



COOPERATION: WHAT IS IT AND WHY DO I CARE?

Although you have probably heard of soft skills, you may be unsure of what they actually are or why they are important. 73% of employers say they are unsatisfied with the level of soft skills in recent graduates and 8 out of the top 10 skills for 2025 are soft skills. Cooperation is a category of soft skills that can set you apart as a leader. If you are cooperative, you are well-liked and a good team member. You understand and empathize with others.



Cooperation

Students with high cooperation skills are nice to almost everyone. They are trusting and always willing to help or lend things to classmates. They are also good at taking other people's perspectives.

Capacities used to maintain positive social relationships

Perspective-Taking	Capacity to understand other people's thoughts and feelings
Capacity for Social Warmth	Capacity to evoke a positive social response from other people
Teamwork	Capacity to work with others to achieve shared goals
Capacity for Trust	Capacity to trust, forgive, and act generously towards other people
Ethical Capacity	Capacity to behave ethically, even when it is difficult to do so

Cooperation is a critical skill in personal relationships and at work. When you have strong cooperation skills, you can work successfully on a team and have stronger, more fulfilling relationships with family and friends.

Do these statement describe you?

- Do you make friends easily and have positive relationships?
- Do you follow your morals, even when it is hard?
- Would your friends say you are thoughtful of their needs and understanding of their flaws?
- Do you like working in groups and bringing people together?

Cooperation skills predict social interests and friendship quality.*

The World Economic Forum's

Top 10 skills for 2025

- Technology Use
- Technology Design
- Innovation
- Active Learning
- Complex Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Creativity
- Leadership
- Reasoning
- Resilience

8 are SOFT SKILLS!

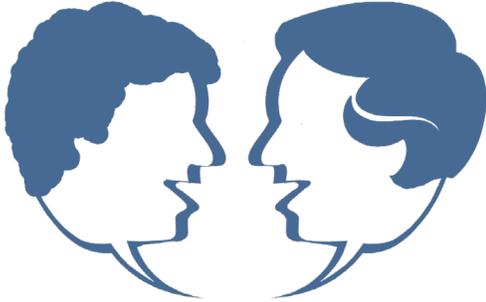
*Soto, C. J., Napolitano, C. M., Sewell, M. N., Yoon, H. J., & Roberts, B. W. (in press). An integrative framework for conceptualizing and assessing social, emotional, and behavioral skills: The BESSI. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.

COOPERATION: HOW TO BUILD IT

Work on building your cooperation skills anywhere, anytime - at home, at school, with friends, or on the go.

Managing your messaging

Cooperation requires we understand people. When we understand people's values and needs, we can say the right thing to give them encouragement or make them feel appreciated.



Make a list of your family members and three closest friends. Write down three or four things that are really important to them or characteristics that define their identity. Maybe your best friend's intelligence is an important part of his or her identity. Maybe your sister values knowing she made a difference or that her actions led to a positive change in someone's life.

Write down two ways you could give them what they need. For example, maybe when your sister does something for you, you say more than just thank you. You tell her how her action impacted your day. "I was feeling down and your joke made me feel so much better. Changed my day! Thanks!"

When your friend says something interesting, maybe instead of just responding to what he or she said, you could say, "I am always amazed at how smart your brain is! I would have never thought of that idea."

What would you do?

Our ethics should guide our actions. Take some time to define your ethics. What really matters to you? When you know who you are and what you stand for, you can contribute more when you are working cooperatively on a team.



Think about the following scenarios and decide what is "right." What should you do and how would you feel about people who would not do the same thing?

Your boss asks you to cover for him on his expense report by saying you were at a meal when you weren't. Should you do it?

Your friend tells an offensive joke. Should you laugh even though you found it offensive?

A member of your family needs to borrow money, but you already lent them money before. Are you obliged to help them because they are family?

Your teacher or boss gave you credit for an idea that was not yours. Do you accept the credit or reveal that you did not generate the idea?

When is it ok to break the law?