

# How to Be Smart: Planning

When we say people are smart, we usually mean that they know a lot of information. But being smart also means that someone has a lot of ability to learn new things. Being smart at learning new things includes knowing and using your *thinking abilities*. There are ways you can use your abilities *better* when you are learning.

## What Does Being Smart Mean?

One ability that is very important is called *Planning*. The ability to *plan* helps you figure out *how to do things*. When you don't know how to solve a problem, using Planning ability will help you figure out how to do it. This ability also helps you control what you think and do. It helps you to stop before doing something you shouldn't do. Planning ability is what helps you wait until the time is right to act. It also helps you make good decisions about what to say and what to do.

## How Can You Be Smarter?

You can be smarter if you PLAN before doing things. Sometimes people say, "Look before you leap," "Plan your work and work your plan," or "Stop and think." These sayings are about using the ability to plan. When you stop and think about *how* to study, you are using your ability to plan.

You will be able to do more if you remember to use a plan. An easy way to remember to use a plan is to look at the picture "Think smart and use a plan!" (Figure 1). You should always use a plan for reading, vocabulary, spelling, writing, math problem solving, and science.

Do you have a favorite plan for learning spelling words? Do you use flashcards or go on the Internet to learn? Do you ask the teacher or another student for help? You can learn more by using a plan for studying that works best for you.

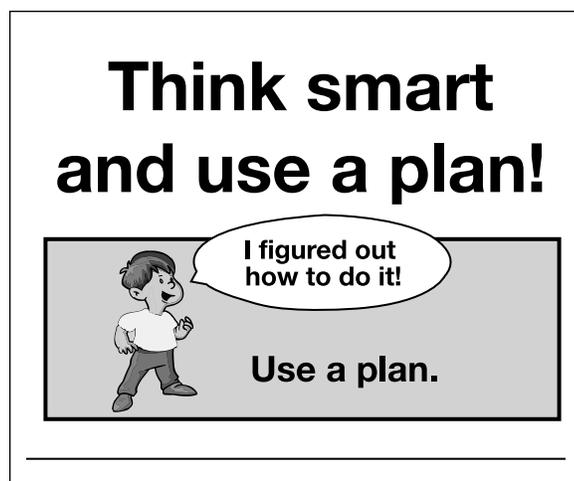


Figure 1. Picture reminder for using a plan.

It is smart to have a plan for doing all schoolwork. When you read, you should have a plan. One plan is to look at the questions you have to answer about the story first. Then read the story to find the answers. Another plan is to make a picture of what you read so that you can see all the parts of the story. When you write you should also have a plan. Students who are good at writing plan and organize their thoughts first. Then they think about what they are doing as they write. Using a plan is a good way to be smarter about your work!

You can also be better in math if you use a plan. Think about the problem, choose a way to solve it, see if that plan works, change plans if necessary, and check the final answer carefully. Use a plan to draw a diagram of the problem so that you understand the question. Using a plan is a good way to be smart!

## **How Can You Interact Smartly with Other People?**

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You should always use a plan with the people in your life. Think about how you want to behave. If what you are doing is not working, plan for another way to reach your goal. Think about what you want to say and choose your words carefully *before* you say it. Think about how the other person might feel or act after you say something. Doing these things will help other people understand you better, and you will understand them better, too. Using a plan with other people is another way to be smart!

## **Remembering to Plan**

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Remember that sometimes when you are scared, tired, or just doing too many things at one time, you might forget to plan. This is a bad way to do things. When you see that you are not using a plan, say to yourself, “Stop and use a plan.” Use a plan, and you will be a lot smarter!

## **Resources**

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- Goldstein, S., & Naglieri, J.A. (2007, October 22–27). Planning and attention problems in ADHD: What parents and teachers can do. *Attention*.
- Naglieri, J.A., Goldstein, S., & Conway, C. (2009). Using the Planning, Attention, Simultaneous, Successive (PASS) theory within a neuropsychological context. In C. Reynolds & E. Fletcher-Janzen (Eds.), *Handbook of clinical child neuropsychology* (3rd ed.) (pp. 783–800). New York: Springer.
- Pressley, M.P., & Woloshyn, V. (1995). *Cognitive strategy instruction that really improves children’s academic performance* (2nd ed.). Brookline, MA: Brookline Books.
- Scheid, K. (1993). *Helping students become strategic learners*. Brookline, MA: Brookline Books.