**Analytical skills** are qualities and characteristics associated with solving problems using facts.

There are a lot of aspects to analytical skills, but we'll focus on five essential points.

They are:

1. Curiosity - wanting to learn something,
2. understanding context - condition in which something exists or happens,
3. having technical mindset - A technical mindset involves the ability to break things down into smaller steps or pieces,
4. data design - Data design is how you organize information, and
5. data strategy - management of the people, processes, and tools.

* Let's start with **curiosity**.

Curiosity is all about wanting to learn something.

Curious people usually seek out new challenges and experiences.

This leads to knowledge.

* Now think about understanding **context**.

Context is the condition in which something exists or happens.

This can be a structure or an environment.

A simple way of understanding context is by counting to 5.

One, two, three, four, five.

All of those numbers exist in the context of one through five.

But what if a friend of yours said to you, one, two, four, five, three?

Well, the three will be out of context.

Simple, right? But it can be a little tricky.

There's a good chance that you might not even notice the three being out of context

if you aren't paying close attention. That's why listening and trying to understand the full picture is critical.

In your own life, you put things into context all the time.

For example, let's think about your grocery list.

If you group together items like flour, sugar, and yeast, that's you adding context to your groceries.

This saves you time

when you're at the baking aisle at the grocery store.

* Now we know you have both curiosity and the ability to understand context. Let's move on to the third skill, a **technical mindset**.

A technical mindset involves the ability to break things down into smaller steps or pieces and work with them in an orderly and logical way.

When you take something that seems like a single task, like paying your bills,

and break it into smaller steps with an orderly process, that's using a technical mindset.

* Now let's explore the fourth part of an analytical skill set, **data design**.

Data design is how you organize information.

As a data analyst, design typically has to do with an actual database.

But, again, the same skills can easily be applied to everyday life.

For example, think about the way you organize the contacts in your phone.

That's actually a type of data design.

Maybe you list them by first name instead of last, or maybe you use email addresses instead of their names.

What you're really doing is designing a clear, logical list that lets you call or

text a contact in a quick and simple way.

* The last, but definitely not least, the fifth and final element of analytical skills is **data strategy**.

Data strategy is the management of the people, processes, and tools used in data analysis.

Let's break that down.

* You manage people by making sure they know how to use the right data to find solutions to the problem you're working on.
* For processes, it's about making sure the path to that solution is clear and accessible.
* For tools, you make sure the right technology is being used for the job.

Now, you may be doubting my ability to give you an example from

real life that demonstrates data strategy. But check this out. Imagine mowing a lawn.

Step 1 would be reading the owner's manual for the mower.

That's making sure the people involved, or you, in this example, know how to use the data available.

The manual would instruct you to put on protective eyewear and closed-toe shoes.

Then, it's on to step 2:

making the process, the path, clear and accessible. This will involve you walking around the lawn, picking up large sticks or rocks that might get in your way.

Finally, for step 3,

you check the lawn mower, your tool, to make sure it has enough gas and oil, and is in working condition, so the lawn can be mown safely.

There you have it. Now you know the **five essential skills of a data analyst**.

Curiosity, understanding context, having a technical mindset,

data design, and data strategy.