What are 21st century skills?

The 21st century skills are a set of abilities that students need to develop in order to succeed in the information age. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills lists three types:

Learning Skills

* Critical Thinking
* Creative Thinking
* Collaborating
* Communicating

Literacy Skills

* Information Literacy
* Media Literacy
* Technology Literacy

Life Skills

* Flexibility
* Initiative
* Social Skills
* Productivity
* Leadership

New Skills for New Jobs

These skills have always been important for students, though they are particularly important in our information-based economy. When most workers held jobs in industry, the key skills were knowing a trade, following directions, getting along with others, working hard, and being professional—efficient, prompt, honest, and fair. Schools have done an excellent job of teaching these skills, and students still need them.

To hold information-age jobs, though, students also need to think deeply about issues, solve problems creatively, work in teams, communicate clearly in many media, learn ever-changing technologies, and deal with a flood of information. The rapid changes in our world require students to be flexible, to take the initiative and lead when necessary, and to produce something new and useful.

- See more at: <https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/FAQ/what-are-21st-century-skills#sthash.7rj751Hp.dpuf>

Demand in the Workplace These are not just anecdotal observations. The following quotations come from Up to the Challenge, a report by the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), Career Technical Education (CTE), and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21): The employment titan Manpower reports that despite the recession, 31 percent of employers throughout the world struggle to find qualified workers because of “a talent mismatch between workers’ qualifications and the specific skill sets and combinations of skills employers want.” The American Management Corporation reports that employers want workers who can think critically, solve problems creatively, innovate, collaborate, and communicate. The National Association of Manufacturers reports, “Today’s skill shortages are extremely broad and deep, cutting across industry sectors and impacting more than 80 percent of companies surveyed. This human capital performance gap threatens our nation’s ability to compete . . . [and] is emerging as our nation’s most critical business issue." The National Academies indicate that “The danger exists that Americans may not know enough about science, technology, or mathematics to contribute significantly to, or fully benefit from, the knowledge-based economy that is already taking shape around us.” The New York Times reports that low-skilled workers are being laid off and "turned away at the factory door and increasingly becoming the long-term unemployed . . .” This issue results from a disparity between the skills that worker have and those that employers need. - See more at: https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/FAQ/what-are-21st-century-skills#sthash.7rj751Hp.dpuf