



The Agenda/Planner

Objectives:

- To support time-management skills
- To build self-advocacy
- To increase a student's responsibility
- To increase involvement in school activities
- To increase home/school communication
- To increase a student's organizational ability

Expectations:

- Agendas/planners are filled out at the end of each class/subject and at the end of the day.
- "No homework" is written if no homework is given.
- Color-coding and other visual reminders are encouraged to manage various academic responsibilities, e.g., homework, quizzes, tests, projects, extracurricular activities, community service, and work.
- Self-monitoring is evidenced by a student's check or signature placed after completing each academic task.
- Daily family signatures, teacher signatures, or behavioral comments are all optional components and are especially valuable strategies to support students who are struggling with organizational skills.
- Students move toward greater independence and management of organizational agendas/planners.
- Students track ongoing projects and break them into manageable tasks.

What to include:

- Backwards mapping of upcoming projects (See "Backwards Mapping Template.")
- "To do" lists, both in and outside of school
- Personal reminders for items outside of school
- Extracurricular activities or schedules (sports, student council, community service, etc.)
- Recording of weekly goals and self-monitoring progress
- Schoolwide events (dances, pep rallies, college fairs, etc.)
- Birthdays, anniversaries, and school holidays

10 Ways for Teachers to Support Planner Usage

① Explicitly tell students, “Write this in your planner,” and wait for all students to do it.

Rather than saying, “Your homework tonight is...” say, “Get out your planner and write your homework...” It’s helpful to write this into your lesson plans as a way to help you remember to explicitly say this.

② Build routines wherein students use their planner.

Start each week by having students write in the schedule for your class for the week. Or start each class period by having students write the objective or essential question of the lesson in their planner.

③ Model planner usage by having a weekly planner on the wall.

Students will benefit greatly by being able to see exactly what you expect them to write down in their planner for your class, especially at first while you are helping them build the habit. Often companies that sell school planners have laminated wall calendars available for teachers.

④ “Backwards map” major assignments together as a class.

Anytime your students have a major project or major test coming up, have them write down the due date in their planner. Then help them through the process of brainstorming the components of the project, the time they need to complete these components, and their goal of when they should have each component done.

⑤ Use the planner as a hall pass for trips to the restroom, nurses, office, etc.

This is a great schoolwide initiative to get all students to use their planner. Students are not allowed to leave the classroom without their planner. This also provides teachers an easy way to track how many times students are leaving their class and other classes.

⑥ Have periodic “planner checks” and give students a grade for their planner usage.

Many teachers use planners for quickwrites and bell-ringer activities. This can then be collected for a grade in your class. Another variation on this is having students do their “exit tickets” for your class in their planner and showing it to you on the way out.

7 Support struggling students by having their parents or another adult view the planner.

Having parents or another adult sign the student's planner is a great way to create home accountability for assignments. The planner can be a great tool for communicating with parents to make sure that they are aware of assignments and upcoming deadlines.

8 Start the year with a planner “scavenger hunt.”

If your school has a standard schoolwide planner, there are probably many resources included in it that students never know about, such as motivational quotes, the Periodic Table, maps, and lists of U.S. presidents. Take a few minutes with your class to show them all the things that are available to them in their planner. This activity can also be revisited periodically throughout the year.

9 Design a planner that works for your school's unique needs.

Many AVID site teams have designed a planner that comes already filled in with school holidays, football games, and other major school events. It can also be designed to correspond to the schedule of your school. This also allows schools to create planners with holes that fit in binders, or any other shape or size that is desired.

10 Find fun ways to incorporate the planner into your class.

Have the class write down everyone's birthday in their planners. Add obscure holidays such as “National Share a Smile Day” (March 1). Count down the days until the end of school.