Collaboration is a Full-time Effort

In a full-time job, you will spend 8 hours, 5 days a week, working with many different people. Most of the time, you won't be able to choose your coworkers, but you will have to interact productively with everyone, even those you enjoy least. If you can't collaborate, your effectiveness will become less and less, and your job may be in jeopardy.

"Collaborate" is a term that applies to people who work together for a common purpose. Often the word is used to refer to the activities of a team, but collaboration also occurs when individuals rely on each other as they help their company become successful.

These words that relate to collaboration will help you understand the term:

- Connect
- Cooperate
- Coordinate
- Relate
- Share
- Partner
- Unite
- Team

To collaborate, you must know your role, your strengths, and how you can best contribute. A collaborator is expected to:

- Share information, ideas, and suggestions.
- Help others in becoming better informed.
- Notify others of changes, delays, or problems in a timely manner.
- Engage with others who may need support.

If you are a strong communicator and self-motivated—and if you are able to motivate others, handle conflict, and show an exceptional work ethic, you can be a good collaborator.

Action: Analyze the situation below. What advice do you give Ena and Jose for becoming better collaborators?

Ena and Jose have been coworkers for five years and usually know what the other is thinking. Their company has been going through a growth spurt, and Val was recently hired to be the third person on their crew. Ena and Jose are happy to have Val on their team. They complete their work each day and check in with Val occasionally to ask how she's doing. They have invited her to ask questions if she needs their advice, but mostly they leave her alone to learn her job. They hope she's ready for the big project their team will start next week. They wonder if she knows about it.