

What Work Requires of Schools

SCANS Report Summary

Middle School

7th 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