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GETTING ORGANISED



AGENDA

- Starter
- The Paper Flow
- What? When?
- Create a System
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will examine ways to organise information and materials for their school subjects.

Students will identify the importance of planning and scheduling study time.

Students will create systems for organising their work.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Organisation Checklist” activity sheet for each student (Part III)
- One copy of the “My Study Week” activity sheet for each student (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Ask students to think about the order in which they do things in the morning.

Ask questions such as the following:

- Would you fix your hair before getting into the shower? Why not?
- Would you put on your shoes before putting on your pants? Why not?
- Would you butter your bread before putting it in the toaster? Why not?

Point out that what have become our everyday habits are really ways in which we organise ourselves. Explain to students that in this lesson they will learn habits of organisation that can help them study and learn more successfully.

Part I The Paper Flow (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students examine ways to organise information and materials for their school subjects.

1. Students examine their personal organisation habits.

Ask students to name the classes they are taking. List these classes on the board. Have students describe how they keep track of information, assignments, and materials for each class. Elicit their reasons. Ask students who keep notebooks or binders to explain why they are helpful organisational tools.

Point out whenever possible the various organisational tools that students already have in place. Emphasise that one important tool is to keep notebooks for each class or a binder with different sections for each class.

2. Students learn how to organise notebooks and binders.

Ask students to describe and show how their notebooks/binders are organised.

Point out individual differences. For example, some students may find that keeping a notebook works best for some subjects. Others may find that keeping a binder works best because binders allow papers to be easily removed or inserted. Some students might even wish to use a combination of both notebooks and binders.

Help students understand that when work is completed, it's often a good idea to keep the work so it may be reviewed later. Other times, work needs to be cleaned out. Ask for suggestions on how students might clean out their notebooks or binders. (Students might respond: go through the notebooks and binders, and identify material that might be helpful when reviewing for tests or working on projects; find a place to keep these materials at home—on a bookshelf, for example. Loose papers could be filed in subject folders.)

Summarise your discussion by writing the following points on the board:

- Students should have a notebook or a section in a binder for each subject.
- Students should have a place to write assignments and notes, and a place to keep completed homework and handouts.

Part II What? When? (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students evaluate the importance of planning ahead and scheduling study time.

1. Students assess their personal time management habits.

Review the list of classes written on the board. Continue your discussion about organisational methods. Ask questions such as the following:

- How do you keep track of assignment due dates or test dates for each of your classes?
- How do you plan your studying so that everything you need to do gets done on time?
- What are some ways you can improve your time management skills?

Acknowledge responses that offer suggestions on how to plan ahead. Tell students that planning ahead is another important part of getting organised. If students have not mentioned making a schedule or a to-do list, remind them of the techniques they learned a few sessions ago in “Lesson 4: Managing Your Time” of Module 4: Managing Personal Resources.

2. Students consider how to plan their study time.

Share the following study tips with students:

- Decide on the best time of day to do homework.
- Study at that same time every day.
- Plan and schedule exactly what you need to accomplish.
- Write down your study schedule and stick to it!
- Work on the most difficult subjects first, before you get tired.

Part III Create a System (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify organisational systems that work best for them.

1. Students organise their notebooks or binders.

Discuss how students might use their notebooks or binders to plan and organise their classwork. Through questions and comments, guide students to point out that if their notebooks or binders are organised by class, and if each class section includes daily assignments and notices of upcoming tests, then they can transfer this information to a daily or weekly schedule. This becomes their to-do list.

Distribute copies of the “Organisation Checklist” activity sheet. Focus attention on the first section of the activity sheet, titled “About Notebooks and Binders.”

Group students in pairs. Tell them to look through any notebooks or binders that they have with them to see how well they are organised. Tell students to fill out the first half of the checklist, and to reorganise their notebooks and binders if they need to. Remind them to list anything they need to do or materials they may need to help them organise, such as additional notebooks, a binder, paper, and pencils.

2. Students make a schedule.

Focus students’ attention on the reminders at the bottom of their checklists. Tell students to read through them as you distribute copies of the “My Study Week” activity sheet.

Suggest that at the beginning or end of each day, students go through their notes for each class, enter upcoming assignments and tests in their notebooks or binders, and write up a schedule of what needs to be done. Model suggestions on the board (e.g., “English—Monday: read pages 50–60, work on rough draft”).

Remind students to keep their schedules in their notebooks. Suggest that they use a schedule like this, adapt it, or make up one of their own that works better for them.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to name useful methods for organising their notebooks and binders. Ask them to explain why their organisational systems may change occasionally. Elicit from students the following key points that were taught in this lesson:

- It is important to have a system for planning and organising classwork.
- Organise your work; keep a notebook or binder with information and materials for each class.
- Plan ahead; make a schedule to organise your study time.

Student Assessment

1. Think of the space in which you usually do homework. With what you learned today in mind, how can you set up this space to keep yourself organised?
2. Why is it important to make and maintain a weekly schedule?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Getting your house in order and reducing the confusion gives you more control over your life. Personal organisation somehow releases or frees you to operate more effectively.”

Discuss this quote as a class. Have students identify ways they can organise their homework/study time more effectively. Then, have them describe how such organisation can free them to do other things.

Addressing Multiple Learning Modes

Have students brainstorm a list of materials needed for studying at home. Have them look through an office supply catalog for organisational ideas that can be made by using materials found at home.

Have students find or create containers for pencils, file folders, etc., that will keep their personal study areas organised. Have them decorate their containers.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students identify one area of their lives in need of organisation. Have them write a plan for organising this area in their journals.

Using Technology

Students create a class Google Slides where each student designs one slide about motivation and inspiration, encouraging them to persist with keeping on top of their study. Students can look through this when they need encouragement.

Homework

Have students make two checklists, one for home and one for school, of items that they routinely need to carry between school and home (e.g., textbooks, pens). Have them also make a list of two “study buddies” in each of their classes whom they can call for clarification on an assignment.

Plan rewards for students who come prepared every day for a week. Give these rewards at various intervals.

Additional Activity

Students create a class Google Docs for all students to share and access tips and inspiration about organisation.

ORGANISATION CHECKLIST

About Notebooks and Binders

Do I have...

- ☐ notebooks, folders, or a binder for my classes?
- ☐ a separate notebook or a separate section for each class?
- ☐ a place in front to write assignment notes and due dates?
- ☐ a place for homework?
- ☐ a paper in each notebook for notes and classwork?

Things I need to get organised:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

About Study Schedules

Be sure to...

- ☐ decide on a time to study each day.
- ☐ make a schedule for what you need to do.
- ☐ note specific assignments.
- ☐ follow through on your plans!

MY STUDY WEEK

SUBJECTS	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS



AGENDA

- Starter
- Do This, Do That
- Active Versus Passive
- Instructions for What?
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will examine the importance of understanding instructions.

Students will apply active listening and reading to following instructions.

Students will practice clarifying written and verbal instructions.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Test Yourself” activity sheet for each student (Part I)

Starter (3 minutes)

Ask students to imagine that they are taking a multiple-choice test. The test has a separate answer sheet for marking their answers.

Ask, “If the instructions for the test say that answers must be marked in pencil, what will happen if you use a pen or a marker?” (Students might respond: if a machine that reads only pencil marks is being used, an answer sheet filled in with pen or marker cannot be scored.) Point out that the result is the same as if the student had handed in a blank answer sheet.

Explain that it can be very disappointing not to do well on an assignment or a test, but it can be even more disappointing if the poor performance is the result of not following instructions.

Tell students that in this lesson they will examine ways to improve on following instructions.

Part I Do This, Do That (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students examine the importance of understanding instructions.

1. Students test their ability to follow instructions.

Distribute copies of the “Test Yourself” activity sheet. Explain that this activity sheet will allow students to check their ability to follow instructions. Allow students three minutes to complete the activity sheet.

2. Students evaluate their results.

When time is up, have students exchange their activity sheets with a partner for grading. Explain that students are to give one of two grades: a 10 if the instructions were followed correctly or a zero if they were not.

After a minute, ask students to raise their hands if they gave their partner’s activity sheet a 10. Call on one of these students, and ask them to hold up the activity sheet. Ask the class if they agree with this score.

Have students evaluate their work. Ask questions such as the following:

- Should there be any other writing on the paper besides the name? (No)
- Should a corner be torn? (No)
- Should there be two holes in the paper connected by a line? (No)
- What did you need to do in order to follow the instructions correctly? (Read through all of the directions before starting to follow them.)

Through questions and comments, help students conclude that the last instruction is to ignore directions three through nine; therefore, an activity sheet with a grade of 10 should only have the person's name written on it and a crease down the center from top to bottom.

3. Students draw conclusions about the importance of following instructions.

Ask students to think of other examples of when it's important to read through instructions first. Point out that simply reading or listening to all instructions first can save time and eliminate the need to do all or part of a task over again. Emphasise that it's important to understand instructions in order to follow them correctly.

Have students reevaluate the results they assigned and adjust them if necessary before returning the activity sheets to their partners.

Part II Active Versus Passive (5 minutes)

Purpose: Students apply active listening and reading to help them understand and follow instructions.

1. Students define the concepts of active and passive listening.

Ask students if they know the difference between active and passive listening or reading. Ask them to give examples of each.

Have students recall what they learned about active listening in lesson 2 of Module One: Communication. Through questions, comments, and prompts, help students understand the following:

- Active listening or reading is paying close attention, thinking about what we are hearing or reading, and making connections to what we are learning. We listen actively when we listen to and ask questions of our friends. We read actively when we are interested in what we are reading. We must listen and read actively when we need to know or understand something.
- Passive listening or reading is hearing or reading without paying attention, thinking, or making connections. When we listen to music, we often listen passively, especially when we are doing something else. When we read while watching television, we are reading passively.

2. Students apply the concepts of active listening to following instructions.

Discuss the need to be active readers and listeners when given a set of instructions. Invite students to support their opinions with reasons.

Explain that in order to understand instructions, students must read or listen actively. Sometimes, it may be necessary for them to read instructions more than once, it's always important for them to ask questions to clarify something they don't understand.

Part III Instructions for What? (25 minutes)

Purpose: Students practice using written and verbal instructions.

1. Students brainstorm activities with simple instructions.

Ask students to brainstorm a list of simple things that they know how to do or make. Explain that students will be writing instructions for these activities, so they should be activities that can be done easily.

Offer suggestions such as sewing on a button, making scrambled eggs, folding a paper airplane, playing a simple card game, tying a knot, fixing a slipped bicycle chain, riding a skateboard, or changing a lightbulb. Discuss the appropriateness of the activity in terms of ease (i.e., how easy or difficult it would be to instruct someone to perform the activity).

2. Students write instructions.

Tell students to choose an activity, reminding them that a simple activity will work best. Then, give students about five minutes to write down step-by-step instructions for doing the activity.

If students have chosen activities that are difficult, suggest easier ones. When most students have finished, tell them to think about whether they will give their instructions verbally or in writing.

3. Students exchange instructions.

Have students work with partners to give each other their instructions, without naming their activities. Remind students to listen or read actively and to ask for clarification if they need it. Set a time limit of about five minutes for this step, alerting students when it's time to change roles.

When time is up, ask for a show of hands from students who think they would be able to successfully complete the task they've learned. Invite students to name the activities they chose to teach to their partners. In order to prompt students to discuss their experiences, ask questions such as the following:

- How many of you chose to give instructions verbally? Why?
- How many of you listened to or read through all of the instructions before responding?
- Was it important to get clarification for some instructions? If so, how did you do this?
- Which was easier—to give instructions or to receive them? Why?

Conclusion *(2 minutes)*

Ask students why it is important to read or listen to instructions actively rather than passively. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- It is important to understand instructions in order to follow them correctly.
- Always read or listen to instructions actively, not passively.
- If necessary, read instructions more than once and ask questions to clarify verbal instructions.

Student Assessment

1. Describe the difference between passive listening/reading and active listening/reading.
2. Give an example of a time when you listened/read passively and a time when you listened/read actively.
3. List three advantages of listening/reading actively

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“You're off to great places, Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, So...get on your way!”

Discuss this quote.

Addressing Multiple Learning Modes

Have students make cookies, pizza, or other simple dishes of their choosing. They must read through the directions once and be able to list the steps, verbally or in writing, before beginning. (This activity requires supervision, and presents an opportunity to involve parents.)

Have students take a photo of their cooking. Discuss the process they needed to follow to make the food.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students recount a time when not following instructions had negative results.

Using Technology

Have students visit www.ehow.com, a site that contains user-submitted instructions for a wide variety of activities.

Have students choose and follow the instructions for an activity on the site.

Homework

Read the instructions for a magic trick. Practice and perform to a peer.

Additional Activity

Find three new recipes you wish to cook. Plan a shopping list.

TEST YOURSELF

1. Write your name in the top right corner of this paper.
2. Fold this paper in half the long way.
3. Unfold this paper.
4. Tear off the bottom left corner of this paper.
5. Write the word "up" to the right of this sentence.
6. Turn this paper upside down and write the word "down."
7. Draw a circle and divide it into four parts.
8. Poke two holes in the middle of this paper.
9. Draw a line to connect the holes.
10. Ignore directions 3 through 9 on this paper.

USING APPROPRIATE RESOURCES



AGENDA

- Starter
- People, Places, and Things
- The Internet
- One Who Knows
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify appropriate reference materials and resources.

Students will listen to a guest speaker in order to learn more about accessing information.

Materials Needed

- A device that can connect to the internet, a dictionary, and a textbook (Starter and Part I)
- A copy of an atlas and one or more volumes of an encyclopedia (Part I)
- A guest speaker who will spend 10 to 15 minutes telling students about sources of information and how to access them (If possible, have a school or public librarian talk about what resources are available to students at their library, how a library is organized, and how to use a card catalog or computer to find books.) (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Display a device that can connect to the internet, a dictionary, and a textbook on your desk. Then, ask questions such as the following:

- Which of these three resources would you use to find out what movies are playing at your favourite theater? Why? (Students should say the laptop.)
- How else might you find out this information? (Students should say by calling the theater.)
- How would you know what number to call? (Students should mention looking the number up in the phone book or on the internet.)

Point out that it's important to be able to go to the right sources to get information. Say, "Today we will be examining ways to get the information you need."

Part I People, Places, and Things (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify appropriate reference materials and resources.

1. Students recognize the importance of resources.

List the following topics on the board:

- What someone with nyctophobia suffers from
- Homework assignment for this class
- Northernmost country in South America

Tell students to imagine that they don't have internet access and must supply information about each of the topics on the board. Ask them if they can. Point out that students would need time to find out more about these topics in order to give answers. Explain that it would be unlikely that anyone knows all of these things offhand.

2. Students identify dictionaries and encyclopedias as resources.

Refer to the list on the board, and ask volunteers to tell which resource they would use to find out what a nyctophobe suffers from. (Students might respond: a dictionary or an encyclopedia.)

Through questions and comments, discuss these points with students:

In addition to spelling, identifying parts of speech, and definitions, a dictionary also gives information about places and people. All of the words in a dictionary are arranged in alphabetical order.

An encyclopedia is a collection of articles that give detailed facts and information about a variety of topics. The articles are arranged in alphabetical order within separate books, called volumes.

3. Students identify people as resources.

Refer to the list on the board. Ask students to tell how they would find out about the homework assignment for this class. (Students might respond: they wouldn't know; they would have to ask you, since the assignment hasn't been given.)

Emphasize that teachers, librarians, parents, classmates—anyone who has experience or knowledge to share—can be a resource. These are people who can answer students' questions and direct them to other resources.

4. Students identify atlases as resources.

Ask students what resource they would use to find out which is the northernmost country in South America. (Students should suggest using an atlas.) Through questions and comments, make sure that students can identify an atlas as a book with maps of states, countries, continents, and the world.

Invite students to look through the resources you've displayed and ask any questions they may have.

Part II The Internet (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students examine computers and the internet as resources.

1. Students share information about the internet.

If it has not already been mentioned, point out that the internet is another source of information. Ask students to explain how they have previously used the internet. Encourage students to describe experiences other than visiting social networking sites or playing games.

Tell students that many places have internet access, either for free or for a nominal charge. If they do not have internet access at home, they can log on at a public library or a school computer lab.

2. Students learn to distinguish reliable sources of information on the internet.

Ask students, "How many of you have used the internet for research or school projects before? Why did you go to the internet for information?" Through discussion, guide students to the realization that there is information available online for almost any subject. Have students describe how they find information online. (Students should respond: use a search engine, visit a reliable site of which they are already aware.)

Tell students that the internet isn't always reliable. There are no editors on the internet, no one to ensure that the information posted to a site or message board is correct. Ask, "How can we know that the information we find online is reliable?" Allow students to offer some suggestions, and then provide them with the following tips for distinguishing between reliable/unreliable sources on the internet.

You may wish to have students write these tips down:

- Know the site you are visiting. If you're looking for information about careers, for example, be sure to visit a site dedicated to careers.
- Pay attention to the end of the site's address (e.g., ".com," ".gov," ".edu," ".org"). Usually, sites ending in ".gov," ".edu," or ".org" are reliable. However, you should always check to see who wrote the information on the site and judge if this person or organization is reliable.
- Look at the site's "About Us" section, if it has one. If the site describes the organization behind it and you feel that the organization is trustworthy, then the information is likely reliable. If it isn't clear who published the information, then it's probably not reliable.
- Look for grammar and spelling mistakes on the site. If the site is very poorly written, then it likely isn't reliable.
- Decide whether the site is trying to sell you something. Many websites are used by companies to sell products. If it seems that the information on the site is trying to get you to buy something, don't use that site for research.
- Remember that some online encyclopedias, like Wikipedia, can be edited by anyone. If you use a site like Wikipedia for research, be sure to double-check the information.

Say to students, "Making sure that the sources you find online are reliable is very important." Explain that when students are performing research online, they should always back up their information with print sources, like books or news articles.

Part III One Who Knows (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students listen to a guest speaker in order to learn more about accessing information.

1. Prepare your guest speaker.

Prior to class, explain to your speaker the purpose of their visit and the time limit. Emphasize that your speaker should focus on what resources are available to students and who can help students utilize these resources, in addition to discussing how to use these resources. Have your guest decide whether to entertain questions during or after the presentation. Suggest that your guest give some personal background before getting into the body of the presentation.

2. Students listen and respond to the presentation.

Introduce your speaker to the class. Suggest that students take notes. If your speaker has elected to answer questions during the presentation, monitor the time in order to assist your guest in completing the presentation.

After the presentation, invite students to ask any questions they may have or to share their thoughts about what they have learned.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to name resources they can use to get information. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- It's important to go to the right sources to get the information you need.
- You can get information from reference books, people, and the internet.
- You can find reference books and use computers in libraries.

Student Assessment

1. List three situations in which you would need to look up information.
2. List five resources that can help you get information about people, places, or things. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of each resource.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.”

As a class, discuss the importance of maintaining focus on a topic while performing research. Have students brainstorm what might happen if they do not keep their topics in mind while researching.

Addressing Multiple Learning Modes

Divide students into teams. Have them locate the answers to 20 trivia questions of your own creation, citing where they found the answer to each question.

Have teams report on their successes. The team with the most correct answers wins. You might also honor teams for ingenious research ideas or collaborative strategies. Discuss the most used and the most effective sources.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students select and research a topic in which they are interested. Have them keep a log of their research (with dates, sources consulted, phone numbers, etc.), just as professional researchers do.

(Note that they should always be able to retrace their steps if they need more details.)

Have students discuss their efforts in small groups. Have them identify the strategies that were most efficient, yielded the best information, etc.

Using Technology

Have students query their favourite search engines (e.g., Bing, Yahoo, Google) about a topic. Then, have them sift through the results to filter the reliable sites from the unreliable ones.

Have students discuss which characteristics helped them filter their results.

Homework

Have students choose a resource to investigate (e.g., atlas, dictionary, encyclopedia, thesaurus, newspaper, magazine, the internet, other people).

Have students create “advertisements” showing the different advantages of the resources they’ve chosen.

Additional Resources

Have students speak to parents and community members about resources specific to their fields (e.g., TV crews rely on local production guides, maps, contact lists).

Have students create a class chart listing examples of career-specific resources.

TAKING NOTES



AGENDA

- Starter
- Easy as One, Two, Three
- Go!
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify important details in note taking and recognise their significance.

Students will learn strategies for taking effective notes.

Students will practice and evaluate note-taking skills.

Materials Needed

- 1 A4 paper for each student and a Writing Implement. (Part 1)

Starter (3 minutes)

Ask students to take out a sheet of paper and write today's day, date, and the name of this class in the top right corner. Ask the following questions:

- If you put this paper in your folder right now and looked it over next week, would it remind you about what happened in this class today? (*Students should say no.*)
- Would it remind you of any homework that was assigned? (*Students should say no.*)
- Would it help you recall important information we discussed? (*Again, students should say no.*)

Point out that if the paper contained notes, the answers would be different. Notes are an important way to remember and learn. Explain that learning how to take notes will become more and more important, as note taking is necessary in school and on the job. Explain to students that they will learn about taking notes that work for them.

Part I Easy as One, Two, Three (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students learn strategies for taking effective notes.

1. Students learn how to take notes that are easy to use.

Students fold down a portrait A4 piece of paper into 3 sections. Label Section 1, Section 2, Section 3. Explain that you are going to give students some tips on taking effective notes. Tell students to write these tips on the paper.

The teacher's notes that follow correspond to the outline on the activity sheet. Refer students to section 1. Explain that they are to write each of the following tips in Section 1. Tell them that these tips will help them take notes that will be easy to use:

- Write the subject, the day, and the date at the top of each page. (Explain that this keeps notes organized and in order.)
- Leave lots of space between sentences. (Explain that this will give students room to add to their notes or write questions.)
- Use abbreviations and symbols for words. (Explain that this will enable students to write faster. You might make a list of common symbols on the board. For example, "b/c" for "because," "=" for "equals" or "is," an arrow for "results in" or "produces.")
- Don't worry about writing complete sentences or spelling correctly, unless asked to do so or unless misspelling would lead to confusion.

2. Students learn how to take notes that are important.

Ask students to write in section 2 these tips, which will help them identify what's important when taking notes:

- Write down only the topic, main ideas, and important details—not every word that's said or read.
- Write down questions the teacher asks. Find the answers when you are studying later.
- Copy information that's displayed on the board.
- Star, circle, or underline anything that the teacher repeats or tells you is important to remember.

3. Students learn how to review notes.

Refer students to section 3. Explain that notes are important for review and study. Tell students that the following tips will help them know when to review their notes:

- Read over your notes at the end of the day when you are studying. Answer questions in your notes. Fix notes that don't make sense.
- Plan ahead and be prepared for your classes. Check your notes for homework and assignment due dates.
- Save your notes and review them before quizzes and tests.

Tell students to keep their activity sheets in their folders and read them occasionally to remind themselves of how to organise and use their notes. Doing this will help them become more successful students.

Part II Go! (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students will practice and evaluate note-taking skills.

1. Students exchange information with partners.

Ask students to find partners. Explain that each student will give verbal directions to their partner on how to get to a certain place from school. Tell students not to say the name of the place; they can only give directions.

Tell students that when they give directions, they should concentrate on how they get from school to their chosen places, and think through the routes step by step. Tell students that as they listen to their partners' directions, they are to take notes in order to pass on the directions later.

Give students about six minutes to exchange information. Halfway through the allotted time, tell students to change roles.

2. Students evaluate information.

When time is up, ask students to quickly review their notes to make sure they are complete. Then, have students retell the directions to their partners and, if they know it, the name of the destination. Students should use their notes when giving back directions to their partners.

Tell students to evaluate how well their partners took notes on the directions. Have them award a score of 10 if they are able to reach the destination successfully, five if they are in the neighbourhood, and zero if they become totally lost.

3. Students reflect on their abilities.

Ask those who received a score of 10 to share their notes. Invite a few students who received lower scores to describe how they got off track.

Explain that taking good notes takes practice. Point out that if students continue taking notes, they will get better at it.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to describe three characteristics of effective note taking. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Taking notes in your classes and when you read will help you become a more successful student.
- Take notes that are easy to use.
- Review your notes when you study each day and when you prepare for tests.

Student Assessment

1. Why is it important to take good notes?
2. List three things you can do to make sure your notes are on target.
3. Read a news or magazine article and take good notes on it.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Practice is the best of all instructors.”

Have students discuss how this applies to note taking.

Addressing Multiple Learning Modes

Obtain a large, detailed photo or painting of a city scene. Divide the class into three groups, and have each take notes on the scene. Group one should take notes as if they are police investigating a crime. Group two are filmmakers checking out a movie location. Group three are tourists.

Have the groups compare notes. Discuss the differences between the groups’ notes.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about one way in which they plan to improve their note taking.

Have students review their notes one week later to see if they’ve met their goals.

Using Technology

Find an age-appropriate video on www.youtube.com about a topic of interest to your students. Have students view the video and take notes on it.

Discuss as a class the different notetaking methods that students used during the video.

Homework

Have students look through old notes that they’ve written, and have them identify ways they could improve their note-taking skills.

Additional Activity

If students need additional reinforcement, teach relevant lessons from *Note Taking Made Easy!* by Deana Hippie.

Allow students to experiment with various note-taking methods. Have them discuss what works best for them and why.

WRITING REPORTS



AGENDA

- Starter
- Prepare
- Put It Together
- Report
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will recognize the importance of focusing on a topic and gathering information for writing a report.

Students will identify ways to paraphrase and organize information in a report.

Students will conduct interviews in preparation for writing reports.

Starter (3 minutes)

Write the following four sentences on the board:

- Put the second slice of bread on top of the one with peanut butter and jelly.
- Take the bread, peanut butter, and jelly out of the refrigerator.
- Pour a glass of water and enjoy.
- Spread the peanut butter and then the jelly on one slice of the bread.

Direct attention to the board. Challenge students to order the steps. Invite students to come to the board and number the sentences in the correct order.

Congratulate those who identify the proper sequence. Explain that organizing information or thoughts in a meaningful way is an important skill. In this lesson, students will learn how to organize information when writing reports.

Part I Prepare (10–15 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize the importance of focusing on a topic and gathering information when writing a report.

1. Students share their experiences with writing reports.

Explain that choosing a topic is the first step in writing a report. Point out that the more focused a topic is, the easier it will be to write about. For example, writing about bears in Alaska is easier than writing about animals in Alaska, and writing about a favourite movie is easier than writing about movies in general.

Ask students to name topics on which they've written reports. Ask them how they decided on the topic. (Students might respond: topics were assigned or were chosen because of interest.)

Suggest that students who have difficulty getting started on reports might wish to take notes during class today.

2. Students review how to research and take notes.

Tell students that the second step in writing a report is gathering information about the topic. Review what students have learned about using appropriate resources. Ask questions such as the following:

- If you were going to write a report about where chocolate comes from, how would you go about getting information? (Students might respond: go to the library. Get books or articles about chocolate. Look in an encyclopedia or on the internet. Ask a teacher, parent, or librarian to help you find information.)
- If you were going to write a report about how students in your class feel about school uniforms, how would you go about getting information? (Students should mention conducting a survey or interviewing students.)

Explain that the third step in writing a report is to take notes while gathering information. Point out that what students have learned about note taking should be applied to researching and gathering information. Remind students of the following:

- They should write down where they get their information.
- They should also check the spelling of names of people, places, or things carefully in order to spell them correctly in the report.

Part II Put It Together (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify ways to paraphrase and organize information in a report.

1. Students define “paraphrasing.”

Write the word “paraphrasing” on the board. Ask students to explain it. If necessary, explain that “paraphrasing” means “summarizing text or a quote in one’s own words.”

Explain that students can use facts, ideas, and information from their sources, but they should express them in their own words. Point out that in addition to citing sources, it is important not to copy someone else’s sentences and paragraphs when writing reports. This is called “plagiarism,” and it is a form of cheating. Tell students that plagiarism involves passing off another’s words or ideas as their own.

Answer any questions students have about paraphrasing. If necessary, read a sentence or short paragraph from a book and ask students to paraphrase, or retell in their own words, the most important ideas or information they heard.

2. Students identify ways to organize information.

Tell students that the fourth step in writing a report is organizing information. Explain that this is the step in which the writing begins.

Ask for suggestions on how students might organize their writing in a report. If necessary, remind students of how they ordered the sentences on the board at the beginning of class. Through questions and comments, prompt students to recall that their organization had a beginning, a middle, and an end. Explain that these three parts are called the “introduction,” the “body,” and the “conclusion” of the report. List the three parts on the board.

Have students discuss the three parts of a report. Prompt them by asking questions such as the following:

- Which part of the report do you think will be the largest? (The body will be the largest because it could have two or more paragraphs.)
- Why? (This is where most of the information will be.)
- What will happen in the first part? (The topic will be introduced.)
- What will happen in the last part? (A final paragraph will restate or summarize the main points.)

3. Students identify how to finish reports.

Explain that the fifth step in writing a report is making or organizing any visuals, such as maps, charts, or pictures. Point out that some reports may not need visuals, but others may be more effective with them.

Tell students that they may need to compile a list of all the sources of information used in the report. Ask if anyone knows what such a list is called. (Students should respond: a bibliography.) Suggest that each teacher may have special instructions for how the sources are to be listed in the bibliography.

Remind students to double-check their assignment before handing in a report. Sometimes, visuals and bibliographies are part of the assignment, but are forgotten.

Part III Report (15–20 minutes)

Purpose: Students conduct interviews in preparation for writing reports.

1. Students prepare questions for their interviews.

Tell students that they will conduct interviews in preparation for writing a short report. The report will be about a classmate’s favourite book, movie, or TV show. Give the following directions:

- To begin, choose a topic and write it at the top of a sheet of paper.
- List five questions you will ask. Be sure to include the following questions: Who? What? Why? Remember to leave plenty of room between questions so that you can take notes during the interview.
- Do not ask questions that will get you only a yes or no answer.

Give students a few minutes to write their questions. Check to make sure all students are finished before having them begin the interviews.

2. Students interview one another.

Divide students into pairs. Allow each student five minutes to interview their partner (using the questions they wrote) and take notes on the answers.

Give students a one-minute warning before they must change roles. When five minutes have passed, tell them to switch roles.

3. Students review their notes.

When the interviews are finished, have students review their notes for clarity. Ask if students have written the name of the person they interviewed and noted the interview topic. Give students a few minutes to clarify information.

Explain that students will use the information they have gathered from their interviews to write reports that will be due for the next class.

Conclusion *(2 minutes)*

Ask students to review the steps of writing a report. Ask them to review how to organize their writing, and to explain what paraphrasing is. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- When preparing to write a report, choose a topic and use appropriate resources to gather information about it.
- Organize your report into three parts: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.
- Always paraphrase information in order to write the report in your own words.

Student Assessment

1. How do you choose a topic for a report?
2. List the steps in writing a report.
3. Explain the process of organizing information for a report.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Diamonds are nothing more than chunks of coal that stuck to their jobs.”

Have students describe the report-writing steps that take ideas from the “coal” to the “diamond” stage.

Addressing Multiple Learning Modes

Have students use web graphic organizers to generate specific topic ideas. They may use topics from science or social studies class or from subjects they know well, such as their favourite types of music or a typical day in their lives.

Share sample webs on the board to demonstrate different ways of organizing the same material.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about their usual approaches to report writing, and then describe one new technique that will help them on their next report.

Have students discuss their journal entries in small groups.

Using Technology

Have students view news programs and note the structure of the host wraparounds and segments (i.e., tell them what you’re going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you’ve told them).

Have students write a paragraph summarizing/paraphrasing the introduction, body, and conclusion of one show segment. Have them share their reports with the class.

Homework

Have students use their notes from the peer interviews in Part III of this lesson to write reports about their partners.

Have students share their reports in small groups.

Additional Resources

Have students select a topic from *99 Jumpstarts for Kids: Getting Started in Research* by Peggy J. Whitley and Susan W. Goodwin. Have them read the directions for their selected topics, perform research, and write brief reports.

Have students present their reports to the class.

TAKING TESTS



AGENDA

- Starter
- Get Ready
- Study!
- During the Test
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will review organisational skills.

Students will identify ways to study and prepare for tests.

Students will apply organisational skills to test taking.

Students will identify test-taking strategies.

Starter (3 minutes)

Prompt students to think about the importance of preparation. Ask, “If you were going to run a marathon, what things might you do to get ready for it?” Have students focus on such things as running every day to get in shape, eating well, and getting plenty of sleep the night before the marathon.

Point out that preparation is often the key to success. This is true for taking tests, as well. Explain to students that in this lesson they will learn strategies that will make taking tests less intimidating.

Part I Get Ready (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students review organisational skills.

1. Students recall how to plan ahead.

Ask students if they would prefer taking a surprise quiz or knowing about the quiz in advance. Have them explain their answers.

Discuss with students how to plan ahead, and the advantages of doing so. Ask questions such as the following:

- If one of your teachers told you that you would have a quiz or a test next week, what would you do with this information? (Students might respond: make a note of it in the notebook for that class, schedule time to study, read the material.)
- Would you do all of this the night before the test? Why or why not? (Students might respond: doing this the night before is stressful; there wouldn't be enough time to get it all done.)

Emphasise that students should never wait until the last minute to study. Tell them that they should begin organising and reviewing material several days before a test. Explain that doing this will give them time to finish assignments, read material, review notes, and get any information or help that they may need.

2. Students recall the importance of reviewing notes.

Prompt students to recall what they have learned about taking notes. Ask questions such as the following:

- Why is it important to review notes? (Students should mention that reviewing notes will allow them time to fill in missing information while they still remember it or to ask questions about things they don't understand.)
- What could you do if you are missing notes or information you need? (Students might respond: borrow notes from a classmate, get missing information from the teacher or a classmate.)

Tell students that when reviewing notes for a test, they should underline important terms, facts, or points that they need to remember. When reading material from a textbook, they should take notes on important information. Explain that doing this will help them learn the material and organise it for a final review.

Part II Study! (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify ways to study and prepare for tests.

1. Students identify ways to prepare for tests.

Explain that before leaving school the day prior to test day, students should make sure they have everything they need for studying. Write this checklist of questions on the board:

- Do I know what material will be covered on the test?
- Do I have the notes I need?
- Do I have the books I need?
- Do I have all the equipment I need?

2. Students identify strategies for studying.

List the following study steps on the board and discuss them:

- Review notes and homework from classes and books.
- Make a master list of important information on a sheet of paper or on index cards. Include terms and definitions, names of people and places, and descriptions of events. Include information that your teacher has pointed out as important to remember, or has indicated will be on the test.
- Use your master list to quiz yourself.
- If you need extra practice, have someone else quiz you.

Elicit and write other strategies that students have successfully used. Remind students to devise systems that work best for them. Suggest that those who have difficulty remembering numbers may have a master list full of dates and figures, but someone else's list may be full of terms and definitions. Assure students that they know their strengths and skills best.

3. Students learn strategies for memorisation.

Point out that it is often necessary to memorise something in order to do well on a test. Ask students to give examples of items that may need to be memorised. (Students might respond: events and dates, spelling, meanings of words, formulas or procedures.)

Explain that people can often memorise something just by reviewing it. Other times, people need to use tricks to help them remember. Ask if anyone can share strategies for memorisation. To prompt suggestions, offer strategies such as the following:

- A slogan can help you remember how to spell words: “‘i’ before ‘e’ except after ‘c.’”
- Mnemonics can help you remember sequences, such as the order of the planets (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune): “my very energetic mother just served us nachos.”

4. Students review the relationship between health and performance.

Recall that when students discussed the preparations for running a marathon at the beginning of class, they discussed food and sleep. Ask how these factors could affect someone’s performance on a test.

Affirm responses that point out that getting enough sleep the night before a test and eating well the day of the test are important. Emphasise that students who have slept and eaten well will perform their best.

Part III During the Test (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students apply organisational skills to test taking and identify strategies to use when taking tests.

1. Students apply their skills to test taking.

Begin a list of test-taking strategies on the board:

- Follow instructions.
- Plan ahead.

Remind students that they have already covered these topics. Ask students to explain how they could apply these skills to taking tests. (Students might respond: reading or listening to instructions carefully, understanding them, and following them; planning how to use the time allotted during the test.)

2. Students identify strategies for taking tests.

Ask students to share strategies they know for planning ahead and completing tests on time. Offer the following tips:

- Quickly look over the test to see what kinds of questions are asked. Explain that this will enable students to identify parts of a test that may take more time.
- Check the clock and your progress every so often.
- If you finish before time is up, use the remaining time to check your answers.

Continue the list of test-taking strategies on the board:

- Read through the test and answer the easy questions first. (Point out that an easy question is one that students know the answer to.)
- Answer the questions you are not sure of next. (Point out that if students have a choice of answers, they should eliminate the ones they know to be wrong, and then select the best answer.)
- Answer the most difficult questions last. (Point out that if students spend most of their time thinking about one or two questions, they may not have time to answer questions they know.)

Tell students that taking tests will not seem nearly as difficult if they have a plan of action. Point out that the most difficult tests they will ever take are the ones they are not prepared for.

3. Students reflect on learning from their mistakes.

Point out that if a student does not do well on a test, they can do something about it. Ask students to describe what they can do in this situation. (Students might respond: they can review what went wrong, learn from their mistakes, and make changes before the next test.) Suggest that students could ask themselves questions such as the following:

- Was I tired? If so, I will get more sleep next time.
- Did I study? If I didn't, I will study next time.
- Did I have all of the information I needed?
- Do I need to go over the test with the teacher to find out what happened?

Conclusion *(2 minutes)*

Ask students to explain why preparing for tests is important. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- To prepare for a test, plan ahead and review your notes and homework.
- To study for a test, make a master list of important information from your notes and test yourself.
- During a test, follow instructions, plan ahead, and answer the easiest questions first.

Student Assessment

1. List three strategies for studying for a test.
2. List three mnemonic devices that work for you.
3. List three things you can do to help you while you are taking a test.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Worry is like a rocking chair: it gives you something to do but it doesn’t get you anywhere.”

Have students brainstorm alternatives to worrying that will help them pass tests.

Addressing Multiple Learning Modes

Have students use the information they learned in this lesson to tutor other students on test-taking strategies.

Have students design an evaluation form for feedback from their pupils on the strategies they found helpful.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students make a plan for improving their test performances in one subject. Have students evaluate their efforts to figure out whether their plans were helpful.

Using Technology

Have students visit [https:// www.thoughtco.com/how-to-studyfor-a-test-quiz-or-exam-3212082](https://www.thoughtco.com/how-to-studyfor-a-test-quiz-or-exam-3212082) for tips on avoiding test anxiety.

Have students work in small groups to make posters of tips that could work for them.

Homework

Students create a master list and study cards for an upcoming exam.

Additional Activity

Have students brainstorm reasons why they might get stressed. Have them make web graphic organisers to show different ways to alleviate or handle stress.

LEARNING HOW YOU LEARN BEST



AGENDA

- Starter
- My Place
- Try This!
- Think About It
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will discover that they learn in different ways.

Students will compare and contrast their organisational strategies to those of other students.

Students will identify studying and test-taking strategies that could work for them.

Materials Needed

- Sheets of paper, one for each student (Part I)

Starter (3 minutes)

Ask for a student to demonstrate how to fold a paper airplane. Ask if someone else can demonstrate the same task in another way.

Point out that it's not necessary for people to do things exactly the same way to accomplish the same task. Say, "What's important is that you use a way that works for you in order to complete a task successfully. Today, we're going to find ways for you to discover how you learn best."

Part I My Place (15–20 minutes)

Purpose: Students discover that they learn in different ways.

1. Students imagine a special place.

Have students think of a place they enjoy where they can relax, be comfortable, and think. Explain that this might be a place they have been before, a place they would like to visit, or a place they imagine. Ask, "Where is this place? What does it look like?"

Place a stack of paper on your desk as you tell students to form a clear picture of their special places in their minds.

2. Students create representations of their special places.

Ask students to draw or write something that represents or describes their special places. Prompt their imaginations by suggesting that they might do one of the following:

- Draw a picture or a diagram of it.
- Draw something they particularly like about the place or how it feels to be there.
- Draw a map to show where it is.
- Write a poem or a paragraph that describes the place itself or how it feels to be there.
- Write a short story about something that happens there.
- Compose a song about it.

Tell students to help themselves to the paper on your desk. Then, give them time to work.

3. Students share their work.

Ask students to discuss what they created. Invite students to display their creations on a wall or bulletin board. Tell students to look at them during or after class today.

Point out the different styles of expression that students used to complete this task. Explain that just as we all express ourselves in different ways, we all learn in different ways, too. We learn by ourselves and we learn when working with others. We learn by reading and we also learn by listening, watching, and doing. We learn by taking notes; we also learn by making graphs, charts, and maps. Tell students that the important thing is to find ways of learning that work for them.

Part II Try This! (10–15 minutes)

Purpose: Students compare and contrast their organisational strategies with other students in order to learn from each other.

1. Students compare notebooks and binders.

Divide the class into small groups of four or five students. Ask students to take out any class notebooks or binders they have with them and share with one another how the material for their classes is organised.

Tell students to focus on how others organise such materials as assignments, notes, and homework. Tell them to also observe how others plan ahead and schedule their study time. Explain that in order to discover methods that might also work for them, students should listen carefully and ask each other questions.

If students seem reluctant to begin, appoint one student from each group to explain how their materials are organised and tell others to follow in sequence.

2. Students compare strategies.

Ask students questions such as the following in order to guide a discussion about their different organisational strategies:

- Were there similarities in how notebooks are organised among the members of your group? If so, describe them.
- Were there differences? If so, describe them.
- Did you discover a better way to organise your own notebook?

Ask students to describe new strategies they identified. Encourage them to implement these ideas. If necessary, point out that some strategies might work better for some classes than others. Ask students to explain why they think this might be true.

Remind students that their work is their responsibility. Point out that if they take the time to find and use strategies that work for them, they will become more successful students.

Part III Think About It (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify studying and test-taking strategies that could work best for them.

1. Students focus on homework skills.

Have students take out a piece of writing paper. Demonstrate how to fold the paper into three sections, from top to bottom. In the top section, have them write the phrase “About Homework.”

Have students list in this section at least three things that they do now or that they think help them the most to get their homework done. Explain that they are to list only those things that they actually do and that work for them.

Give students a few minutes to work. Then, ask them to think about some things that they do not currently do, but that they think might help them complete their homework more effectively. Remind students that when you asked them to think about a special place, they chose a method of expressing what they were thinking about. Tell them that the methods they chose show which learning option they might prefer. When possible, they should use the methods they chose and a learning option to complete their homework. Tell them to add these methods to their lists and draw a box around them.

2. Students focus on studying for and taking tests.

Direct students’ attention to the middle section of their papers and have them write “About Studying for a Test.” In the bottom section, have them write “About Taking Tests.”

Follow the same procedure as described in the step above, addressing each section and topic separately. Be sure to have students list things they currently do, then list other things they might do in order to complete these tasks more successfully. Circulate as students work, reminding them to draw boxes around strategies they think would help them do better.

3. Students reflect on the activity.

Ask students to share what they have listed in each of the boxes. Encourage them to write down homework and study strategies that might be effective for them. Explain that practicing various study methods with notes before a test will help them prepare for it. Suggest that students add strategies to their lists when they get ideas from other students.

Listen carefully to the suggestions the students are offering, and then jot down ideas or practices such as the following to cover important skills that students may have overlooked:

- Planning ahead and not leaving large assignments or studying for tests until the last minute
- Following instructions for assignments and tests carefully
- Gathering necessary information and materials
- Using appropriate resources when needed
- Taking meaningful notes
- Reviewing notes and homework when studying for a test

Conclusion *(2 minutes)*

Ask students to describe the learning strategies that work best for them. Ask them to explain how knowing a variety of methods for studying can be useful. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- We all learn in different ways.
- Try different strategies in order to find the ones that work for you.
- Using these strategies will help you become a more successful student.

Student Assessment

1. List three things that you do not currently do that will help you to do your homework.
2. List three things that you do not currently do that will help you with studying and taking tests.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“The more that you READ, the more things you will KNOW. The more that you LEARN, the more places you'll GO!”

Create a poster of this quote and deliver to other classmates.

Addressing Multiple Learning Modes

At the conclusion of a topic, students form pairs, develop and create a study game.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about the best class they ever attended. Have them describe what the lesson was about and how it was taught. They can discuss if the lesson included a preferred learning option.

Using Technology

Have students use computers to prepare study guides for an upcoming test.

Have students share their work in small groups, discussing where their ideas came from (e.g., highlighted in notes, teacher said it was important, chapter heading) and which items seemed important enough to be included in the guides of several people.

Homework

Have students bring evidence that they have been actively studying to class on the day of a test (e.g., a study guide, a mnemonic device, flash cards, a web organiser).

Additional Activity

Students compile a playlist of their favourite study songs.