Why is teamwork important? Learning how to work well with others is an essential skill. Group projects are usually assigned in courses for two primary reasons. First, group projects help prepare students for the workplace by allowing them to learn social, communication, and organizational skills required for productive teamwork. Second, collaborating with fellow students helps improve students’ educational experience. When working with classmates, students tend to think through issues and problems more so than they do when they discuss issues and problems with their instructor because they view the instructor as the expert and thus defer to the “expert’s” viewpoint.

**Effective teams share several characteristics:**

1. A successful team establishes and meets team goals. One of your first tasks as a team should be to agree on what defines a successful project.

2. An effective team is in constant communication with each other. Each team member should know how to contact all other team members. You should make yourselves available to each other as you work on the team project.

3. In an effective team, all team members have a voice. Every team member should participate at every stage of the project.

4. A successful team respects each team member’s opinions and ideas.

5. An effective team recognizes each team member’s strengths and weaknesses. As a team, you use each team member’s strengths for the benefit and success of the team and team project. As a team, you help each other improve each team member’s weaknesses.

6. As an effective team, you should select a specific tool and/or format for giving each other feedback and for keeping track of communication and documents if used.