - *Maintains and troubleshoots equipment*: Prevents, identifies, or solved problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies