

CURRICULUM RESOURCE

Exploring Employment as an Assistant Cook

OALCF ALIGNMENT

Competency	Task Group	Level
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	2
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A2. Interpret documents	1
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A2. Interpret documents	2
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A3. Extract information from films, broadcasts, and presentations	N/A
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B1. Interact with others	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B2. Write continuous text	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B3. Complete and create documents	1
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B3. Complete and create documents	2
Competency C - Understand and Use Numbers	C2. Manage time	2
Competency C - Understand and Use Numbers	C4. Manage data	1
Competency D - Use Digital Technology	N/A	1
Competency D - Use Digital Technology	N/A	2
Competency E - Manage Learning	N/A	1
Competency F - Engage with Others	N/A	N/A

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:



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The opinions expressed in this report are the opinions of Community Literacy of Ontario and do not necessarily reflect those of our funders.

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EXPLORING EMPLOYMENT AS AN ASSISTANT COOK

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Introduction – For Practitioners

Exploring Employment as an Assistant Cook will help adult learners enrolled in Ontario’s Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program who are interested in learning more about working in this type of job.

Exploring Employment as an Assistant Cook provides an overview of both the hard and soft skills needed to work as an assistant cook. It highlights working conditions, ways to get training, and planning the next steps. This resource embeds the Government of Canada’s Skills for Success model. Tasks and the Supporting Activity align with the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework.

This curriculum resource was researched and written by Jette Cosburn and Joanne Kaattari for Community Literacy of Ontario in the autumn of 2023.

This resource has been designed for learners with Level 2 skills.

Skills for Success

In 2021, the Government of Canada introduced an update to its Essential Skills model. The updated model has been renamed *Skills for Success*. Information about the Skills for Success model is available on the government’s website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success.html>

Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF)

The OALCF is a competency-based framework that Ontario’s Literacy and Basic Skills programs use to develop programs for each person receiving literacy support. The six competencies support learners as they work towards one or more of the five goal paths:

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

For more information about the OALCF, visit the Ontario Government’s website at https://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/lbs_oalcf_overview.html

Section 1 – Introduction to Working as an Assistant Cook

Do you enjoy preparing and cooking a variety of delicious food? Then a job as an assistant cook might be good for you! This resource will help you to learn more about this job.

Community Literacy of Ontario's **Exploring Employment as an Assistant Cook** contains seven sections.

1. Introduction to Working as an Assistant Cook
 - What Does an Assistant Cook Do?
 - Where Does an Assistant Cook Work?
 - What Are the Working Conditions Like?
 - How Much Does an Assistant Cook Earn?
 - What Skills Does an Assistant Cook Need?
2. Ways to Get Training
3. Assistant Cooks and the Skills for Success
4. Would Working as an Assistant Cook be a Good Job for Me?
5. Planning Your Next Steps
6. Supporting Activity
7. Additional Resources for Practitioners



What Do Assistant Cooks Do?

The work of an assistant cook includes helping the head cook with the following duties:

- prepares and cooks:
 - meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner
 - appetizers and snacks
- prepares full meals and “short order” dishes such as sandwiches or bacon and eggs
- uses a variety of methods to prepare meats, poultry, and fish including:
 - roasting
 - frying
 - grilling
- prepares soups, sauces, salads, dressings, potatoes, vegetables, and desserts
- prepares vegetarian dishes
- prepares dishes for people with allergies or special needs such as gluten-free food
- applies safe work practices such as:
 - hygiene
 - sanitation
 - safe equipment handling
 - workplace safety



(Source: Skilled Trades Ontario)

Watch this video from WorkBC’s Career Trek. It shows what it is like to work as a cook. An assistant cook would help the head cook with the duties talked about in the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gYAN-cJa-k>



Be sure to enable “Closed Captioning” if needed by the learners.

✓ **Task:**

After watching the video, list four dangers of working in a busy kitchen.

**Practitioners’ Answer Key: Page 31

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: A3

SFS: Communication

✓ **Task:**

In the video, the head cook mentions that communication is very important in the kitchen. Do you feel that you are a good communicator?

- List an example of when you have been a good communicator.
- List an example of when you have been a poor communicator.
- Beside each example, share why you thought it was good or bad communication.
- Discuss one of the examples with your teacher or fellow classmates and share why it was good or bad communication.

**Practitioners:

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: B1.2, B2.2

SFS: Communication, Writing

Where Does an Assistant Cook Work?

Assistant cooks work in many places, including:

- restaurants
- pubs and bars
- hotels
- hospitals and long-term care homes
- assisted living retirement homes
- banquet halls
- catering companies

 **Task:**

From the list above, choose two places where you might like to work as an assistant cook.

- Create a chart that includes what you think are two possible pros and two possible cons for each of your choices.
- Share your ideas with your teacher or classmates.

For example:

	Pro	Con
Pubs and bars	Lively atmosphere and I can't work evenings	Might have to work shifts,
Catering companies	Might have fewer staff, and chances to learn and do more	If the company is small, work might not always be busy enough

**Practitioners:

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups and Level Indicators: A2.1, B1.2, B3.2b

SFS: Communication, Reading, Writing

 **Task:**

From the list of places on Page 8, where an assistant cook might work:

- Identify which workplace you think is the most challenging.
- List three potential challenges that you think an assistant cook might face in this workplace.
- Share your choice and the potential challenges with your teacher or classmates.

****Practitioners:**

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups and Level Indicators: A2.1, B1.2, B2.2

SFS: Communication, Reading, Writing

What Are the Working Conditions Like?

Working as an assistant cook can be interesting and fun.

- You will always be learning new things.
- You will be working as part of a team.
- You will learn skills that will help you at work and at home.

However, some parts of being an assistant cook may be more difficult.

- A kitchen is a busy place. Timelines are tight. You must work quickly.
- You will often need to work on evenings and weekends.
- You will be standing for most of the day.
- You will sometimes need to lift heavy pots and pans.
- Kitchens are often hot and noisy.

How Much Does an Assistant Cook Earn?

According to Indeed.ca, assistant cooks earn an average of \$17.71 per hour as of September 2023.

What Skills Does an Assistant Cook Need?

You'll need to learn many skills to be an assistant cook. You'll need both hard and soft skills to be a good assistant cook. You do not need to have all these skills now. You can learn these skills later by:

- learning on the job
- building your skills via digital learning resources
- going to college
- becoming an apprentice

HARD SKILLS

Hard skills mean the skills you need to do a specific job. They are skills you can learn. You need a variety of hard skills to be an assistant cook. For example, knowing how to grill salmon so it is completely cooked is a hard skill.

Here are some examples of hard skills needed by assistant cooks:

- understanding how to keep a kitchen clean and hygienic
- knowing how to follow a recipe precisely
- knowing how to use sharp kitchen knives to safely chop ingredients
- understanding what temperature various types of meat, fish, and poultry need to be cooked to
- knowing how to prepare sauces so that they are properly cooked but do not burn



Task:

Look at the examples of the hard skills used by assistant cooks.

- Discuss with your teacher or classmates whether you have used any of these skills at home or at a previous job.
- If you haven't used any of these skills, discuss ways that you could learn more about them.

****Practitioners:**

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: A1.2, B1.2

SFS: Communication, Reading

SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills are personal qualities that you have. There are many kinds of soft skills. These are skills such as paying close attention to detail. You can use soft skills in any job. These are skills you can also use at home and in the community.

Here are some examples of soft skills needed by assistant cooks:

- enjoys learning new things
- deals well with stressful situations
- accepts criticism and learns to do better next time
- uses creativity to think of helpful solutions
- works well as part of a team

✓ Task:

Look at the examples of soft skills used by assistant cooks.

- Discuss with your teacher which soft skills you might like to work on in the next month.
- Think about ways you can work on them.
- Set a date to talk about your progress.

****Practitioners:**

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups and Level Indicators: A1.2, B1.2, E.1, F
SFS: Communication, Reading

This video “Kitchen Helper” by Tourism HR Canada talks about some of the tasks done by an assistant cook:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFNCS2pwAQE>

Be sure to enable “Closed Captioning” if needed by the learners.



✓ Task:

Watch the Kitchen Helper video on page 11.

- List three of the tasks mentioned in the Kitchen Helper video.
- Share with your teacher or classmates if you have done any of these tasks.
- If you haven't done them, discuss how you could work towards doing them.
- Discuss the tasks you and other students haven't done.
- Problem solve how you could all work towards doing these tasks.

**Practitioners' Answer Key: Page 31

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: A3, B1.2, E.1

SFS: Collaboration, Communication, Problem Solving, Writing



Section 2 – Ways to Get Training

There are a few different ways to get training to become an assistant cook. These are:

- On-the-job training
- College programs
- Apprenticeship

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

As a first step, if you don't have your high school diploma, completing high school is a good place to start working towards your goal. Completion of high school is usually required to become an assistant cook. It will be required for an apprenticeship or to start a college program. Most employers would prefer to hire assistant cooks with high school diplomas.

If you want to upgrade and get your high school diploma, talk to a Literacy and Basic Skills practitioner about how you can do this.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

Sometimes, people find an employer who is willing to train them as an assistant cook.

Look at the requirements in job ads. Job ads are available online through websites such as indeed.ca and the Canada Job Bank. Sometimes, you will see “willing to train” or “training provided” in these ads.

Also, watch for advertisements in your community for assistant cooks. For example, you might see these posted outside of retirement homes or restaurants. Don't be afraid to go in and ask.

If you already have some cooking skills – from cooking at home or from volunteer activities – then that would be helpful in finding an employer who is willing to train you.

Your literacy practitioner can also refer you to Employment Services for help.

COLLEGE COURSES

You could take a program at college to learn how to become an assistant cook. In Ontario, the program is usually called “Culinary Skills”. It is a one-year program. You will gain many great skills at college. After completing your program, finding an employer to hire you either as an apprentice or as a skilled worker will be much easier.

The Culinary Skills program is offered at many Ontario colleges:

Algonquin	Canadore	Centennial
Conestoga	Durham	Fanshawe
George Brown	Georgian	Humber
Loyalist	Niagara	Sault
St. Lawrence		

Most of these courses are offered in person. A few of them are offered online. If you are interested in this program, ask your literacy practitioner to help you find a college program near you. Or you can contact your local college for more information. You will need to have your high school diploma to register for the “Culinary Skills” program.

For interested learners, here is an overview of the Culinary Skills program offered at Georgian College. It would be similar in other colleges. See:

<https://www.georgiancollege.ca/academics/programs/culinary-skills/>

As well, some **Adult Education Centres** offered by School Boards provide training in culinary skills for assistant cooks.

Ask your literacy practitioner for more information on how to find out if these courses might be available where you live.



APPRENTICESHIP

Taking an apprenticeship program is another way to learn how to be an assistant cook. An apprenticeship combines practical on-the-job training and in-school learning. The apprenticeship program follows a provincial training standard for the baking trade.

Skilled Trades Ontario says that:

Generally, the timeframe to become competent in the trade of Assistant Cook is approximately one and a half years (3,000 hours). This includes 640 hours of on-the-job work experience and 360 hours of in-school training.

You will need to find an employer to sponsor you as an apprentice. Sometimes finding an employer to take you on as an apprentice is difficult. Ask your literacy practitioner to refer you to Employment Services for ideas. The more skills you have, the easier it will be to find an employer.

Assistant cook is a non-compulsory trade. This means that you do not need to be a registered apprentice or have a Certificate of Qualification to work as an assistant cook.

Learners who want to find out more about an apprenticeship as an assistant cook could visit the Skilled Trades Ontario website: <https://www.skilledtradesontario.ca/trade-information/assistant-cook/>

✓ Task:

Look at the different ways to get training to become an assistant cook. If you wanted to be an assistant cook, which way of training would you choose?

- Write a letter to your teacher. In the letter
 - tell your teacher which way of training you would choose
 - explain three reasons why this way of training would work best for you
- Share and discuss this letter with your teacher.

****Practitioners:**

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: A1.2, B1.2, B2.2,
SFS: Communication, Reading, Writing

Section 3 – Assistant Cooks and the Skills for Success

The Skills for Success are the everyday skills Canadians need for work, learning, and life. All nine Skills for Success are required to be an assistant cook.



Adaptability

Adaptability is being able to change your goals when things change around you.

Here are some ways that adaptability skills are used by assistant cooks:

- A pub has always served the same delicious food. Fish and chips, and steak and baked potatoes were always popular menu items. Lately, fewer people are ordering meals at the pub. The assistant cook thinks this is because people want to eat healthier food. People want more salads and interesting recipes from other countries. The assistant cook and the head cook meet. They change the menu so that people can order more salads. They add several vegetarian menu items.
- Customers are starting to ask about whether the food at the restaurant is locally grown. People have not asked this before. The assistant cook does an internet search and learns that there is now a “local food movement”. This means that people like it when the food is grown or produced locally. The head cook decides to buy many of the vegetables from local farms or the farmers' market.



Collaboration

Collaboration means working well with other people.

Here are some ways that collaboration skills might be used by assistant cooks:

- The “Taste of Little Italy” food festival is coming to Toronto. The assistant cooks are excited because their restaurant is participating. They want the menu to be very special. The head cook asks each assistant cook to find five Italian recipe ideas on the internet. Then, they will compare ideas and work together to create the festival menu.
- The residents at the long-term care home have had a long and lonely winter. The care home wants to do something special for them now that spring is here. The recreation and kitchen staff work together to hold a spring tea party. They plan tasty treats and drinks to make the tea party fun for the residents.



Communication

Communication is your ability to speak, listen, and share information and ideas.

Here are some ways that communication skills are used by assistant cooks.

Assistant cooks might:

- tell the head cook about an interesting recipe they saw on a cooking show
- communicate with co-workers and supervisors about the work that needs to be done each day
- discuss with co-workers how to coordinate the use of kitchen equipment
- talk to suppliers about items they need to order
- ask the head cook for more information about an allergy alert issued by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- participate in staff meetings about how to improve menu items



Creativity and Innovation

Creativity and innovation mean you can imagine and come up with new ideas.

Here are some ways that creativity and innovation could be used by assistant cooks:

- November 11th is Remembrance Day. It is a day to honour people who serve in Canada's military. An assistant cook works at an assisted living retirement home. Some people living at the retirement home are veterans. The assistant cook would like to find a new way to celebrate the veterans on November 11th. The assistant cook finds an old cookbook written in the 1940s at a garage sale. It has some great recipes from World War 2. Together with the head cook and other staff, they make some special Remembrance Day treats for everyone at the retirement home.
- An assistant cook loves watching celebrity cooking shows at home. The assistant cook learns that a local celebrity cooking event will be held in their town. This event will raise money for charity. The assistant cook encourages the head cook to join up to this event. It will be fun. It will be a great way to promote their restaurant, and it will help the community. The head cook agrees to participate!



Digital

Digital skills mean your ability to use digital technology to find, create, and share information and content.

Here are some ways that digital skills are used by assistant cooks.

Assistant cooks might:

- use a calculator to estimate the required ingredients
- use a database to input and find recipes
- post recipes on a Google Docs site so they can be shared by all kitchen staff
- search the internet for global food trends
- engage with blogs, online cooking shows, and Pinterest for new recipes
- improve their cooking skills via online courses, videos, and websites
- monitor inventory using an Excel spreadsheet
- share pictures of their most popular breakfast creations on Facebook
- use digital scales to measure ingredients
- use digital ovens



Numeracy

Numeracy means you can work with and understand math.

Here are some ways that math skills are used by assistant cooks.

Assistant cooks might:

- measure the amount of oil needed to make a dressing using a measuring cup
- use a thermometer to check the temperature of meat, poultry, and fish
- calculate ingredient quantities needed to triple a recipe
- weigh ingredients using a scale
- review inventory and order more products when supplies are low
- keep track of the amount of “Spring Special” dinners sold to see if it is an idea to try again
- estimate how many servings can be made from six kilograms (13 pounds) of beef



Problem solving

Problem solving means you can find solutions when things go wrong.

Here are some ways that problem-solving skills are used by assistant cooks:

- An assistant cook notices that some customers tell the restaurant staff that they have diabetes. These customers cannot eat many items on the menu. They want food that is healthy for people with diabetes. The assistant cook has an aunt with diabetes. The assistant cook asks their aunt how to find healthy recipes. The aunt says that “Diabetes Canada” has many good recipes on their website. The assistant cook shares these recipes with the head cook. The head cook thinks serving some of these recipes is a good idea. They are good recipes for people with diabetes. Other people will like them too.
- The assistant cook notices that a recipe has not turned out as planned. The assistant cook tries adding a few new ingredients. They hope this will improve the taste. This does not improve the recipe. The assistant cook looks for other similar recipes. They make the recipe again. This time it is delicious!



Reading

Reading is your ability to understand written words.

Here are some ways that reading skills are used by assistant cooks.

Assistant cooks might:

- read recipes
- read texts or notes from their supervisor
- read instructions on product labels
- read warnings written on signs, labels, equipment, and packaging
- read allergy alerts and food recalls issued by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency



Writing

Writing means you can share information and ideas using words and sentences.

Here are some ways that writing skills are used by assistant cooks.

Assistant cooks might:

- write notes to the head cook to:
 - suggest changes to ingredient quantities in a recipe
 - share recipe ideas for an upcoming special event
 - request a new type of equipment
 - share recipe ideas for an upcoming fancy tea party for seniors at a retirement home

- write notes to other staff about:
 - a long-time customer's request for a special birthday meal
 - ingredients that are low and need to be replaced
 - issues that happened during a shift

- write a post on the restaurant's Instagram account sharing a picture of the most popular dish of the week



Task:

Read about the Skills for Success needed to be an assistant cook.

- Choose the two skills for success that you feel are your strongest.
- Write an email describing how you use these skills in your everyday life.
- Write about why they are important.
- Send the email to your teacher.

****Practitioners:**

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups and Level Indicators: A1.2, B2.2, D.1


SFS: Communication, Digital, Reading, Writing

Section 4 – Would Working as an Assistant Cook be a Good Job for Me?

Here are some questions you could ask yourself to help you decide if working as an assistant cook is a good job for you. Choose one of the four options for each question.

Do you like preparing a variety of dishes such as meat, fish, vegetables, soups, stews, salads, appetizers, desserts, and more?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Do you like to cook using a variety of methods such as roasting, frying, baking, boiling, and grilling?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Do you like to learn new skills?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Are you able to always follow health, safety, and sanitation guidelines precisely for food preparation?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
A kitchen is a busy place. Timelines are tight. Can you work well under pressure?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Recipes and instructions from the head cook must be followed exactly. Do you pay close attention to detail?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Do you like working with your hands?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Do you like working with different equipment (for example, pressure cookers, grills, and fryers)?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Assistant cooks sometimes work evenings, weekends, and on holidays. Would you be willing to work shifts at these times?	Yes Somewhat No


Can you lift and carry heavy items such as large pots and pans?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Are you able to stand for long periods?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Do you work well with others?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Are you hardworking and reliable?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill
Kitchens are often hot, noisy, and busy. Would you be comfortable working in this environment?	Yes Somewhat No
Can you learn and closely follow workplace safety and safe equipment handling guidelines?	Yes Somewhat No I could develop this skill

 **Task:**

Complete the chart.

- Review your responses.
- Explain to your teacher why you would or would not be a good assistant cook.

****Practitioners:**
OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: A2.2, B1.2, B3.2a
SFS: Communication, Problem Solving, Reading

 **Task:**

Choose two skills from the chart that you think are important in most workplaces.

- Discuss the two skills you chose and the reasons you think they are important with your teacher or classmates.
- Share ideas on how you could improve these skills.

****Practitioners:**
OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: A2.2, B1.2
SFS: Collaboration, Communication, Reading

Section 5 – Planning Your Next Steps

We've explored the basics of having a job as an assistant cook. We've looked at:

- What Does an Assistant Cook Do?
- How Much Does an Assistant Cook Earn?
- Where Does an Assistant Cook Work?
- What Are the Working Conditions Like?
- What Skills Does an Assistant Cook Need?
- Ways to Get Training
- Assistant Cooks and the Skills for Success
- Would Working as an Assistant Cook be a Good Job for Me?

Talk with a literacy practitioner about what you have learned. Review any sections that you want to learn more about.

- Do you want to learn more about working as an assistant cook?
- Do you need to upgrade your reading, writing, or math skills?
- Do you need to complete your high school diploma?
- Do you need to work on some of your soft skills?

Your literacy practitioner can help you plan your next steps.

You might decide that working as an assistant cook would be a great job for you! Or maybe you've decided that you are not interested in this job. Don't give up. You have learned a lot by exploring the job of assistant cook. There are many interesting jobs out there. Use the information you learned to keep looking until you find a job that suits you!



If you are interested in working as an assistant cook, here are some next steps you could take. Use this checklist to make note of the steps that interest you.

Checklist of Potential Next Steps	
	What skills do you need to build? There are Literacy and Basic Skills Programs across Ontario that can help you upgrade your reading, writing, and math skills. Talk to a literacy practitioner about how you could do this.
	A literacy practitioner can also refer you to Employment Services. Employment Services can tell you more about jobs, training, and apprenticeships.
	You could visit the Canada Job Bank and Indeed.ca and search for jobs as an assistant cook in your area. Do these jobs interest you and meet your needs?
	You could look again at the Skilled Trades Ontario website: https://www.skilledtradesontario.ca/trade-information/assistant-cook/ It is full of helpful information about working as an assistant cook. You could also use this website to explore other trades.
	You could learn more about this job to help you decide. Search YouTube for videos about working as an assistant cook. Look on the internet for ideas. See what others have to say about this job to help you decide.
	You could look again at the " Ways to Get Training as an Assistant Cook" section. Which type of training best suits your needs?
	What other steps could you take?



Task:

Make a Goal Chart to show the first five steps you might take if you decide to become an assistant cook. Include the month that you would start your goal and a brief description of the step. For example:

Goal 1: January – Visit the Skilled Trades Ontario website for more info

Goal 2: February -- Make an appointment with a literacy practitioner

Goal 3:

****Practitioners:**

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups and Level Indicators: B3.2b, E.1

SFS: Problem Solving, Writing

Section 6 – Supporting Activity

Instructions for Practitioners

This **sample activity** can be used for learners interested in a career as an assistant cook. It is suitable for one learner or for a small group of learners. It can be changed to meet individual needs.

This activity uses elements of the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework's (OALCF) Competencies with Level 1 and 2 Tasks and Indicators.

The tasks in this activity also include Entry and Intermediate components and elements of a variety of the Skills for Success (SFS). Descriptions of the SFS needed by an assistant cook are available in Section 3 of this resource. Visit the SFS website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success.html> if you would like more information about the SFS level components and elements.

A computer or tablet will be used during this activity.

Activity

Introduction to the Activity

In the job of assistant cook, many different hard and soft skills are used. The following are just some of the skills shown in this resource. There are many more that could be included:

- communicate
- measure and estimate
- manage time
- set priorities
- solve problems
- be creative
- use kitchen equipment
- follow directions
- work in a team
- learn new things

This practitioner-led activity uses skills and competencies needed to support learner goals. The individual tasks also include a sampling of the hard and soft skills required by assistant cooks.

Activity: Task 1 – Solve a communication problem.

Sometimes minor communication mistakes can cause confusion.

Ask learners to list three possible ways that a miscommunication between a head cook and two assistant cooks could be fixed.

- Explain that the head cook has made a mistake and told two assistant cooks that they will be preparing the vegetables for the evening service.
- The head cook should have told one of them to prepare vegetables and the other to prepare sauces.
- The head cook is out for an hour at the local market.

Ask the learners to write below their list which solution they think is best and to give a reason why they think it is the best.

Ask learners to share their solutions with the teacher or classmates. The discussion should include which solution the learner thinks is best and why.

(B1.2, B2.2, B3.1a)

****Practitioners' Answer Key: Page 32**

OALCF B1.2, B2.2, and B3.1a:

Competency B: Communicate Ideas and Information

- Task Group: Interact with others (B1)
 - B1.2: Initiate and maintain interactions with one or more persons to discuss, explain, or exchange information and opinions
- Task Group: Write continuous text (B2)
 - B2.2: Write texts to explain and describe information and ideas
- Task Group: Complete and create documents (B3)
 - B3.1a: Make straightforward entries to complete very simple documents

Embedded Skills for Success:

- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Writing

Activity: Task 2 – Calculate time.

Often assistant cooks will need to adjust quantities and time based on changes to the number of dinner reservations,

Ask learners to calculate how much time an assistant cook will need to peel 60 potatoes if it takes 25 minutes to peel 50 potatoes. (C2.2 and C4.1)

****Practitioners' Answer Key: Page 33**

OALCF C2.1 and C4.1:

Competency C: Understand and Use Numbers

- Task Group: Manage Time (C2)
- C2.2: Make low-level inferences to calculate using time

- Task Group: Manage data (C4)
- C4.1: Make simple comparisons and calculations

Embedded Skills for Success:

- Numeracy

Activity: Task 3 – Find websites and send an email.

Menus often change to meet different dietary needs. Assistant cooks can be asked for menu suggestions.

Ask learners to Google “vegan recipes” and find five different websites where assistant cooks can find vegan recipes.

Ask learners to create an email that gives the names of the websites and the website addresses.

Have learners send the email to their teachers.

(B3.1a, D.2)

OALCF B3.1a and D2:

Competency B: Communicate Ideas and Information

- Task Group: Complete and create documents (B3)
- B3.1a: Make straightforward entries to complete very simple documents

Competency D: Use Digital Technology

- Task Group: Not applicable
- D.2: Perform well-defined, multi-step digital tasks

Embedded Skills for Success:

- Communication
- Digital
- Writing

Activity: Task 4 – Create an email.

Sometimes, an assistant cook's work shift might need to be changed.

Ask learners to prepare an email that an assistant cook would send to the head cook requesting a change to their shifts using the following information:

- The assistant cook would like to enroll in a 6-week night school course to learn more about making creative appetizers.
- They would like to temporarily change from the afternoon shift to the morning shift starting the next month.

Ask learners to also include two ways that this extra training might be helpful for the restaurant.

Have learners send the email to their teachers.

(B2.2, D.1)

OALCF B2.2 and D1:

Competency B: Communicate Ideas and Information

- Task Group: Write continuous text (B2)
- B2.2: Write texts to explain and describe information and ideas

Competency D: Use Digital Technology

- Task Group: Not applicable
- D.1: Perform simple digital tasks according to a set procedure

Embedded Skills for Success:

- Communication
- Digital
- Writing



Section 7 – Additional Resources for Practitioners

- While not currently maintained or updated to the Skills for Success, here is the link to the Essential Skills Profiles for Cook <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/essentialskillsresults/53>. (As of November 2023, there was no link to Assistant Cook). These profiles contain helpful information on the essential skills required and have linkages to the Skills for Success.
- Here is the link to the Federal Government's National Occupational Classification (NOC) Code information for Kitchen Helpers (NOC Code 65201) <https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/Structure/NocProfile?objectid=wq0oCbEgaGuHQfHAj%2By382XWqC1M95YrEmdn%2FHKDhmM%3D> (Note to practitioners – this link is slow to open!)
- Exploring Food Trades is a practical curriculum for LBS learners developed by Literacy Link South Central. See: <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/1a9192fe/files/uploaded/LBS%20Apprenticeship%20cirr%20Food.pdf>
- Another helpful curriculum resource is Food Safety – Learning in the Kitchen. It was created for adult learners by the Northwest Territories Literacy Council. See: https://www.nwtliteracy.ca/sites/default/files/resources/2_Food%20Safety_Edited.pdf



Section 8 – Answer Key

Task – Page 7

Watch this video from WorkBC’s Career Trek. It shows what it is like to work as a cook. An assistant cook would help the head cook with the duties talked about in the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gYAN-cJa-k>

After watching the video, list four dangers in a busy kitchen.

Possible Answers:

- Cooking with hot fats
- Spinning machinery
- Working with sharp knives
- People always moving
- People carrying trays of hot food

Task – Page 12

The video “Kitchen Helper” by Tourism HR Canada talks about some of the skills needed to be an assistant cook: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFNCS2pwAQE>

List five of the skills mentioned in the Kitchen Helper video. Share with your teacher or classmates if you have these skills. If you don’t have them, discuss how you could work towards getting them.

Discuss the skills you and other students don't have. Problem solve how you could all work towards gaining these skills.

Possible Answers:

- Cleaning
- Sorting
- Cleaning and sanitizing equipment
- Assisting
 - with food preparation
 - in the receiving and storage of kitchen products
- Setting up and preparing the kitchen for a service

Activity: Task 1 - Page 26 (Solve a communication problem.)

Sometimes minor communication mistakes can cause confusion.

Ask learners to list three possible ways that a miscommunication between a head cook and two assistant cooks could be fixed.

- Explain that the head cook has made a mistake and told two assistant cooks that they will be preparing the vegetables for the evening service.
- The head cook should have told one of them to prepare vegetables and the other to prepare sauces.
- The head cook is out for an hour at the local market.

Ask the learners to write below their list which solution they think is best and to give a reason why it is the best.

Ask learners to share their solutions with the teacher or classmates. The discussion should include which solution the learner thinks is best and why.

Possible Answers:

The answers to this question are opinions so there aren't any "right" answers. Some examples might be:

- Have the two assistant cooks decide on their own based on their skills and tell the head cook when they return
- Have the two assistant cooks draw straws
- Ask a different supervisor
- The assistant cook who has been working there the longest gets first choice

Activity: Task 2 - Page 27 (Calculate time.)

Often assistant cooks will need to adjust quantities and time based on changes to the number of dinner reservations,

Ask learners to calculate how much time an assistant cook will need to peel 60 potatoes if it takes 25 minutes to peel 50 potatoes.

Answer: 30 minutes

Rationale: 25 minutes divided by 50 potatoes = .5 minutes per potato
60 potatoes multiplied by .5 minutes = 30 minutes

