

Initial Planner Set-Up

Instantly open your planner to the current page with a binder clip. You are much more likely to use your planner if you do not have to flip through dozens of pages every time you need to write something down. (Paper clips do not work well because they slip off very easily.)



Write the phone numbers of responsible classmates from each of your classes in the back of your planner, in case you ever have questions about homework. Do not use e-mail or instant messaging for this purpose. E-mail is not reliable because you have to wait for friends to check it and instant messaging provides a strong temptation to get sucked into the computer. Save e-mail/instant messaging for after your homework is complete, when you can enjoy it without worrying about homework.



Sunday Night

Spend ten minutes on Sundays preparing for the week. Pull out your planner and write down your goals for the week, sports practices, project due dates, test dates, work schedules, etc. Highlight test or project due dates and then consider, "What do I have the night before?" If you have a basketball game the night before a big test, then you need to plan on spending extra time studying two nights before the test.

Do you ever feel like your parents nag you too much? Would you like them to stop?

Involve them when you plan your week. Ask your parents what their schedules are for the week and if they have anything planned for you, such as a doctor appointment or birthday dinner for your great-aunt. Let them know what you have going on, as well.

Parents "nag" because they want to be sure you are getting your homework done, that you are getting good grades, etc. They want what is best for you! If **you** take the initiative to tell your parents what is going on and communicate your plans for completing homework, you will be letting your parents know that you have things under control. When parents know you have things under control, they almost always stop nagging.

Students with Two Homes

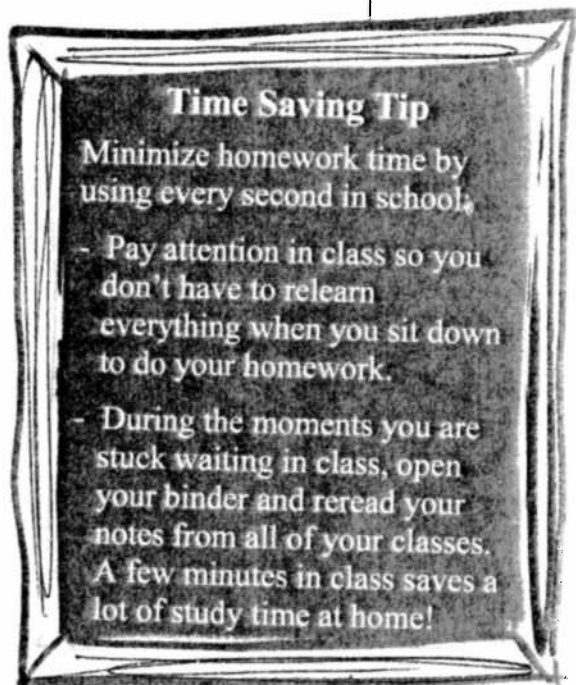
If your parents/guardians live in two different homes, the Sunday Night Conference is a critical strategy for you to use with both parents.

Take a few minutes to speak with each parent. If possible, have both parents on the phone line with you. Talk to them about your schedule for the week and make sure they both know about any practices you have after school, big tests, or projects that you have coming up. Double-check when you will visit the other parent and who will be picking you up from soccer practice, etc.

This conference is the single best thing you can do for yourself when you call two places 'home.'

I have had countless parents and students tell me that taking a few minutes to plan their week together at the beginning of the week has been the greatest strategy they have ever tried. It really does work!

■ During Class



Keep a pen in the rings of your planner so you can record homework, due dates, test dates, and other critical information right away. You are more likely to use a planner regularly if you do not have to search through your bag every time you need to write something down.

Keep your planner accessible. The best place to keep your planner is on your desk, or at least on top of the rest of your belongings under the desk. Once again, you are more likely to use a planner if you do not have to dig for it.

Record your homework as it is assigned in class. Also make note of the books you will need to take home. Do not wait until the end of the day to write down assignments because you are likely to record the *wrong* assignment or not record anything at all.



■ End of School Day, Before Going Home

Sometime before you go home from school (perhaps in the final moments of your last class or on the bus), take a few seconds to plan when you will work on homework that evening. Review your planner notes and write down how much time you will need for each assignment so you can appropriately plan how much time you will need.

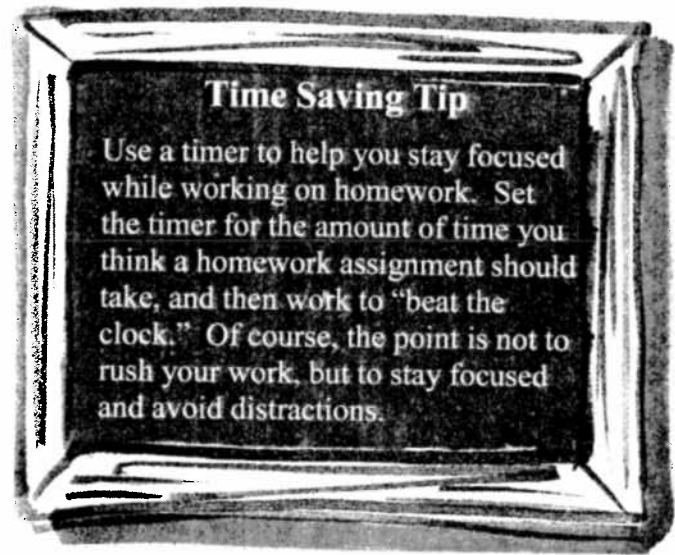
Check your planner before you go home to be sure you have all of the books you need. This will take no more than five seconds if you have the current page marked with a binder clip and your planner easily accessible in your arms or book bag.

At Home, After School

Stick to your schedule! Share it with your parents so that they know you are being responsible and will be less likely to “bug” you about your homework. If something comes up, or you simply get off track, get back on track by thinking about your priorities and take care of your “rock” priorities first.

Stay on schedule by “powering down” during homework time.

Using electronics will only delay your progress. Turn off cell phones (no calls or text-messages...save them for later), turn off the TV, radio, or iPod, and turn down the volume on your computer so that you do not hear every email that may be “popping” into your computer. Turning everything off may not sound very fun, but it will help you get your homework done much quicker. Do yourself the favor of avoiding the distractions, getting homework done on time, and then enjoying TV, music, phone calls, or texting later. (It’s all about priorities!)



Before Bedtime

Avoid rushed mornings by taking a minute before you go to bed to check your planner one last time: Did you get all forms signed? Is all of your homework in your bag? Do you have your lunch money? Is there anything else you needed to take care of?

Get everything you need ready, in your bag, and placed by the door before you go to bed. This simple habit will reduce morning craziness and will dramatically increase your feeling of preparedness in school the next day.

Keeping a Good Balance

Use your planner for organizing more than just schoolwork; record scheduled appointments, notes about family events, and goals for other areas of your life in your planner, too.