TIPS FOR USING A PLANNER

☑ Including "Planning & Organizing" as a subject so that you set aside time to make a weekly plan, take stock of your priorities, and re-organize your backpack and binders.

☑ Schedule regular time dedicated to long-term projects to avoid procrastination on essays, projects and studying for tests. This is also the perfect time to reach out to teachers with questions about content or grades.

☑ Record all after-school activities, weekend commitments, and even plans with friends in the planner so you can see your available blocks of time to get things done.

☑ Write "No Homework" if none has been assigned to ensure that you haven't forgotten to record an assignment.

☑ Even if you use a web platform to review upcoming assignments, write them in your planner so that everything is easily visible in one place.

☑ Never rely on your memory alone. Write down everything you need to remember. The act of writing actually commits ideas to memory.

☑ Only check items off as "done" after you turn them in.

☑ Use sticky notes to remind yourself about an important assignment due date or an upcoming school event.

☑ To build time awareness, enter the amount of time you spend on each assignment right in the planner.

☑ If you're a visual learner, consider color-coding subjects and events or adding symbols to make important due dates stand out.

PRIVATE PREP
RECOMMENDED PLANNERS

Order Out of Chaos Planner
This planner lets students write their classes just once all year, clearly divides classes, and gives space to plan hour-by-hour. It also has room for notes and offers both a monthly and weekly view.

Clever Fox Planner
We like the undated weekly planner from Clever Fox. The weekly view asks users to identify their top 3 each day and offers a to-do list, habit tracking, and reflection without being overwhelming. It also includes space for a vision board as well as monthly views.

Global Date Books
This planner is our Amazon pick. It's a student planner with monthly and weekly views each of which has space for goals and reminders. There's also an elementary version for younger kids.

Class Tracker
The college planner from class tracker is exceptional. The weekly view has space for tests/quizzes, assignments, reminders, a daily plan, and a self-care corner. The high school planner offers a separate space for activities & the middle school planner encourages breaking out subjects separately.

Todoist App
This free app syncs across all devices and most other productivity apps, is incredibly intuitive, and allows for multiple projects as well as sub-tasks. Users can also share their lists with others.

Free College Schedule Maker
This website is a simple way to make a visual schedule. Use it with students after they complete a time audit.

Google Calendar
An oldie, but a goodie. Google Calendar syncs with many schools' systems so that assignments automatically populate. It's also easily integrated with virtually every other planning app and creating multiple calendars on the same account allows for easy color coding.

Dry Erase Calendar or Desk or Wall Calendar
Many students like to have their monthly view as something very visible in their workspace. For those who are planner averse, starting by asking them to put major dates on one of these is a good entry point.

ELEMENTS OF A PLANNING SYSTEM

MONTHLY

You need to see the full month at once. This is where you'll record major due dates, performances or games, family events, doctor's appointments, or anything else that is planned well in advance.

- ☑ Input dates as you learn about them: game schedules, performances, days off, etc.
- ☑ Try to keep this easy to look at; put details in the weekly or daily view.

WEEKLY

Set aside time each week to plan. Reflect on the previous week and make adjustments going forward as necessary. Take note of your busier days or any conflicts and troubleshoot them.

- ☑ Copy items from the monthly view, to the weekly view.
- ☑ If there are large tasks coming up that aren't already broken into small steps, break them down now and input mini-due dates.
- ☑ Use highlighters, post-its, colored pens, or reminders to make sure key elements stand out.

DAILY

Each day you need to be clear on what you are responsible for. This includes daily homework assignments, home responsibilities, progress toward assessments, and clubs or sports.

- ☑ Write down homework or "none" for each class.
- ☑ Check any school portals to be sure you haven't missed anything.
- ☑ If something unexpected comes up, move tasks to a different day rather than just skipping them.