

Jobs and Money Lesson 4: Soft Skills and the Job Market

SUBMITTED BY: WGYP Summer 2011 Instructor

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

This lesson is mostly about increasing student exposure to the international job market and the kinds of skills that are valued in that space. The students will read about consulting jobs and think about why such jobs are so popular and dominant in the job market today.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Entrepreneurship, IV. Finance

≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“You’re Fired! Now What?”](#)
- [“Who Knew the Job of a Prosecutor Looks Nothing Like “Law & Order?””](#)
- [“Where Are You Working this Summer?”](#)
- [“The Value of a Summer Job”](#)
- [“The College Investment: Will It Pay Off?”](#)
- [“Mentors: Knowing How and When to Listen to Feedback”](#)
- [“Educator Toolkit: The Future of Work”](#)
- [“Consulting: Where the Client Is King”](#)
- [“CEO Katlyn Grasso Connects Young Women with Executive Role Models”](#)
- [“Career Spotlight: Studying to Be a Veterinary Technician”](#)
- [“Career Spotlight: Motion Capture Is an Industry on the Move”](#)
- [“Building a ‘Work Brand’ that People Will Brag About”](#)

NBEA Standard(s):

Finance 2: Earning and Reporting Income

Common Core Standard(s):

- Reading Informational Text—RI.9-10.1.; RI.9-10.2.
- Speaking and Listening—SL.9-10.1.
- Writing

Purposes:

- After this lesson, students should have a broader understanding of the kinds of careers they can pursue outside of America or connecting America to other parts of the world through consulting.
- They should also be able to explain what is meant by soft or hard skills and how today's careers may require one or both of these skill sets.

Other Resources/Materials:

Butcher Paper, board, chalk/markers, Internet

Activity:

This lesson has five parts:

Introduction (5 min)

- Introduce the different kinds of job markets around the world and talk a little bit about [globalization](#). What does that mean? (See WGYM definition.)
- How does it affect the job market and the changes that have come into being? Think about how the energy sector is changing rapidly and the importance of international experience for jobs in this sector. The teacher can reference some of the discussion from the first lesson in the unit about the changing job market.

Guided Reading (10 min)

Have students read the WGYP consulting article. Ask them to think about career trajectory while they are reading. Also direct them to think about the differences between soft skills and hard skills and how that is valued in the national and international job market.

Class Discussion (10 min)

As a class, ask the students to summarize the point of the article. Write their comments on the board and try to formulate a two-sentence summary using their comments. Ask them if anything important has been left out.

Some takeaways:

- Consultants travel a lot so they can work on different project in different cities and countries.
- Consultants are always learning new things since industries are constantly changing to keep up with the market.
- You can work in a field, such as IT, and not be a programmer. If one has the right “soft skills” you could potentially work in almost any industry.

Group Activity (10 min)

Students will divide into three-to-four person groups. Each group will come up with a list of important soft skills. [Examples: Language skills, other communication skills, conflict resolution and mediation, critical thinking, team building, presentation skills.]

1. Have one member of each group be the scribe.
2. As a group, have the team think of how they could learn about each of these skills, practice them and how they would be useful. Have them write all this down.
3. Once they are done, have them come up and present their soft skill definitions to the class.

Class Discussion (5~10 min)

Have a short discussion about whether any of them would be interested in a consulting-type job and what kinds of skills they would need for such jobs. Wrap up with a brief introduction to

students about how recruitment works for such jobs and the importance of developing soft skills for use in interviews and other settings, regardless of the specific profession.

Tying It All Together:

In this lesson, students think about some of the basic skills they need to know for any profession and how important it is to remember that we live in a globalized society. Consider tying in a more recent Wharton Global Youth Program article at some point to deepen the soft skills discussion: [“Building a Work Brand that People Will Brag About.”](#)

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently:

5