

Executive Functioning Task Cards



Why is being on
time to classes
important?

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You have a lot of
homework and you
have practice at
6pm. What can you
do?

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For remembering
your homework?

How long will it
take you to
complete your
homework tonight?

You see someone
crying. What
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things t
could b

Y
forgo

Why

Table of Contents

Resource	Color	Black & White
Product Directions	3-4	56-57
Planning Task Cards	5-9	58-62
Time Management Task Cards	10-14	63-67
Working Memory Task Cards	15-19	68-72
Self Control Task Cards	20-24	73-77
Flexibility Task Cards	25-29	78-82
Organization Task Cards	30-34	83-87
Task Initiation Task Cards	35-39	88-92
Metacognition Task Cards	40-44	93-97
Attention Task Cards	45-49	98-102
Perseverance Task Cards	50-54	103-107

Product Directions

The task cards in this document focus on all areas of executive functioning skills: planning, time management, working memory, self control, flexibility, organization, task initiation, metacognition, attention, and perseverance.

The task cards are aimed to help students at higher elementary, middle, and high school who need help with their executive functioning skills. Many times, these students are very bright but perform poorly in school because they are lacking these skills.

The cards can be helpful for a range of professionals, including regular education teachers, guidance counselors, special education teachers, 504 coordinators, tutors, school psychologists, and mentors.

How To Use

The task cards in this set can be used as part of a whole class curriculum or small group / individual instruction, based on your students' needs. Several ideas are listed below:

- ✓ Set up class centers for each executive functioning skill. Allow small groups to walk around and work at the center until time is up. Then, they can move on to the next executive functioning center.
- ✓ Use a card each morning as part of a guided class or small group discussion. This can also be part of a morning meeting.
- ✓ Group students up to discuss the task cards. Each group can focus on one particular executive functioning skill. Have the group then share out what they learned about the skill.
- ✓ Allow students to pick a card and random and discuss in a small group. Let the students run the group discussion.
- ✓ Have students independently read a card and respond in their journal before talking with a partner or group about it.

Planning



- Develop steps to reach a goal
- Prioritizing what to do first
- Considering what materials you need to complete a task
- Tackling long-term tasks
- Focusing on important tasks first
- Sequencing activities
- Setting goals
- Anticipating what will happen next or in the future

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Time Management

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- Being on time
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- Estimate how much time something will take
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Working Memory



- Holding information in your mind
- Completing tasks with multi-steps
- Remembering directions and information
- Taking notes
- Understanding verbal directions
- Recalling important information during a task
- Completing math with many steps

Have a partner tell you directions to do something. As they give directions, try to picture it in your mind (visualize).

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Memorize this phone number:
419-8465
What strategy did you use?

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What strategies can you use to help study terms or vocabulary for a test?

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A teacher in class gives a direction. What can you do to help remember it?

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How can taking notes in class help you later on?

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Have a friend tell you five facts about them. Then, repeat them back to your friend.

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In your head do...
 $3 \times 7 + 10 - 2$

What is the answer?

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In your head do...
 $20 \times 30 + 5 - 4$

What is the answer?

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Have a friend give you verbal directions to a place close by in town. What strategy can you use to remember the directions?

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Memorize this sequence:

3, 2, 7, 8, 1

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Memorize this sequence:

lion, cat, tiger, dog,
kangaroo

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Memorize this sequence:

green, yellow, red,
pink, blue, orange

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When and why might you ask a teacher to repeat information? How could it help you?

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What are some strategies for remembering your homework?

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What are ways you can study for a test or a quiz?

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Describe some routines that help you accomplish tasks (chores, getting to class on time, homework, etc.).

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Self Control



- Thinking before acting
- Waiting your turn to speak
- Keeping your cool when feeling upset
- Taking your time when working or completing tasks
- Controlling your emotions
- Making more positive choices

You know you are angry and want to confront a friend. What should you do?

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You are raising your hand in class to share but the teacher isn't calling on you. What should you do?

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What are some ways you can take a break when you are feeling angry or upset?

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How can you recognize when you're feeling angry?

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Why might walking away when you are angry be a good option?

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How might other students feel if someone is always shouting out in class?

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What do you do when...

A friend breaks something of yours?

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What do you do when...

Your parents don't let you go out to your friend's house?

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Think of a time you demonstrated strong self control. What did you do? How did it help you?

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What are some possible triggers that cause you to lose your cool?

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Picture a stop sign. How might this help you when you're feeling upset?

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Think of a time that you acted on impulse and got in trouble. What could you have done better?

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You see some other students writing on the bathroom wall. What should you do? What could the consequences be?

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Someone calls you a name that you don't like. What should you do? What could the consequences be?

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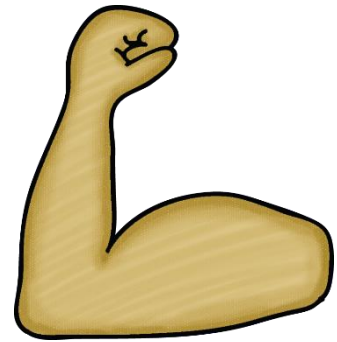
What are some strategies to try to reduce calling out in class?

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What activities could you do to help you calm down when you're mad?

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Flexibility



- Adjusting to changes in plans or new situations
- Coming up with new approaches
- Being able to “think outside the box”
- Being able to improvise and go with the flow
- Switching between activities and tasks

You have math homework but forgot your book at school. What can you do?

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You have a big project due today but forgot it at home. What can you do?

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You see someone crying. What are three different things that person could be thinking?

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You see someone with their head down. What are three different things that person could be thinking?

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You were supposed to go a friend's party but your mom said a family dinner came up. How do you react?

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You are supposed to meet a friend at the mall but your parents can't give you a ride. How do you react?

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You were planning on getting a phone for your birthday but your parents now tell you that won't happen because of grades. How do you react?

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Your teacher gives you a detention for talking, even though it wasn't you. How do you react?

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A boy did his math project but did not turn it in. What are at least 3 possible reasons why?

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Megan loved her math teacher but didn't talk to her all day. What are at least 3 possible reasons why?

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Tommy was hungry but didn't eat lunch. What are at least 3 possible reasons why?

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Casey went to the mall to buy a pair of shoes but didn't come home with any. What are at least 3 possible reasons why?

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What are strategies for staying calm when things don't go as planned?

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Describe a time you were upset when things didn't go as planned. What could you have done differently?

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A friend comes over your house but they don't want to do what you want. What could you do?

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A friend wants you to try a new hobby but you don't want to. What are possible consequences for this?

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Organization

- Keeping track of assignments and dates
- Keeping materials orderly
- Developing a system that helps keep track of materials
- Having all the necessary information for a task ready
- Using a calendar to keep track of dates and important events



How could using a calendar or planner help you stay organized?

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What is your binder organization system? Name 3 ways you could improve.

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How can keeping an organized notebook help you improve your grades?

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How could a homework folder or binder help you stay organized?

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Choose any class. If you had a test in that class, what 3 pages in your notebook would you study from?

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Describe 3 routines that would help someone be organized in school.

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Describe 3 routines that would help someone be organized at home.

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How could a dedicated homework spot help you stay organized at home?

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Jen's notebooks are disorganized. She says she doesn't have enough time to put pages in the right spots in class. What can she do?

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Brett completes homework but always has a difficult time finding it to turn it in. What can he do?

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Lori wants to get good grades but does poorly on homework. When she gets home, she doesn't remember what the homework was. What can she do?

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Greg starts his long-term projects but often doesn't finish them. What can he do to improve?

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Sometimes Maria gets home to start her homework but doesn't always have the right books or binders. What can she do?

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Describe the steps it would take to organize your binders.

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How would a weekly notebook de-clutter time help you to stay organized? How could you make it happen?

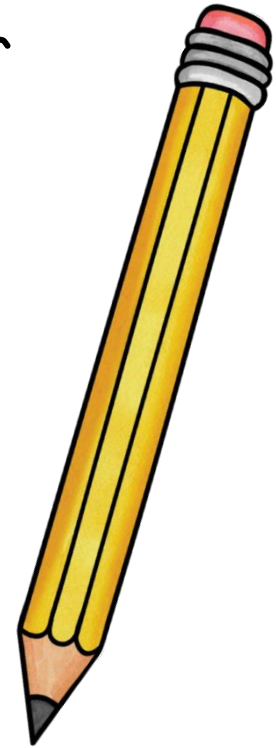
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How could staying organized help you reduce stress?

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Task Initiation

- Starting on a task in a timely manner
- Beginning a task, even when you don't feel like doing it
- Developing routines to help with initiating tasks
- Putting an end to procrastination
- Using strategies to help yourself feel motivated to start tasks



In a working period, within how many minutes should you start to work on an assignment?

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How can making a list help you get started and accomplish your work?

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Describe your homework routine at home. How could you improve it to help you accomplish your work?

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What are some ways you can “reward” yourself after you finish an assignment or task?

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Lisa tries to begin her math homework but isn't sure what she is supposed to do. What can she do?

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Max wants to start his science project but knows he won't be able to finish it. What can he do?

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How could having a specific "homework time" at home help you get started on work?

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Nick sits in study hall not doing anything even though he has homework. Why might he not be working? What could help him?

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How could a checklist help someone complete work?

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Cameron has a science test tomorrow but he says he will study in the morning. What are the possible consequences for this?

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What does it mean to procrastinate? What negatives or positives come out of procrastination?

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You are taking a test and you don't know the first question. What do you do?

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Maggie gets home from soccer practice at 6:30pm. She goes to start her homework but knows she can't finish it all so she stops. What can she do?

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If you are starting work in school, should you start the harder or easier assignments first? Why do you think that?

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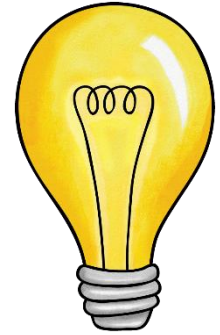
Molly uses a timer to work for 30 minutes and then take a break. How might this help her?

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Tim does his homework while watching television but doesn't get a lot done. Why might that be? What could help him?

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Metacognition



- Evaluating your performance as you go
- Checking your work before turning it in
- Evaluating your performance after you complete a task
- Being self-aware of your own behavior and performance
- Being self-aware of your own feelings
- Identifying what you need to be successful
- Understanding how your behavior and actions impact others

After you finish a test or quiz, what are some strategies to help you check it over and make sure answers are correct?

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Think of the last project you did and rate your performance from 1-10. Why did you rate yourself that way?

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Choose a recent homework assignment and rate your performance from 1-10. Why? How could you have improved?

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Prior to turning in an assignment, what are some simple ways you can check your work to make sure it is good quality?

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How do you learn best – seeing, hearing, or doing?
How do you know?

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How can you tell what you need to study before a test or a quiz?

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How can just sitting quietly help you re-organize your thoughts and think more clearly?

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How are you doing in school right now?
What are 3 ways you could make improvements?

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How can you tell when you've studied enough for a test or quiz?

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When working on a report or project, how do you know it's finally done?

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Think of a project that didn't get a grade you wanted. How could you have improved the project?

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How can asking the teacher for a sample or model work help you do better on an assignment?

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What is your most challenging subject or class? Why?

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You don't feel like doing a homework assignment. How could that impact you?

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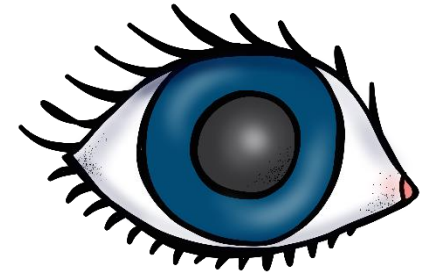
What grades do you try to strive for in classes? What actions do you take to get those grades?

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You forgot to do your part for a group project. How could that impact you? How could it impact the group members?

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Attention



- Staying focused on a task
- Identifying triggers that cause distraction
- Ignoring or eliminating distractions
- Shifting attention from one task to another
- Knowing when you are side tracked or not focused

What are some triggers that cause you to become distracted? How can you eliminate them?

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How can you tell when you've stopped really focusing on something?

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What does it mean to stay focused during a class lesson?

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Beth sets a timer for 30 minutes to complete her work before she can do anything else. How might this help her stay focused?

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How could taking notes in class help you stay focused? What are some ways you could accomplish this?

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Mike gets distracted from his work whenever he gets a text. What can he do?

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How can paying better attention in class help reduce stress?

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What are some ways a teacher could help to refocus you when you are off task or unfocused?

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How might some routines at school or home help you stay focused?

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Amanda noticed that it took her much longer to finish her math homework when she was listening to music. Why might that be? Does this happen to you?

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Physical exercise has shown to help attention. What are some ways you could exercise throughout the week?

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What relationship do you notice between the amount of sleep you get and how much you can pay attention? Why?

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A healthy diet may help people to pay attention better. How could you incorporate this into your day?

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Zac realized he wasn't paying attention during the lesson and doesn't know how to complete his science homework. What can he do?

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Think of the last homework assignment you completed at home. How focused were you? Were there any distractions that you had to avoid?

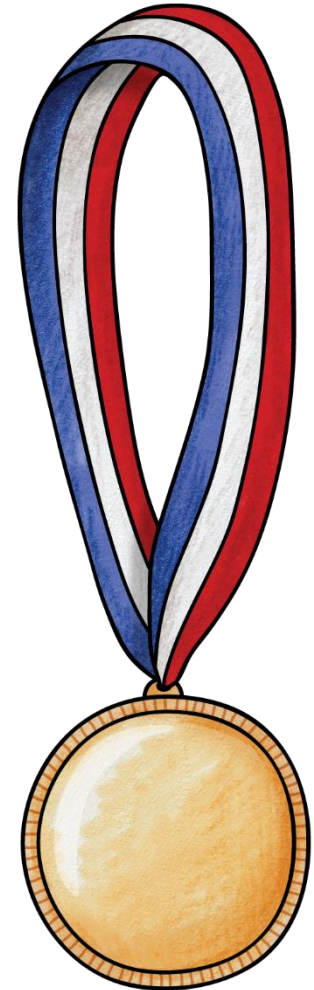
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Deanna has trouble shifting her attention to a new task after completing one. What can she do after completing the first assignment?

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Perseverance

- Following through steps until reaching a goal
- Not giving up
- Working through challenges and obstacles
- Having a purpose for a task
- Completing tasks well



You were working hard to improve your math grade but just failed a quiz. What are you thinking and what should you do?

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Describe a goal you have for this year. What are 2 steps you are taking to achieve the goal.

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How can you tell if you've met a goal? Give an example of a goal you made in the past.

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You brought all your history materials home to complete a project but now your internet doesn't work. What can you do?

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Hannah spent 20 minutes working on her math assignment and isn't done yet. She really wants to stop and go hang out with friends. What should she do?

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What does perseverance mean? Look it up if you are not sure.

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Brett tried out for the basketball team but didn't make it. Should he continue playing basketball? Why or why not?

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Sam begged her mom to start playing the flute but isn't sure she likes it anymore. What should she do?

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Describe a famous person who showed perseverance in their life.

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What are dreams you have for the future? How do you plan to get there?

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Where do you see yourself in 10 years? How do you plan to get there?

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Babe Ruth said, "Every strike brings me closer to the next home run."
What does the quote mean?

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Think of a time that you failed at something. How did it make you a better person? What did you learn?

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Describe how you feel after failing or losing. What are some ways to stay positive?

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Why is it important to fail sometimes? What would happen if you always won or were successful?

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Thomas Jefferson said, "I'm a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it." What does the quote mean? Do you agree?

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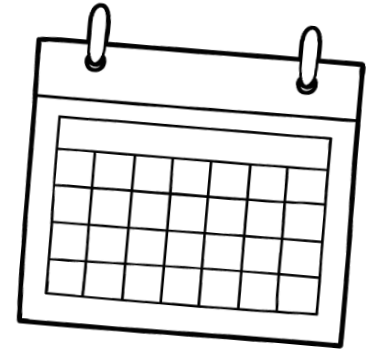
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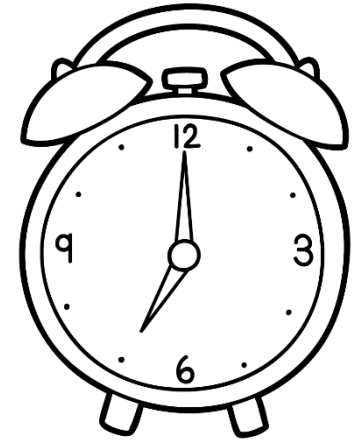
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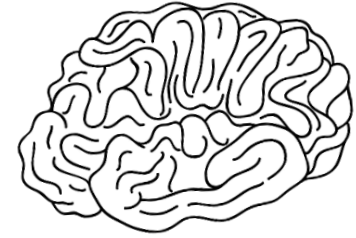
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- Recalling important information during a task
- Completing math with many steps

Have a partner tell you directions to do something. As they give directions, try to picture it in your mind (visualize).

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Memorize this phone number:
419-8465
What strategy did you use?

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What strategies can you use to help study terms or vocabulary for a test?

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A teacher in class gives a direction. What can you do to help remember it?

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How can taking notes in class help you later on?

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Have a friend tell you five facts about them. Then, repeat them back to your friend.

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In your head do...
 $3 \times 7 + 10 - 2$

What is the answer?

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In your head do...
 $20 \times 30 + 5 - 4$

What is the answer?

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Have a friend give you verbal directions to a place close by in town. What strategy can you use to remember the directions?

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Memorize this sequence:

3, 2, 7, 8, 1

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Memorize this sequence:

lion, cat, tiger, dog,
kangaroo

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Memorize this sequence:

green, yellow, red,
pink, blue, orange

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When and why might you ask a teacher to repeat information? How could it help you?

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What are some strategies for remembering your homework?

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What are ways you can study for a test or a quiz?

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Describe some routines that help you accomplish tasks (chores, getting to class on time, homework, etc.).

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Self Control



- Thinking before acting
- Waiting your turn to speak
- Keeping your cool when feeling upset
- Taking your time when working or completing tasks
- Controlling your emotions
- Making more positive choices

You know you are angry and want to confront a friend. What should you do?

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You are raising your hand in class to share but the teacher isn't calling on you. What should you do?

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What are some ways you can take a break when you are feeling angry or upset?

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How can you recognize when you're feeling angry?

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Why might walking away when you are angry be a good option?

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How might other students feel if someone is always shouting out in class?

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What do you do when...

A friend breaks something of yours?

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What do you do when...

Your parents don't let you go out to your friend's house?

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Think of a time you demonstrated strong self control. What did you do? How did it help you?

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What are some possible triggers that cause you to lose your cool?

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Picture a stop sign. How might this help you when you're feeling upset?

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Think of a time that you acted on impulse and got in trouble. What could you have done better?

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You see some other students writing on the bathroom wall. What should you do? What could the consequences be?

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Someone calls you a name that you don't like. What should you do? What could the consequences be?

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What are some strategies to try to reduce calling out in class?

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What activities could you do to help you calm down when you're mad?

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Flexibility



- Adjusting to changes in plans or new situations
- Coming up with new approaches
- Being able to “think outside the box”
- Being able to improvise and go with the flow
- Switching between activities and tasks

You have math homework but forgot your book at school. What can you do?

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You have a big project due today but forgot it at home. What can you do?

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You see someone crying. What are three different things that person could be thinking?

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You see someone with their head down. What are three different things that person could be thinking?

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You were supposed to go a friend's party but your mom said a family dinner came up. How do you react?

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You are supposed to meet a friend at the mall but your parents can't give you a ride. How do you react?

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You were planning on getting a phone for your birthday but your parents now tell you that won't happen because of grades. How do you react?

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Your teacher gives you a detention for talking, even though it wasn't you. How do you react?

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A boy did his math project but did not turn it in. What are at least 3 possible reasons why?

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Megan loved her math teacher but didn't talk to her all day. What are at least 3 possible reasons why?

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Tommy was hungry but didn't eat lunch. What are at least 3 possible reasons why?

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Casey went to the mall to buy a pair of shoes but didn't come home with any. What are at least 3 possible reasons why?

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What are strategies for staying calm when things don't go as planned?

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Describe a time you were upset when things didn't go as planned. What could you have done differently?

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A friend comes over your house but they don't want to do what you want. What could you do?

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A friend wants you to try a new hobby but you don't want to. What are possible consequences for this?

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Organization

- Keeping track of assignments and dates
- Keeping materials orderly
- Developing a system that helps keep track of materials
- Having all the necessary information for a task ready
- Using a calendar to keep track of dates and important events



How could using a calendar or planner help you stay organized?

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What is your binder organization system? Name 3 ways you could improve.

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How can keeping an organized notebook help you improve your grades?

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How could a homework folder or binder help you stay organized?

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Choose any class. If you had a test in that class, what 3 pages in your notebook would you study from?

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Describe 3 routines that would help someone be organized in school.

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Describe 3 routines that would help someone be organized at home.

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How could a dedicated homework spot help you stay organized at home?

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Jen's notebooks are disorganized. She says she doesn't have enough time to put pages in the right spots in class. What can she do?

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Brett completes homework but always has a difficult time finding it to turn it in. What can he do?

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Lori wants to get good grades but does poorly on homework. When she gets home, she doesn't remember what the homework was. What can she do?

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Greg starts his long-term projects but often doesn't finish them. What can he do to improve?

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Sometimes Maria gets home to start her homework but doesn't always have the right books or binders. What can she do?

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Describe the steps it would take to organize your binders.

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How would a weekly notebook de-clutter time help you to stay organized? How could you make it happen?

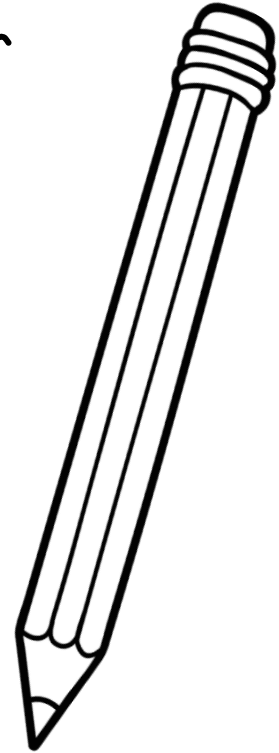
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How could staying organized help you reduce stress?

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Task Initiation

- Starting on a task in a timely manner
- Beginning a task, even when you don't feel like doing it
- Developing routines to help with initiating tasks
- Putting an end to procrastination
- Using strategies to help yourself feel motivated to start tasks



In a working period, within how many minutes should you start to work on an assignment?

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How can making a list help you get started and accomplish your work?

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Describe your homework routine at home. How could you improve it to help you accomplish your work?

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What are some ways you can “reward” yourself after you finish an assignment or task?

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Lisa tries to begin her math homework but isn't sure what she is supposed to do. What can she do?

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Max wants to start his science project but knows he won't be able to finish it. What can he do?

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How could having a specific "homework time" at home help you get started on work?

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Nick sits in study hall not doing anything even though he has homework. Why might he not be working? What could help him?

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How could a checklist help someone complete work?

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Cameron has a science test tomorrow but he says he will study in the morning. What are the possible consequences for this?

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What does it mean to procrastinate? What negatives or positives come out of procrastination?

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You are taking a test and you don't know the first question. What do you do?

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Maggie gets home from soccer practice at 6:30pm. She goes to start her homework but knows she can't finish it all so she stops. What can she do?

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If you are starting work in school, should you start the harder or easier assignments first? Why do you think that?

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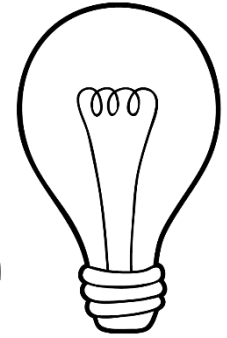
Molly uses a timer to work for 30 minutes and then take a break. How might this help her?

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Tim does his homework while watching television but doesn't get a lot done. Why might that be? What could help him?

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Metacognition



- Evaluating your performance as you go
- Checking your work before turning it in
- Evaluating your performance after you complete a task
- Being self-aware of your own behavior and performance
- Being self-aware of your own feelings
- Identifying what you need to be successful
- Understanding how your behavior and actions impact others

After you finish a test or quiz, what are some strategies to help you check it over and make sure answers are correct?

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Think of the last project you did and rate your performance from 1-10. Why did you rate yourself that way?

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Choose a recent homework assignment and rate your performance from 1-10. Why? How could you have improved?

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Prior to turning in an assignment, what are some simple ways you can check your work to make sure it is good quality?

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How do you learn best – seeing, hearing, or doing?
How do you know?

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How can you tell what you need to study before a test or a quiz?

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How can just sitting quietly help you re-organize your thoughts and think more clearly?

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How are you doing in school right now?
What are 3 ways you could make improvements?

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How can you tell when you've studied enough for a test or quiz?

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When working on a report or project, how do you know it's finally done?

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Think of a project that didn't get a grade you wanted. How could you have improved the project?

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How can asking the teacher for a sample or model work help you do better on an assignment?

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What is your most challenging subject or class? Why?

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You don't feel like doing a homework assignment. How could that impact you?

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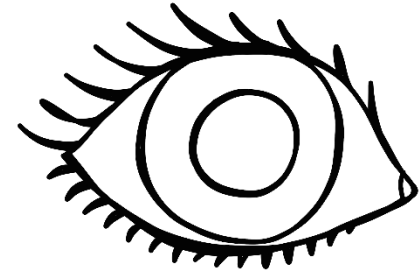
What grades do you try to strive for in classes? What actions do you take to get those grades?

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You forgot to do your part for a group project. How could that impact you? How could it impact the group members?

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Attention



- Staying focused on a task
- Identifying triggers that cause distraction
- Ignoring or eliminating distractions
- Shifting attention from one task to another
- Knowing when you are side tracked or not focused

What are some triggers that cause you to become distracted? How can you eliminate them?

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How can you tell when you've stopped really focusing on something?

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What does it mean to stay focused during a class lesson?

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Beth sets a timer for 30 minutes to complete her work before she can do anything else. How might this help her stay focused?

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How could taking notes in class help you stay focused? What are some ways you could accomplish this?

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Mike gets distracted from his work whenever he gets a text. What can he do?

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How can paying better attention in class help reduce stress?

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What are some ways a teacher could help to refocus you when you are off task or unfocused?

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How might some routines at school or home help you stay focused?

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Amanda noticed that it took her much longer to finish her math homework when she was listening to music. Why might that be? Does this happen to you?

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Physical exercise has shown to help attention. What are some ways you could exercise throughout the week?

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What relationship do you notice between the amount of sleep you get and how much you can pay attention? Why?

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A healthy diet may help people to pay attention better. How could you incorporate this into your day?

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Zac realized he wasn't paying attention during the lesson and doesn't know how to complete his science homework. What can he do?

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Think of the last homework assignment you completed at home. How focused were you? Were there any distractions that you had to avoid?

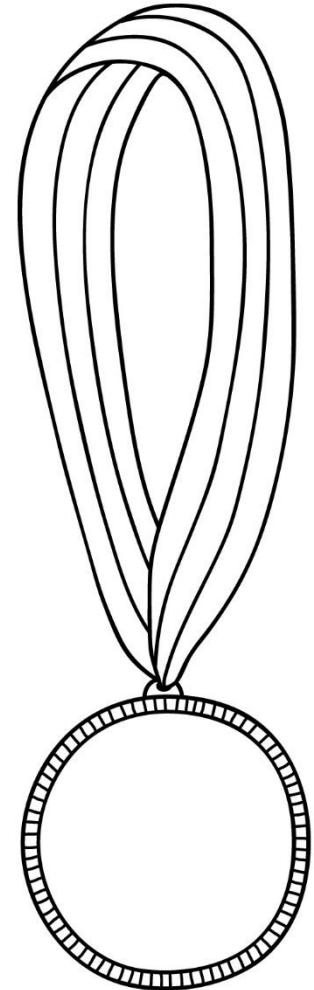
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Deanna has trouble shifting her attention to a new task after completing one. What can she do after completing the first assignment?

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Perseverance

- Following through steps until reaching a goal
- Not giving up
- Working through challenges and obstacles
- Having a purpose for a task
- Completing tasks well



You were working hard to improve your math grade but just failed a quiz. What are you thinking and what should you do?

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Describe a goal you have for this year. What are 2 steps you are taking to achieve the goal.

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How can you tell if you've met a goal? Give an example of a goal you made in the past.

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You brought all your history materials home to complete a project but now your internet doesn't work. What can you do?

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Hannah spent 20 minutes working on her math assignment and isn't done yet. She really wants to stop and go hang out with friends. What should she do?

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What does perseverance mean? Look it up if you are not sure.

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Brett tried out for the basketball team but didn't make it. Should he continue playing basketball? Why or why not?

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Sam begged her mom to start playing the flute but isn't sure she likes it anymore. What should she do?

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Describe a famous person who showed perseverance in their life.

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What are dreams you have for the future? How do you plan to get there?

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Where do you see yourself in 10 years? How do you plan to get there?

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Babe Ruth said, "Every strike brings me closer to the next home run."
What does the quote mean?

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Think of a time that you failed at something. How did it make you a better person? What did you learn?

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Describe how you feel after failing or losing. What are some ways to stay positive?

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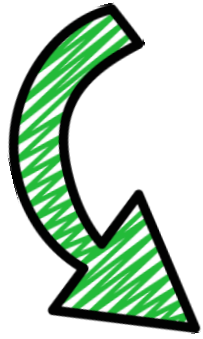
Why is it important to fail sometimes? What would happen if you always won or were successful?

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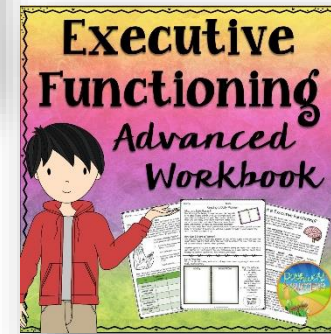
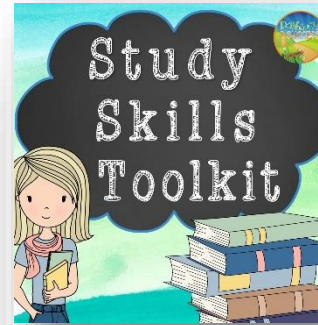
Thomas Jefferson said, "I'm a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it." What does the quote mean? Do you agree?

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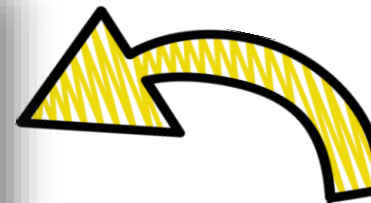
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About the Author



Kristina Scully has been a special educator for over 10 years. She has a bachelor's degree in special and elementary education from the University of Hartford, along with a master's degree in special education with a specialization in autism from the University of St. Joseph. She has worked extensively with kids and young adults with behavioral challenges, learning disabilities, autism, ADHD, anxiety, and other needs.

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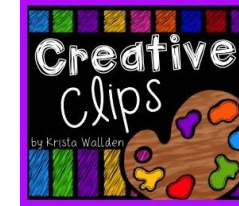
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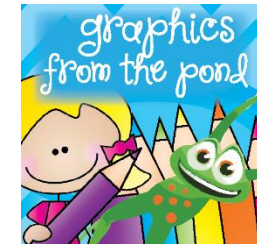


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