

The Nine Essential Skills of December

The Canadian government recognizes nine essential skills that are used in nearly every occupation and throughout daily life in different ways and at different levels of complexity. The nine skills are: reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, continuous learning, thinking skills, and computer use. We use these skills every day.

Reading Text	Read “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” with your niece and nephew. The next day, find your unhappy German Shepherd with pipe-cleaner antlers tied to her head.
Document Use	Spend all day following gourmet recipes for smashed potatoes, fresh chestnut stuffing and Tiramisu eggnog trifle. At dinner, listen to your sister point out that nothing tastes like grandma’s. Repeatedly. For 3 hours.
Numeracy	Calculate how wide a strip of wrapping paper you need to cut to cover the bare patch on your son’s gift because you didn’t measure the first piece.
Writing	Twitter 35 new lyrics for “Jingle Bells” with the hashtag #naughtyxmassongs. Pick up 189 new followers and lose 20.
Oral Communication	After your 3rd eggnog, jump on a desk and sing “The Chanukah Song” to great applause at your holiday office party.
Working With Others	Meet with a group of friends for a cookie bake-off. After the 3rd tray of burnt cookies, head to Costco together to stock up on bulk holiday candy.
Continuous Learning	Take a candymaking class. Back at home, try to make fudge, without a candy thermometer, for everyone on your list. Discover that chocolate sauce makes a fine gift too.
Thinking Skills	Buy a fresh Christmas tree. Bring it home, and realize it’s too tall for your house. Measure the ceiling, and cut two feet off the tree. Then, discover that your tree stand won’t hold it up. Plan a series of hooks, wires and pulleys to keep it upright. Get it set up, and find out that your star won’t fit on top. Attach star to tree with twist ties. Voila! Beautiful!
Computer Use	Spend Cyber Monday hunting down the best online deals on Christmas presents. Three hundred dollars later, realize that all of the gifts you bought were for yourself.