

**Select Readings, Second Edition**  
**Upper-Intermediate, Chapter 6 Test**

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

**The Importance of Interpersonal Skills**

We all know that being on time, working hard, and consistently delivering quality performances are keys to success on the job. However, be careful not to discount the importance of interpersonal skills in the workplace. How your superiors<sup>1</sup> and coworkers perceive you can play a major role in your day-to-day status at the office, and building rapport may be one of the most important factors for the future of your career.

Hard work and brilliant ideas aside, if you can't zero in on connecting with the people around you, your professional life can, and probably will, suffer. The good news is that there are several simple things you can do to improve your social skills and build successful relationships with your colleagues. Without a doubt, these ten simple tips will give you an edge in today's working world.

**1. Smile**

Never underestimate the power of a smile. Maintaining a positive, cheerful attitude about work and about life radiates positive energy that will draw others to you.

**2. Be Appreciative**

Find something about everyone and let them hear it. Offer praise and words of encouragement freely. Say thank you and make colleagues feel welcome when they call or stop by your office. Show some appreciation, and others will want to give you their best.

**3. Pay Attention**

Get to know people and address them by their first names. Ask others for their opinions, and pay attention to what is going on in other people's lives.

**4. Practice Active Listening**

To actively listen is to listen empathetically to another's opinion without judgment. Then restate that opinion in your own words. This shows that you understood their meaning and they know that you are not just faking it. Your coworkers will appreciate knowing that you really do listen to what they have to say.

**5. Teamwork**

Create an environment that encourages people to work together. Treat everyone equally, and don't talk about others behind their backs. Follow up on other people's suggestions or requests.

**6. Resolve Conflicts**

Try your best to face conflicts as they arise and solve them. If a conflict occurs, arrange to sit down with both parties and help sort out their differences. By taking on such a leadership role, you will receive respect and admiration from those around you.

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<sup>1</sup> **your superiors** people at a higher level job than you in a workplace

## 7. Say What You Mean

Pay close attention to both what you say and how you say it. A clear and effective communicator avoids misunderstandings. Communicating clearly conveys an image of intelligence and maturity. People won't put much weight on opinions that aren't stated clearly.

## 8. Use Humor Effectively

Don't be afraid to have a sense of humor. People generally like someone who can make them laugh. A little humor can be an effective tool to lower barriers<sup>2</sup> and gain people's affection.

## 9. Empathize

To empathize means to be able to try to understand how someone else feels. Try to view situations and responses from another person's perspective.

## 10. Don't Complain

No other character is more disliked in the workplace than the chronic complainer. If you must verbalize your grievances, do it at home. To avoid getting a bad reputation, spare those at work.

1. True or false? Interpersonal skills can play a major role in your business success.
  - A. True
  - B. False
2. According to the author, you should address colleagues at work by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. their first name
  - B. their last name
  - C. either their first or last name
  - D. their first and last name
3. *Active listening* is listening to another person's opinion \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. while smiling
  - B. but keeping your opinions to yourself
  - C. while giving your opinion
  - D. non-judgmentally
4. An important part of active listening is to restate the other person's opinion \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. in your own words
  - B. in as few words as possible
  - C. adding a lot of details
  - D. using very simple vocabulary
5. Restating the other person's opinion in your own words shows that you \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. agree with their meaning
  - B. have another opinion
  - C. are really listening to them
  - D. are not interested in what they're saying
6. True or false? In paragraph 2, "Without a doubt" is used to show that the author is not sure about his/her statement.
  - A. True
  - B. False

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<sup>2</sup> **barriers** walls or obstacles

7. In section 4, *Practice Active Listening*, 'This' in the phrase "This shows that...", refers to \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. treating everyone equally
  - B. restating the other person's opinion in your own words
  - C. smiling at people
  - D. talking about people behind their backs
8. In section 6, *Resolve Conflicts*, 'such a' in the phrase "such a leadership role" refers to \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. a leadership role in which you help work out differences or problems
  - B. a minor leadership role
  - C. a negative leadership role
  - D. a secondary leadership role
9. In paragraph 2, the sentence beginning with "Hard work and brilliant ideas aside..." means that \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. hard work and great ideas are not as important as interpersonal skills
  - B. a person who has great ideas doesn't have to work hard
  - C. a person needs good interpersonal skills as well as hard work and great ideas
  - D. good interpersonal skills are more important than having good ideas
10. 'Addressing' someone by their first name means \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. writing their first name on an envelope
  - B. writing them a letter
  - C. only using their first name when you call them on the phone
  - D. using their first name whenever you speak to them