# Helping Students Articulate Knowledge and Skills

Students, and particularly those in the humanities, arts, and social sciences, often [struggle to articulate their knowledge and skills](https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/10/02/career-services-and-faculty-must-work-together-help-humanities-students-essay) to prospective employers.

Your college or university’s career center may have worked with local employers to identify the skills they most desire in students. Boise State University’s Career Center, for example, [maintains a list](https://career.boisestate.edu/makecollegecount/skills-critical-employability/) that includes, among other things, analyzing and interpreting information, collaboration, communication, problem solving, and taking initiative.

These are, of course, all skills students build through course assignments. Near the end of each semester, I co-create with my students a list of the skills they have built that semester. We then craft phrases they might use in résumés, cover letters, and interviews. Here are some examples from a women’s history course I taught recently:

* Located valuable sources when information is difficult to find
* Conducted primary source research in analog and digital repositories
* Collaborated with a diverse team on multiple iterations of a project
* Pivoted a project’s focus when resources proved unavailable
* Navigated ambiguity; can “think on my feet” when obstacles arise
* Demonstrated persistence and resilience when identifying and learning new technologies
* Set realistic goals and timelines
* Learned who to ask, what to ask for, and how to ask for it
* Built accessible digital resources

Most students wouldn’t consider a women’s history course vocationally focused, yet this exercise helped them emerge from the class confident they had transferable skills. Chances are your courses are similarly useful to students on the job market, but they might not realize it, let alone know how to describe the knowledge and skills they acquired.

## Further reading

[A curriculum model for transferable skills development](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.11120/ened.2006.01010019)

[Analysing student perceptions of transferable skills via undergraduate degree programmes](http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1469787405054238)

[Humanities and social science degrees ‘develop key employment skills’](http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/arts-blog/humanities-and-social-sciences-degrees-develop-key-employment-skills)

[Dispelling the myth of the unemployable humanities major](https://www.washington.edu/trends/dispelling-the-myth-of-the-unemployable-humanities-major/)

[A list of transferable skills undergraduates develop](http://www.marquette.edu/csc/undergraduate/transferableskills.shtml), from Marquette University

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