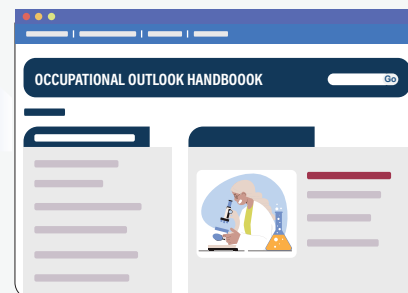# What are the skills data?

BLS defines a skill as a general human capacity that is developed (learned over time through education, training, and/or experience), general (applicable across many occupations), applied (involving action beyond cognitive knowledge of a subject), and work related (limited to performance in employment). For each of the occupations for which BLS publishes projections data, BLS also provides information about skills using the 17 skills categories outlined below.

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OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOOK

17 Skills categories

- Adaptability
- Computers and information technology
- Creativity and innovation
- Critical and analytical thinking
- Customer service
- Detail oriented
- Fine motor
- Interpersonal
- Leadership

- Mathematics
- Mechanical
- Physical strength and stamina
- Problem solving and decision making
- Project management
- Science
- Speaking and listening
- Writing and reading

Skills defined

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Skills definitions

Adaptability	Adjusts behavior or work methods in response to new information or changing conditions; open to change and new information; maintains composure even with changing circumstances; actively learns and uses relevant knowledge to adapt to changes
Computers and information technology	Uses computers and related technology to accomplish work activities, including tasks such as sending emails, using the internet to find information, using word processor or spreadsheet applications, programming computers, designing websites, and managing computer networks
Creativity and innovation	Uses imagination to develop new insights in situations and applies innovative solutions to problems; designs, creates, and implements cutting-edge processes, ideas, or products, including artistic contributions
Critical and analytical thinking	Applies logic and reasoning to analyze information, identify strengths and weaknesses of various approaches and solutions to problems, and draw conclusions
Customer service	Works with external customers (for example, clients, patients, and consumers); tasks involve providing information and assistance to customers, dealing with difficult people or situations, and convincing others to buy goods or services
Detail oriented	Pays close attention to all the small particulars when working on a task or project
Fine motor	Coordinates the use of fingers, hands, and wrists to make precise movements
Interpersonal	Shows understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others, leading to the development and support of effective relationships
Leadership	Influences and guides others to accomplish strategic plans by leading, mentoring, taking charge, building teams, and offering direction
Mathematics	Uses principles of mathematics rules and methods to express ideas and solve problems; tasks involve comprehending and accurately interpreting mathematical information, applying mathematical reasoning, and formulating a solution
Mechanical	Applies knowledge of machines, systems, and tools to complete tasks such as operating, monitoring, maintaining, troubleshooting, building, installing, and repairing mechanical or electrical devices and equipment
Physical strength and stamina	Uses the body to complete work-related duties, such as standing for long periods of time to help customers, exerting muscular force to lift heavy objects, and coordinating the movement of multiple limbs to entertain a crowd through dance or athletics
Problem solving and decision making	Identifies complex problems, determines accuracy and relevance of information, uses judgment to develop and evaluate options, and implements solutions
Project management	Applies knowledge, methods, and processes to achieve the objectives of a project; tasks involve developing, scheduling, coordinating, and managing resources, including monitoring costs, work, and contractor performance
Science	Uses principles of scientific rules and methods to express ideas and solve problems; tasks involve comprehending and accurately interpreting scientific information and formulating solutions to scientific problems
Speaking and listening	Communicates verbally to convey, exchange, and receive ideas and information
Writing and reading	Communicates in writing to convey, exchange, and receive ideas and information

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