

**Curriculum Resource**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail & Food Services – Creativity & Innovation

**OALCF Alignment**

Competency	Task Group	Level
Competency A -Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	1
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B1. Interact with others	1
Competency F - Engage with Others	N/A	1
Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

**Goal Paths (check all that apply)**

- Employment
- Apprenticeship
- Secondary School Credit
- Postsecondary
- Independence

**Embedded Skills for Success (check all that apply)**

- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Creativity and innovation
- Digital
- Numeracy
- Problem Solving
- Reading
- Writing

**Notes:** Part 4 of Series

## Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail

### NOTE FOR PRACTITIONERS:

This series of **Skills for Success Curriculum Resources** can be used as a supplement to the [“Retail Curriculum package”](#) developed by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) and produced by Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) in 2019. It is not an adaptation of that material but an addendum focusing on five newly identified Skills for Success competencies—**Problem Solving, Adaptability, Creativity & Innovation, Collaboration, and Communication**—as well as updates to the retail sector itself.

These resources are learner-based and activity-focused, moving the learner through on-the-job “scenarios” which they will have to respond to. In participating in the activities, the learner will gain an understanding of the workplace challenges that might require them to use a given competency and its associated strategies.

The series is divided into six sections that can be used separately or in tandem:

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Finding a Job**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Problem Solving**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Adaptability**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Creativity & Innovation**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Collaboration**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Communication**

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*This is section four, Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Creativity & Innovation***

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# SKILLS FOR SUCCESS IN THE WORKPLACE: RETAIL

## Creativity & Innovation

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## 1. What is a “Retail” Job?

A job in retail means:

- Selling products to customers, or
- Doing **other jobs** at a place that sells products to customers—a retail store.

This work is best for:

- People with good customer service skills.
- People who like to interact with others.
- People who like to try do different tasks.

## 2. What Sorts of Jobs are in Retail?

There are retail jobs at many types of stores and businesses. You could work at:

- A convenience store as a cashier
- A grocery store stocking shelves
- A Walmart as a greeter
- A hair salon scheduling appointments.
- A car dealership selling cars
- A Tim Hortons' drive-thru
- A restaurant as a dishwasher or server

### 3. What Skills and Habits Do You Need to Work in Retail?

To succeed in a retail job you need some key **skills**:

- Basic math skills.
- Basic digital skills
- Good customer service skills.
- Problem-solving skills.
- Adaptability.
- Time-management skills.
- Multitasking.
- Collaboration skills like teamwork.
- **Creativity and innovation** skills like trying tasks in new ways.
- Strong communication skills.

To succeed in a retail job you need also some key **habits**:

- Tidy appearance.
- Politeness.
- Being on time for work.



## 4. What is “Creativity & Innovation”?

Creativity & innovation means using **new ideas** to make the workplace better.

**Creativity & innovation** comes from thinking about things in new ways!  
Don't be afraid to use your **imagination**!

### Why is Creativity & Innovation Important at Work?

Businesses have to keep improving to succeed. As the world changes, businesses must change too.

Businesses **improve** and **change** by using creativity & innovation.

Employees with strong creativity & innovation skills:

- **Imagine** how the workplace could improve.
- Pay close attention to how the business works.
- Help the business to grow and improve.
- Are **open-minded** to change.



Everyone can be **creative** just by thinking of new ways of doing things.

## 5. Creativity & Innovation at Your Retail Job

There are many ways to use creativity & innovation at a retail job:

### a. Try Something New

One way to be creative at work is to try a new strategy or idea. New ideas don't always work, but they might improve things at your job.

If you have a new idea:

- **Tell someone first!**
- Tell your boss or co-workers about your idea.
- Don't just do something new without asking.
- If your boss likes your idea, the workplace might change for the **better**.



### b. Old Things a New Way

Most retail jobs have ways of doing things that you need to follow. But these ways might change if a better way is found.

To think about old tasks in a new way:

- **Pay attention** to what is working and what is not working.
- **Imagine** a way of doing things without the problems.
- Be **open-minded** to change.

If you imagine a better way, you can help improve the workplace!

### c. Face Down a Problem

At a retail job, there will sometimes be problems. If you face problems, you might be able to think of new ways to deal with them.

Here are some examples:

- A dishwasher at a restaurant might have to work in a new way to be faster.
- A greeter at Walmart might have to stand in a new place to meet customers.
- Someone stocking shelves at a grocery store might have to change how they work if the products move.

Don't be afraid of problems. They might show the way to making things better!



### d. Share Ideas

If you do have new ideas at work, it's important to share them with your boss. When you share ideas:

- Your boss can make a decision about what to do.
- Your boss will see that you **care** about making the workplace better.
- You'll be using your creativity & innovation skills to make change!

Don't be afraid to share your ideas! Believe in yourself and what you bring to the job!



## Start Developing Your Creativity & Innovation Skills for the Workplace

To be a good collaborator, you will need to learn to improve your **creativity & innovation** skills.

Here are some steps you can take to do so:

- ✓ Be thoughtful.
- ✓ Use your imagination.
  
- ✓ Be open-minded.
- ✓ Be flexible.
- ✓ Think in new ways.
  
- ✓ Try new things.
- ✓ Share what you know.
- ✓ Listen to all ideas.



# Activities

We will now do some activities that will give you a good sense of how to use **creativity & innovation skills** at work. These activities will provide examples of:

- ✓ The types of jobs you might have in retail.
- ✓ The daily tasks you might do.
- ✓ On the job challenges.
- ✓ Other key skills for success in retail.
- ✓ Dos and don'ts.



In each case you will **read a scenario**, **think** about it, and **respond** to some questions. Then we will review.

## Activity #1

Vandana has been working at a Tim Horton's for one year. One of her duties is to empty the garbage cans at the end of her shift.

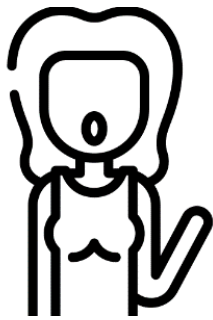
She begins to notice that **garbage is piling up** on the ground below the drive-thru window. There are two garbage cans by the drive-thru menu sign but none by the drive-thru window.



## Activity #1 (Continued)

Vandana realizes that customers might throw less garbage on the ground if there is a garbage can by the drive-thru window.

She makes a suggestion to her boss:



Can we move one of the garbage cans from the drive-thru menu to the drive-thru window?

She explains her reasons to her boss. Her boss thinks this is a great idea. He tells her she has done a **great job!**

Now there is less garbage on the ground outside the restaurant.

### Questions:

1. List one way Vanada used creativity on the job.
2. **Discuss** with your teacher or partner some benefits of Vandana using creativity.

## Answers #1

- Vandana used **creativity** when she came up with a solution for the garbage cans.
- She did the **right thing** by sharing her idea with her boss.
- She was a **thoughtful** about the garbage at work and saw there was a problem.
- By trying new things, the business will be better off.
- Her boss was ~~be~~ very pleased that Vandana used her creativity & innovation.

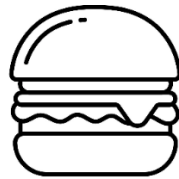


## Activity #2

Mindy has been working at the cash of a Wendy's for six months. She understands how to do all her duties.

But one day her boss is replaced with a new boss. The new boss says she wants things done **differently**.

She asks Mindy for suggestions about how to improve things.



Mindy has **creative ideas** about how to improve how the staff take breaks. She also has **creative ideas** about how to improve how the staff talk to customers.

But Mindy doesn't want things to change. She is worried she will be confused by new rules.

So she **does not** share her creative ideas with the new boss.

### Questions:

1. Should Mindy have shared her creative ideas with her boss? **Yes**   **No**   **Not sure**
2. Why didn't she share her creative ideas with her boss? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.

## Answers #2

- Mindy has been **thoughtful** at work.
- She has been using her **imagination** about how things could improve.
- But she is not **open-minded** about new rules.
- She did not **share** her ideas with her boss.
- She should have been open-minded about doing things differently.
- She should have shared her ideas with the team.
- Her boss will be **disappointed** that she didn't share her creativity & innovation ideas.



## Activity #3

Tommy has been working as a busboy at a restaurant for five months.

He works with another busboy, Aaron. Their job is to carry dirty dishes from the tables and place them in plastic bins.

But on busy nights the plastic bins get **too full**.

When this happens, Aaron just puts the extra dirty dishes on the floor beside the plastic bin.

But Tommy sees that there are more plastic bins in the back of the kitchen.



They are not quite the same as the plastic bins used for dirty dishes. But these other bins are not being used for anything else.

Tommy thinks about it. He comes up with an idea. He asks his boss if they could use the extra plastic bins for dirty dishes on busy nights.

His boss loves the idea!

### Questions:

1. Who used creativity in this case? Check one: **Aaron**      **Tommy**
2. How did Tommy use creativity? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.
3. What were the benefits of being creative in this case? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.

## Answers #3

- Tommy used creativity.
- Aaron **did not** use creativity.
- Tommy was **thoughtful** and saw that there was a problem.
- He used his **imagination** and came up with a solution.
- He was **open-minded** about doing things differently.
- He found a new way to keep the dishes from piling up.
- His boss was very pleased that he used his creativity & innovation skills.





## Activity #4

Jeremy has been working as dishwasher at an East Side Mario's restaurant for six months. He likes his job.

But the waiters have complained to him that many of the dishes are **chipped**.

At the staff meeting, no one says anything to the boss about this situation.



Jeremy has a **creative** idea about how to prevent the dishes from getting chipped. He thinks waiters should stack dishes in a plastic bin, not in the sink.

But Jeremy doesn't want the boss to blame him for the chipped dishes.

He doesn't tell the boss his creative idea at the meeting.

### Questions:

1. Should Jeremy have shared his creative ideas with his boss? **Yes**   **No**   **Not sure**
2. Why didn't he share her creative ideas with his boss? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.

## Answers #4

- Jeremy has been **thoughtful** at work.
- He has been using his **imagination** about how things could improve.
- But he did not **share** his ideas with his boss.
- His boss will be **disappointed** that he didn't use his creativity & innovation skills.



## Activity #5

Marie has been working as a hostess at a restaurant for five months.

One of her jobs is to empty the front garbage cans and carry the garbage bags to the back.

But Marie notices that there is a **problem** when she carries the garbage bags through the kitchen:

- The kitchen is too busy.
- She bumps into waiters.
- She drops the garbage bags and spills them.

She comes up with two creative ideas to solve this problem.

She can carry the garbage bags around the **outside** of the restaurant, or she can **wait** until the restaurant is closed to bring the bags back.

She tells her boss her idea, and **he loves it!**

Now all the hosts take the garbage bags around the outside of the restaurant. No one spills garbage in the kitchen.

### Questions:

1. List one way Marie used her creativity skills
2. What happened when she used her creativity in this case? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.

## Answers #5

- Marie was **thoughtful** and saw that there was a problem.
- She used her **imagination** and came up with a solution.
- She was **open-minded** about doing things differently.
- She **shared** her ideas with her boss.
- Her boss was very pleased that she used her creativity & innovation skills.



## Review

- ✓ Now you have learned some **strategies** to use creativity and innovation on the job.
- ✓ You have learned the importance of **thinking carefully** on the job.
- ✓ You have learned the importance of using your **imagination**.
- ✓ You have learned the importance of being **open-minded** and **flexible**.
- ✓ You have learned the importance of **sharing information** with others.
- ✓ You can go back to this guide to review the strategies for problem solving at your job.

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