

JA Essential Skills for Work

► Work and Career Readiness



JA Essential Skills for Work is an engaging and comprehensive learning experience that introduces teens to the workplace. As interns, they participate in realistic work experiences in multiple departments of a fictional company, Orbit Boom. The learning experience enables participants to learn and apply career skills through scenarios and a project. Upon completion, participants are eligible to earn JA's Essential Work Skills Credential, which can be shared with employers or colleges.

The learning experience is designed for Grades 10–12. It is comprised of ten 45-minute sessions and can be led by either volunteers or educators.



LEARNING EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

- Enables participants to develop knowledge, skills, and abilities related to essential work competencies including Creativity and Innovation, Critical and Analytical Thinking, Cultural Agility, Effective Collaboration, Engaging Communication, and Self-Direction
- Students solve problems within a varied set of business environments ranging from Information Services and Logistics to Sales and Marketing
- Includes a digital employee handbook with valuable information about corporate policies and practices
- Provides opportunities to work on solutions to an array of business problems, brainstorm new product ideas, and collaborate with peers
- Effective Communication Strategies project allows for the deepening of communication skills
- Supplemental resources and activities available to support career development and Artificial Intelligence (AI) literacy

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CURRICULUM OUTLINE

- 1 Session One: Welcome to the Workplace**
Participants are onboarded by the Human Resources department on their first day at Orbit Boom, explore the employee handbook and organizational hierarchy, and set SMART goals for their internship.
- 2 Session Two: Workplace Decision Making**
Participants are asked by the head of Information Services to evaluate communication platform options using a seven-step decision-making process and share their decision in a persuasive summary.
- 3 Session Three: Work Smart: Planning and Remote Collaboration**
Participants work in groups to plan a company-wide remote meeting with a detailed timeline for the Executive team.
- 4 Session Four: Conflict Resolution in the Workplace**
Participants role-play conflicts in the Logistics department and apply conflict management techniques through improvisation to resolve conflicts in the warehouse.
- 5 Session Five: Workplace Creativity**
Participants collaborate to generate, narrow down, and elaborate on creative ideas for new products and services with the R&D department.
- 6 Session Six: Solving Work Problems**
Participants analyze declining sales of a key software product. They identify the root cause and present findings to the Sales & Marketing head.
- 7 Session Seven: Crisis Management**
Participants evaluate an existing contingency plan in the Production department and generate recommendations for improvement in an executive summary. They reassess their Session One goals, and Orbit Boom hires them.
- 8–10 Sessions Eight through Ten: Project—Effective Communication Strategies**
In this project, participants work independently to put transferable skills into action in a workplace simulation. Participants will apply active listening, critical thinking, and professional writing to analyze a leadership meeting, conduct research, and synthesize their findings into a polished executive summary and oral presentation. The result is a capstone learning artifact that showcases their transferable skills in a real-world context.

Visit <https://connect.ja.org/> and <https://career.ja.org/> for additional resources.