

# HOW TO CONNECT WITH YOUR COWORKERS

Watch the [video](#) titled “3 Ways to Better Connect with Your Coworkers” by TED.

## 1 TEAM BONDING ACTIVITIES

**Task 1:** Can you identify the team bonding activities shown in the pictures below?



1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_



3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_



5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

**Task 2:** Discuss the following questions as a class.

1. What team bonding activities have you participated in at work?
2. How can team bonding activities improve team morale?
3. Which team bonding activity do you think is most effective? Why?

## 2 CHARACTERISTICS OF COWORKERS

**Task 1:** Decide if the characteristics of a coworker in the box below are positive or negative.

Disorganised	Argumentative	Collaborative	Reliable	Arrogant
Supportive	Procrastinator	Judgmental	Flexible	Egotistical
Enthusiastic	Open-minded	Empathetic	Gossipy	Punctual

Positive	Negative

**Task 2:** Use words from the previous task to describe the following people:

1. A coworker.
2. A subordinate.
3. A member of the management team.
4. A client or customer.
5. Yourself.



**Task 3:** Discuss the following questions as a class.

- a. Can you think of three more positive characteristics?
- b. Can you think of three more negative characteristics?
- c. What characteristics do you value most in a coworker? Explain.
- d. Which characteristic do you think is most damaging in a workplace?
- e. Are there situations where a negative trait might be necessary or beneficial?
- f. Can positive traits be learned through training courses or experience?



### 3 THREE WAYS TO CONNECT WITH COWORKERS

**Task 1:** Read the quote taken from the [video](#). Do you agree or disagree with it? Explain.

“Our relationships with our coworkers play a huge role in determining how successful, innovative, and happy we'll be at work. Our work relationships give us two valuable things: social support and access to information. And research shows it's the combination that can make us happier and more successful.”

#### Tip 1: Build Trust

**Task 2:** Decide if the statements based on the first tip in the [video](#) are true or false.

1. Having a close friend at work makes us less effective at our jobs.
2. Work friends are important because they can give us access to information.
3. Teams that trust each other do so much better because people on those teams feel safe sharing their best ideas.
4. When you're vulnerable in front of somebody, it makes it more difficult for them to be vulnerable in front of you.
5. Sharing personal concerns, like a child starting at a new school or project worries, builds team trust.

**Task 3:** Complete the following task, then answer the questions.

- a. Make a list of ways you have built trust with colleagues.

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

- b. What is the vulnerability loop?
- c. Why is it important to build trust with colleagues?
- d. Have you ever worked in a team where there was no trust?



## Tip 2: Be a Joiner.

**Task 4: Complete the quote from the second tip in the [video](#) using the words in the box.**

social circles

weak ties

performance

acquaintances

“Surprisingly, our closest friends aren't the best people for giving us access to new information. It's often our \_\_\_\_\_ because they connect us to different \_\_\_\_\_ and consequently new ways of thinking. “

“Social scientists call these relationships \_\_\_\_\_, and when it comes to innovation, they're more important than our strongest connections. For example, in one study, I found that people who had many weak ties that connected different groups in a large organisation were more likely to have high \_\_\_\_\_ scores, more likely to be promoted, and even more likely to say they were a part of a creative breakthrough.”

**Task 5: Discuss the following questions as a class.**

- a. At work, do you have close friends?
- b. Are there different social circles within your organisation?
- c. How can acquaintances give us access to new ways of thinking?
- d. What are weak ties?
- e. Why is it beneficial to develop the number of weak ties you have?
- f. Make a list of ways you can develop weak ties below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



### Tip 3: Make it Easier.

**Task 6:** Read the quote about the third tip from the [video](#).

“A number of years ago, I helped redesign the onboarding process at a big company. Every week, I assigned new employees to one of five groups, each with a different coloured T-shirt, and something amazing started to happen.

Almost immediately, people wearing yellow T-shirts started having breakfast together. People in the green T-shirts started walking between the different sessions together. And at the end of the week, we blew by our happy hour budget because people hung out together so much longer than they ever had.

The best part is that, after that onboarding week, many of those people stayed in touch for years, which became a great source of weak ties across the organisation. The reason the T-shirt experiment worked so well is because it gave people an easy way to identify the group they belong to.”

**Task 7:** Discuss the following questions as a class.

1. In your own words, describe the new onboarding process the speaker created.
2. What were the positive consequences of the new onboarding process?
3. What was the key reason behind the success of the T-shirt experiment, as explained by the speaker?
4. Describe your company's onboarding process.
5. How would you improve your company's onboarding process?
6. Do you think it is important to have a good onboarding process? Why?



## 4 PHRASAL VERBS

**Task 1: Match the words from the box to their definitions listed 1-4.**

to get along with

to hang out

to put up with

to open up

1. to spend time together in a relaxed way.
2. to like and be friendly with someone.
3. to share your thoughts and feelings with others.
4. To tolerate or accept something annoying or difficult.

**Task 2: Complete the sentences using the new words. Be careful with the verb tense.**

- a. I \_\_\_\_\_ my colleagues because we share similar interests outside of work.
- b. After work, sometimes we all \_\_\_\_\_ at the nearby coffee shop and chat.
- c. I have to \_\_\_\_\_ my colleague's messy desk. I try to ignore it but it annoys me!
- d. It took some time, but eventually, my colleague \_\_\_\_\_ about their struggles with time management.

**Task 3: Practice using the words by answering the following questions.**

1. Do you think it is important to get along with your coworkers? Why or why not?
2. Do you hang out with coworkers outside of normal work hours? Explain.
3. Describe some office annoyances you have to put up with?
4. Do you think it is wise to open up with coworkers? Explain.



## 5 WOULD YOU RATHER?

**Let's finish the unit with a fun speaking game!** Begin by deciding which scenario you'd prefer, then provide a detailed explanation, weighing the pros and cons of both options.

1. Would you rather work on a project with a colleague who is always late or one who is overly critical?

2. Would you rather have a coworker who talks too loudly on the phone or one who constantly interrupts you during meetings?

3. Would you rather have a coworker who constantly gossips about others or one who never participates in team activities?

4. Would you rather work with a colleague who micromanages your every move or one who never communicates important information?

5. Would you prefer a colleague who always speaks negatively about the job or one who always speaks positively about themselves?

6. Would you prefer working with a colleague who is overly competitive or one who always procrastinates on important tasks?

7. Would you rather work with someone who is overly secretive or someone who shares too much personal information?

8. Would you rather have a coworker who is overly critical of your work or one who constantly distracts you with non-work-related conversations?



# HOMework

## 1 HOW TO CONNECT WITH COWORKERS

**Task 1:** Read the following article, then complete the question on the next page.

Building strong relationships with your coworkers is crucial for a positive work environment and effective teamwork. Here are five tips to help you connect better with your colleagues:

Take the first step in getting to know your coworkers by initiating conversations. Start with simple greetings and ask open-ended questions about their interests, hobbies, or weekend plans. For example, you could ask, "How was your weekend?" or "What do you enjoy doing outside of work?" Showing genuine interest in their lives outside of work can help you bond on a personal level.

When engaging in conversations with your coworkers, practice active listening. This means focusing on what they are saying without interrupting, maintaining eye contact, and responding well. Show empathy and understanding by acknowledging their feelings and opinions. Active listening not only helps you build rapport but also fosters trust and mutual respect.

Look for common interests or shared experiences that you can bond over with your coworkers. Whether it's a love for sports, a favourite TV show, or a mutual hobby, finding common ground can help break the ice and strengthen your connection. Participating in team-building activities or joining office clubs and groups related to your interests can also

provide opportunities for bonding outside of work tasks.

Be willing to lend a helping hand and offer support to your coworkers when needed. Whether it's assisting with a project, providing guidance, or simply being a good listener, showing that you're dependable and supportive can go a long way in building positive relationships. Additionally, don't hesitate to ask for help yourself when you need it. Building a culture of mutual support and collaboration can enhance teamwork and productivity.

Treat your coworkers with respect and professionalism at all times. Avoid gossiping or speaking negatively about others, and always communicate in a courteous and considerate manner. Respect their boundaries and personal space, and be mindful of cultural differences and diverse perspectives. Building a respectful and inclusive work environment fosters trust and encourages open communication among colleagues.

Overall, connecting with your coworkers is essential for a harmonious and productive work environment. By initiating conversations, practicing active listening, finding common interests, offering help and support, and being respectful and professional, you can build meaningful relationships with colleagues.

**Task 2: Research the definitions of the following words and phrases, then use them in example sentences.**

1. genuine interest.
2. active listening.
3. empathy.
4. mutual respect.
5. team-building activities.
6. dependable.
7. collaboration.
8. inclusive.



**Task 3: Write detailed answers to the following questions.**

- a. Why is it important to initiate conversations with coworkers, according to the text?
- b. What is active listening, and how can it help in connecting with coworkers?
- c. How can finding common interests help build relationships in the workplace?
- d. What are some examples of ways to offer help and support to coworkers?
- e. Why is it important to maintain professionalism when interacting with coworkers?
- f. How can building a culture of mutual support and collaboration benefit productivity?
- g. What is the significance of small gestures of appreciation in the workplace?
- h. How might participating in office clubs or team-building activities outside of work tasks help strengthen relationships with coworkers?
- i. Summarise the five tips from the article for building relationships with coworkers?

