



# Using Your Planner Effectively

## Did you know?

A planner can help a student stay on track, on task, and on time. Ultimately, being organized can help a student earn better grades! Have you ever been so busy that an assignments due date just sneaked up on you without you even noticing? It is not easy to remember all of the “to-do” items, due dates, and notable events in your life. Being a student is an important job!

A planner is your solution for academic success. This handy tool can help you manage your study time, highlight what you need to accomplish, and the time you have to do it in. It can help you finish important tasks that need to be completed to achieve your short-term goals for each day or week, as well as your longer-term goals for the month or grading period.

## Always remember....

The best way to prepare to ensure your school success and future choices is to:

- Take challenging courses
- Do your homework
- Prepare for quizzes and tests
- Ask and answer many questions

## Select the planner that is the right one for you!

There are many types of planners available – from cell phone and tablet apps, to online templates, to hard-copy versions. You may even wish to create your own planner with a three-ring binder. Planners that have a week-at-a-glance format are a great choice because you can see an extended view of your responsibilities for the week. They provide places to enter information about academic, extra-curricular, and outside commitments.



## Establish a chart of your current activities!

To get started, try recording notes of what you do on a daily basis for one week. This can help you evaluate how you spend your time on a daily basis. Be sure to record things you do at home and socially, including when you eat, sleep, and relax as well as the activities you do for fun. This will help you begin to use your planner and to efficiently plan time to devote to studying.



# Using Your Planner Effectively

## Get ready, get set, record!

- Use your daily activities chart and block out time for regular activities and add your school class schedule.
- Use your school year calendar and record days school is closed, mid-grading-period dates, grading-period ending dates, and holidays (if this is not already provided).
- Add important dates such as registration deadlines (e.g., ACT or SAT), school functions, extracurricular events, and special family events.
- Ask your teachers for major project due dates and important test dates. Take notes on what they say, then transfer those dates to your planner in a timely manner.

## Accessibility is key!

A planner that is easy to access will be used, e.g., put the planner in an outside backpack pocket. Also, you can use a large paper clip or binder clip to help find the current page quickly. Remember to keep the planner with you at all times.

## Use your planner at regular times!

Make it part of your daily routine. Using your planner on a regular basis will help you stay organized. Choose a time to update your planner that works best for you – at the beginning or end of each class, at the end of the school day, in the evening, or at the beginning of each week. Identify the best time and stick to your plan.



## Stay organized – monitor pending assignments and upcoming test dates!

- Use a highlighter to identify assignments and record the steps needed to achieve your goals to complete the assignment, project, or research paper on time. Choose different colors and create your own system.
- Use colored stickers as reminders to spotlight upcoming quiz and test dates. For example, give yourself a week's notice that an important date or event is approaching.
- Draw symbols and get creative.
- Cross out assignments when completed.



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## Utilize effective time management!

To accomplish a goal – remember to consider the following:

- Due date or deadline
- Steps required (identifying small and large steps)
- Length of time required for each step
- Record each step in your planner

Please refer to Helpful Tools for Success:  
[Managing Your Time \(PDF\)](#).



## Be happy when you have completed your daily goals!

Staying focused will help you achieve your goals. Your hard work will pay off in the end and provide you with a well-deserved sense of accomplishment.

## Always be prepared – record, record, record!

Busy schedules may cause you to forget important details and due dates. Be assured, you will not miss any important assignment due dates when using a planner. You hold the key to your own learning outcomes and success.

