

HabitCoach.com:

Executive Function Program



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Company and Founder Background

HabitCoach is a subsidiary of **TestingMom LLC** which for **15 years** has been providing test prep, learning materials, and tutoring to students in the U.S. and around the world. TestingMom business owner, **Karen Quinn**, brought on an ADHD/Executive Function expert, **Jon Zeitlin**, to build the HabitCoach product. Jon previously was a middle school teacher, a senior executive at Kaplan, co-founder of one of the largest ADHD centers in California (in partnership with Dr. Edward Hallowell, one of the most prominent leaders in the ADHD field). Jon has built and delivered products to schools since the mid-1990s.

Program Description

HabitCoach Executive Function Program is a complete K-8 curriculum program for teachers to use with their students in schools. The product is delivered online with the ability for teachers to print out variety of program materials for classroom use.

The program consists of **lessons and homework** in the following 7 major topic areas:

1. Executive Function
2. Emotional Control
3. Academic Skills
4. Organization and Planning
5. Flexible Thinking/Creativity
6. Communication
7. Avoiding Distraction/Screen avoidance

Lesson Counts

K-2: Still under development

3rd/4th: 58 lessons

5th/6th: 64 lessons

7th/8th: 78 lessons

Assessment

The HabitCoach Program comes with two assessments. Both assessments can be delivered and tracked longitudinally.

1. **Knowledge Assessment** – Tests the concepts presented in the curriculum
2. **Executive Function Assessment** – Provides assessment of executive function strengths and weaknesses.

Additional Offerings for schools

Professional Development and Training

HabitCoach Schools offers research-based professional development for teachers so they can learn the connections between executive function and academic performance. More specifically, we help teachers understand what is going on in the brains of their struggling students and how to reach them. We also offer training on how to best use the Habit Coach Curriculum Program.

Parent Program

The HabitCoach Curriculum Program also offers a parent component. Each lesson comes with a mini-lesson for parents to do with their kids to reinforce the concepts being learned in school. Lessons often have example videos to help parents learn the language and parenting approaches that work.

Outline of 3rd/4th Grade Topics

Executive Function

Topic 1 – Day 1 – Assessment

Topic 1 – Day 2 – What is Executive Function?

Emotional Control

Topic 1 – Day 1 - Know How You Feel

Topic 1 – Day 2 – Know How You Feel

Topic 2 – Day 1 – Recognizing Frustrations and Triggers

Topic 2 – Day 2 – Recognizing Frustrations and Triggers

Topic 3 – Day 1 – Dealing with Upsets

Topic 3 – Day 2 – Dealing with Upsets

Topic 4 – Day 1 – Contemplation and Self-Assessment

Topic 4 – Day 2 – Contemplation and Self-Assessment

Topic 5 – Day 1 – Mindfulness to Calm Yourself

Topic 5 – Day 2 – Mindfulness to Calm Yourself

Topic 6 – Day 1 – Verbalizing Your Emotions

Topic 6 – Day 1 – Verbalizing Your Emotions

Topic 7 – Day 1 – Dealing with Disappointment

Topic 7 – Day 2 – Dealing with Disappointment

Topic 8 – Day 1 – Having a Growth Mindset

Topic 8 – Day 2 – Having a Growth Mindset

Organization

Topic 1 – Day 1 – Losing and Finding Things

Topic 1 – Day 2 – Losing and Finding Things

Topic 2 – Day 1 – Permission Slips and Library Books

Topic 2 – Day 2 – Permission Slips and Library Books

Topic 3 – Day 1 -- Keeping Your Toom and Workspace Tidy

Topic 3 – Day 2 – Keeping Your Room and Workspace Tidy

Topic 4 – Day 1 – Putting Stuff Away When You Get Home From School

Topic 4 – Day 2 – Putting Stuff Away When You Get Home From School

Topic 5 – Day 1 – Packing Your Backpack

Topic 5 – Day 2 – Packing Your Backpack

Topic 6 – Day 1 – Keeping Track of Time

Topic 6 – Day 2 – Keeping Track of Time

Early Academic Skills

Topic 1 – Day 1 – Getting Started on Homework

Topic 1 – Day 2 – Getting Started on Homework

Topic 2 – Day 1 – Dealing with Distractions That Prevent You From Studying

Topic 2 – Day 2 – Dealing with Distractions That Prevent You From Studying

Topic 3 – Day 1 – Paying Attention in Class

Topic 3 – Day 2 – Paying Attention in Class

Topic 4 – Day 1 – Studying for a Test

Topic 4 – Day 2 – Studying for a Test

Flexible Thinking/Creativity

Topic 1 – Think Like No One Else

Topic 2 – Be Original

Topic 3 – Creating Thinking Using Random Words

Topic 4 – Negative Brainstorming

Topic 5 – Creative Product Improvement or Unusual Uses

Topic 6 – Creative Product Improvements and Unusual Uses

Topic 7 – Infomercial Salesperson

Topic 8 – Just Imagine

Topic 9 – Nursery Rhyme Problem

Topic 10 – Complete the Story

Topic 11 – Flexibility

Topic 12 – Elaboration and Originality

Topic 13 – Ask and Guess

Topic 14 – Thinking Outside the Box with Shapes

Topic 15 – Picture Completion

Topic 16 – Art and Imagination

Topic 17 – Brainstorming

Topic 18 – Whoopsie! Solve this Common Problem

Topic 19 – Adapting to Changes

Topic 20 – Problem Solving – Try a New Solution

Sample Lesson: 3rd/4th grade

Early Academic Skills for Grades 3-4

Topic 2 - Day 2 – Dealing with Distractions That Prevent You from Studying

Teacher Instructions (in blue): These are guidelines—use the lesson as you see fit. This is Lesson 2 of 2, with extra activities you may use, if needed, throughout the week. Write the Executive Functions (EF) on the board and discuss their meaning so students can use EF language with teachers, parents, and peers.

Executive Function Skills: Focus & Follow-Through and Metacognition

Focus and Follow Through – This means being able to pay attention even when you're bored, tired, or uninterested; being able to set goals and work towards them without getting distracted. You need focus to prevent you from trying to get distracted when you are studying.

Goal:

- Teach students how to use strategies to prevent and manage distractions that cause problems with efficient studying.

Objective:

- Students will be able to identify common distractions that interrupt studying
- Students will explain why distractions affect focus and learning.
- Students will practice strategies to overcome distractions.

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- "Distraction Scenario" cards (realistic situations students may face)
- Strategy Cards (examples: "Take a Brain Break," "Find a Quiet Spot," "Set a Timer," "Ignore the Noise")
- Student Reflection Sheet

Whole Group:

Teacher - begin by asking: "Would anyone like to share a distraction they have experienced this week when trying to study or do homework?"

Teacher: Read the following story aloud.

"Max and the Great Homework Battle"

Max sat down at the kitchen table with his math homework. He sharpened his pencil, opened his book, and was just about to start... when the family dog, Buster, plopped a slobbery tennis ball in his lap.

"Not now, Buster," Max whispered.

Buster stared at him with big, sad puppy eyes. Whimper.

Max took a deep breath and refocused. Problem #1: $12 \times 8 =$ _____.

"MAX!" his little sister shouted from the living room. "Come see the dance I made up!"

"I can't! I'm doing homework!" he yelled back.

But then she started singing—loudly—and dancing right in front of him. Max tried covering his ears, but she twirled so close she knocked over his eraser.

HONK! HONK! Outside, the ice cream truck rolled by, playing Pop Goes the Weasel. Max's stomach growled like a bear.

By the time Max actually finished the first problem, it had been 20 minutes, three interruptions, and exactly zero ice cream cones.

Write the word **Distraction** on the board and ask students to share what it means in their own words.

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 – Types of Distractions

Teacher: “Have you noticed that not all distractions are the same? There are different kinds of distractions. Who can think of one kind of distraction? Allow time for students to respond

- Teacher – Write on chart paper, create two columns:
 - a. Inside Distractions (thoughts, feelings, hunger, tiredness)
 - b. Outside Distractions (noise, people, technology).
- Teacher – Ask students to brainstorm and add ideas under each category.
- Discuss how these distractions can make studying harder.

Activity 2 – Distraction Scenarios (15 minutes)

- Divide students into small groups.
- Teacher – Hand out one card per group - Give each group a Distraction Scenario Card (from pages 5 & 6)
- Teacher: Ask the groups to discuss:
 - a. What kind of distraction is this?
 - b. How might it affect your studying?
 - c. What strategies could help?
- Groups share their answers with the class, and the teacher records strategies on the board.

Activity 3 – Strategy Practice: Staying Focused (10 minutes)

Teacher – Display the Strategy Cards (pages 8 & 9) on the whiteboard and explain how each works – explanations below:

Distraction Strategy Cards

1. Find a Quiet Spot
 Move to a place where there is less noise or fewer people around so you can focus.
2. Take a Brain Break
 If you're feeling restless or distracted, take a short break—stretch, get a drink of water, then come back ready to focus.
3. Set a Timer
 Work for a set amount of time (like 15 minutes) before checking your phone or doing something else.
4. Ignore the Noise
 Use earplugs, headphones, or focus on the paper in front of you and tune out what's going on around you.
5. Put Distractions Away
 Turn off the TV, silence your phone, and put away toys or games until homework is done.
6. Ask for Help
 If people are distracting you, politely ask them to give you quiet time to finish your work.
7. Make a To-Do List
 Write down what you need to do so you can focus on one thing at a time instead of getting distracted by other thoughts.

Teacher – Try to distract the students by tapping, talking, spinning, or humming. Role-play with a volunteer: the teacher pretends to be a distraction, and the student uses a strategy to stay focused.

Allow students to practice with a partner using a short scenario.

Read the following Scenario aloud to the students and/or display it on the board for students to practice a strategy.

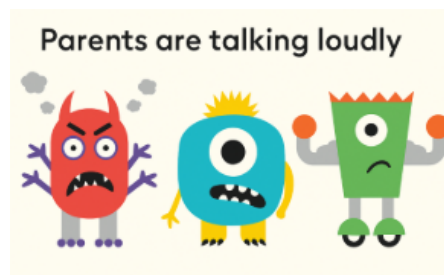
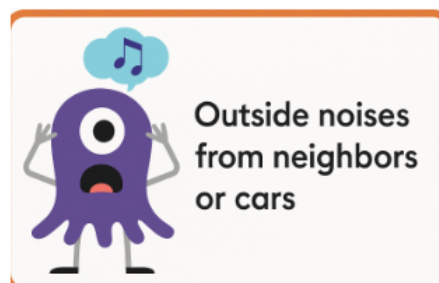
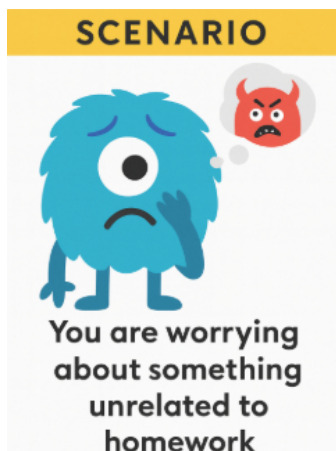
“The Mystery in the Backyard

Aiden sits at his desk with his math book open, ready to start his homework. He reads the first problem... but suddenly hears a strange rustling sound coming from the backyard. He peeks out the window and sees shadows moving behind the fence. His mind starts racing—Is it a raccoon? A cat? A secret spy? Instead of solving math problems, Aiden spends the next 15 minutes staring out the window, trying to solve the “mystery” outside. By the time he sits back down, he’s forgotten where he left off in his work.

Activity 4 – Reflection

- Teacher – Review the strategies again
- Hand out Reflection Sheets where students write:
 - a. One distraction they face most often.
 - b. One strategy they will try next time they study.
- Collect sheets for review.

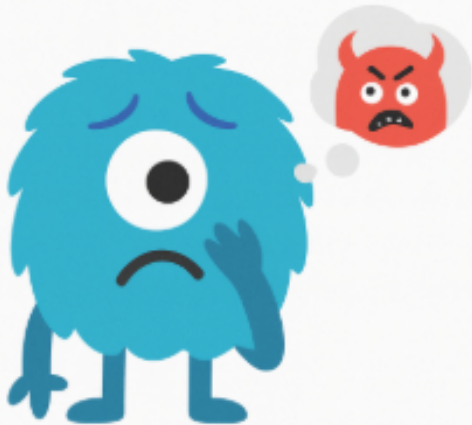
The cards below are called the **Distraction Scenario Cards**. You will want to either display these for the class or print and laminate them for each student/small group. You will need one card per group.



Below are the larger versions for print.

Student Homework: Photos below are intended to be printed for the student to take home for homework. Please print enough for your class size.

SCENARIO



You are worrying
about something
unrelated to
homework

FEELING TIRED

I'm too sleepy
to think about
homework.



Outside noises
from neighbors
or cars



The room
is too hot
or too cold

Parents are talking loudly



Thinking about having
to do chores



Kids are
playing
outside

Distraction Strategy Cards

1. Find a Quiet Spot



Move to a place where there is less noise or fewer people around so you can focus.

2. Take a Brain Break



If you're feeling restless or distracted, take a short break—stretch, get a drink of water, then come back ready to focus.

3. Set a Timer



Work for a set amount of time (like 15 minutes) before checking your phone or doing something else.

4. Ignore the Noise



Use earplugs, headphones, or focus on the paper in front of you and tune out what's going on around you.

5. Put Distractions Away



Turn off the TV, silence your phone, and put away toys or games until homework is done.

6. Ask for Help



If people are distracting you, politely ask them to give you quiet time to finish your work.

7. Make a To-Do List

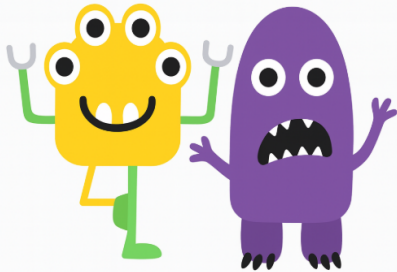


Write down what you need to do so you can focus on one thing at a time instead of getting distracted by other thoughts.

Strategy Cards – For each small group, display, print, or laminate one set of cards.

Print and cut out the cards, then give one to each student as a reference and reminder of what they have learned.

Take a brain break



FIND A QUIET SPOT



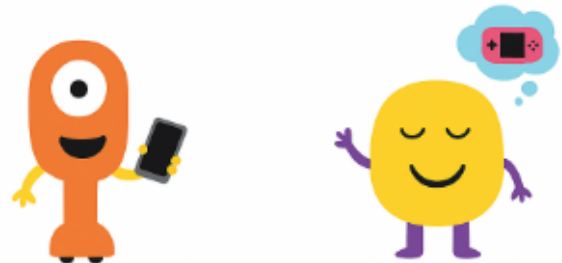
Ignore the Noise



Ask for Help



Put away distractions



Make a to-do list



For When You
Get Distracted
Doing Your Homework



Set a timer
for 20 minutes
and work until
it dings!

STUDENT HOMEWORK

Homework: Staying Focused During Homework Time

Name: _____ Date: _____

Goal: Today, you will practice using a strategy to help you stay focused while doing your homework.

Part 1 – Choose Your Focus Strategy

Circle ONE strategy you will use today:

- Find a Quiet Spot
- Take a Brain Break
- Ignore the Noise
- Ask for Help
- Make a To-Do List
- Snack First

Part 2 – Homework Time Log

Step	What I Did	How Focused Was I? (1-5 ★)
1. I got ready to start homework by...		★ ★ ★ ★ ★
2. I used my focus strategy by...		★ ★ ★ ★ ★
3. I finished my homework in... (minutes)		★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Part 3 – Reflection

What was the biggest distraction for you today?

How did your strategy help you stay focused?

Will you use the same strategy next time? Why or why not?

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

PARENT HOMEWORK (OPTIONAL)

Parents should navigate to [HabitCoach.com](https://habitcoach.com)
and click on Coach Your Own Child.

In the box titled “Executive Function,” choose “Overcoming Distractions.”

Alternatively, you may use this URL address or QR code.

<https://dashboard.habitcoach.com/cyoc-lessons/72/>

SCAN HERE



Outline of 5th/6th Grade Topics

Executive Function

Topic 1 – Day 1 – Self-Assessment
Topic 1 – Day 1 – What Is Executive Function?

Organizing and Planning

Topic 1 – Day 1 – Improving Your Digital Organization
Topic 1 – Day 2 – Improving Your Digital Organization
Topic 2 – Day 1 – Planning Out Longer-Term Projects
Topic 2 – Day 2 – Planning Out Longer-Term Projects
Topic 3 – Day 1 – Breaking Down Big Assignments and Creating Interim Deadlines
Topic 3 – Day 2 – Breaking Down Big Assignments and Creating Interim Deadlines
Topic 4 – Day 1 – Keeping Track of Assignments
Topic 4 – Day 2 – Keeping Track of Assignments
Topic 5 – Day 1 – Planning Your Study Time
Topic 5 – Day 2 – Planning Your Study Time
Topic 6 – Day 1 – Handling Timed Assignments
Topic 6 – Day 2 – Handling Timed Assignments
Topic 7 – Day 1 – Organizing Your Ideas Into Essays
Topic 7 – Day 2 – Organizing Your Ideas Into Essays

Academics

Topic 1 – Day 1 – Being on Time for Class/Transitioning Between Classes
Topic 1 – Day 2 – Being on Time for Class/Transitioning Between Classes
Topic 2 – Day 1 – Keeping Track of Time
Topic 2 – Day 2 – Keeping Track of Time
Topic 3 – Day 1 – Paying Attention in Class
Topic 3 – Day 2 – Paying Attention in Class
Topic 4 – Day 1 – Active Listening
Topic 4 – Day 2 – Active Listening
Topic 5 – Day 1 – Remembering What You Just Read or Heard
Topic 5 – Day 2 – Remembering What You Just Read or Heard
Topic 6 – Day 1 – Proofreading
Topic 6 – Day 2 – Proofreading
Topic 7 – Day 1 – Getting Started on Homework
Topic 7 – Day 2 – Getting Started on Homework
Topic 8 – Day 1 – How to Take Notes
Topic 8 – Day 2 – How to Take Notes
Topic 9 – Day 1 – How to Study for a Test
Topic 9 – Day 2 – How to Study for a Test
Topic 10 – Day 1 – Building Endurance
Topic 10 – Day 2 – Building Endurance
Topic 11 – Day 1 – Taking Timed Tests

Topic 11 – Day 2 – Taking Timed Tests
Topic 12 – Day 1 – Making To-Do Lists
Topic 12 – Day 2 – Making To-Do Lists

Focus – Avoiding Distraction

Topic 1 – Day 1 – Dealing With Distractions That Keep You From Studying
Topic 1 – Day 2 – Dealing With Distractions That Keep You From Studying
Topic 2 – Day 1 – Having a Healthy Relationship With Technology
Topic 2 – Day 2 – Having a Healthy Relationship With Technology
Topic 3 – Day 1 – Do You Have a Screen Addiction?
Topic 3 – Day 2 – Do You Have a Screen Addiction?
Topic 4 – Day 1 – How Much Time Do You Game?
Topic 4 – Day 2 – How Much Time Do You Game?
Topic 5 – Day 1 – How to Set Your Own Time Limits on Screen Use
Topic 5 – Day 2 – How to Set Your Own Time Limits on Screen Use
Topic 6 – Day 1 – Keeping Your Electronics Charged

Emotional Control

Topic 1 – Day 1 – Having a Growth Mindset
Topic 1 – Day 2 – Having a Growth Mindset
Topic 2 – Day 1 – Understanding Different Points of View
Topic 2 – Day 2 – Understanding Different Points of View

Communication

Topic 1 – Day 1 – Active Listening
Topic 1 – Day 2 – Active Listening
Topic 2 – Day 1 – How to Have Better Two-Way Conversations
Topic 2 – Day 2 – How to Have Better Two-Way Conversations

Flexible Thinking

Topic 1 – Day 1 – Creative Problem-Solving
Topic 1 – Day 2 – Creative Problem-Solving
Topic 2 – Day 1 – Transitioning to Middle School
Topic 2 – Day 2 – Transitioning to Middle School

Sample 5th-6th grade lesson

Communication

Topic 1 - Day 1 – Active Listening

Teacher Instructions (in blue): These are guidelines—use the lesson as you see fit. This is Lesson 1 of 2 for the week. In every lesson, write the names of the Executive Functions (EF) on the board and discuss what each EF means. The goal is for students to understand the language of EF and be able to talk about it with their teachers, parents, and peers.

Executive Function Skills: Focus & Follow-Through and Metacognition

Focus and Follow Through – This means being able to pay attention even when you're bored, tired, or uninterested; being able to set goals and work towards them without getting distracted. If you are practicing active listening, you will need to be able to focus.

Metacognition – This means self-awareness. It's the ability to evaluate your own skills or behavior and adjust them as needed. It means thinking about thinking. You need to be aware that you are not practicing active listening to get better at it.

Goal:

- Teach students the difference between active and passive listening and how distractions affect the ability to comprehend what you hear. Provide strategies and opportunities to practice these strategies to improve academic performance through active listening.

Objective:

- Students will be able to explain the difference between passive listening and active listening.
- Students will identify how distractions can affect listening and comprehension.
- Students will practice active listening strategies in structured activities.
- Students will reflect on how active listening can improve academic success and relationships.

Materials Needed:

- Printed story Mr. Lopez's Open Book Test (or projector/whiteboard display)
- Active Listening Strategy Chart (teacher-prepared)
- Short practice passage (provided in lesson)
- Student reflection worksheet (optional)
- Whiteboard/markers
- Student Handouts (pages 5-6)

Whole Group:

Story & Discussion (10 minutes)

Read Mr. Lopez's Open Book Test aloud (teacher or volunteer).

Leon sat in his 7th-period American History class. It was late in the day, and he had not gotten a great night's sleep, so he kept yawning. He noticed his buddy Emilio was writing a note and passing it to Jeanie. "Hmm, I wonder what's going on between those two," Leon wondered.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lopez was giving instructions for the test tomorrow.

Okay, this test will cover the causes of the Mexican-American War, Manifest Destiny, and the changing border between Mexico and the United States," Mr. Lopez said. Leon wrote in his notebook, "Manifest Destiny," while he looked to see if Jeanie was passing a note back.

"Make sure you reread chapters 7 and 8," Mr. Lopez said and paused for a second, "And you might as well reread chapter 9 as well." Leon wrote, "Reread chapter 9," in his notebook as he saw Leon give Jeanie his big smile.

"I want you to study really hard because this will be one of the hardest tests of the year, but remember, it will be an open-book test. So, rereading is more important than flashcards," Mr. Lopez finished.

Leon wrote, "one of the hardest tests of the year."

"Okay class," Mr. Lopez said, "I will see you tomorrow. Eat a good lunch so you have the fuel to do well on the test."

Leon got up feeling pleased with his notes about the test. "Okay," he thought, "so it will be on Manifest Destiny, and I have to reread Chapter 9 and make really good flashcards." And then he looked up to see Jeanie looking back hard at Emilio.

Guiding Questions:

- Does this feel familiar to you?
- Why do you think Leon misunderstood the study directions?
- Was Leon listening actively or passively?
- When do you get distracted in class?
- What's the cost of missing small details?
- Ask: *"Have you ever thought you were listening carefully—only to realize later that you missed something important?"*

Part 1 - Strategy Instruction (10 minutes)

Teacher: introduce Active Listening Strategies:

Active Listening Strategy Chart

Strategy

Be Fully Present

Listen to Understand, Not to Respond

Maintain Eye Contact

Notice Nonverbal Cues

Don't Interrupt

Paraphrase What Was Said

Ask Open-Ended Questions

Explanation

Put away distractions and give your full attention to the speaker.

Focus on what is being said instead of planning your reply.

Show you are engaged and paying attention by looking at the speaker.

Pay attention to tone, facial expressions, and body language.

Let the other person finish before you speak; interruptions break focus.

Repeat back the main idea in your own words to confirm you understood.

Encourage deeper conversation by asking questions that need more than yes/no.

*Students copy into notes or highlight on a separate handout.

Part 2 - Guided Activity: Listening Practice (10 minutes)

- **Teacher reads the practice passage aloud once.**

Listening Practice Passage

Yesterday, after school, I decided to stop by the library before heading home. I had to return a mystery novel that was two days late, so I owed a small fine of fifty cents. While I was there, I checked out a new book about the history of baseball and another one about space exploration. On my way out, I ran into my friend Taylor, who told me she had just joined the art club. She showed me a sketch she had been working on of a sunflower, and it looked amazing. I was so impressed that I told her she should enter it into the upcoming school art show next month.

- Students write down the key details (stopped by library, return a mystery novel, fine of 50 cents, checked out new books, bumped into Taylor, amazing sketch, she should enter it into the show).
- Pair-share: Students retell the story to a partner in their own words.
- Partners check if they remembered the same details.
- Whole-class debrief: Which details were missed? Why?

Part 3 - Real-Life Application (5 minutes)

- **Students brainstorm examples of when active listening matters most:**
 - In class (teacher instructions)
 - With friends (to avoid miscommunication)
 - At home (parents/guardians)
- **Encourage students to practice active listening at home tonight with a sibling, parent, or friend.**

Part 4 - Closure & Reflection (5 minutes)

- Exit Ticket: "One way I can practice active listening today is..."
- Teacher collects for review.

Student Handouts for This Lesson

Part 1 - Active Listening Strategies:

Active Listening means focusing fully on what someone is saying, not just hearing the words. It helps you understand better and avoid mistakes like Leon made.

Active Listening Strategy Chart

Strategy

Be Fully Present

Listen to Understand, Not to Respond

Maintain Eye Contact

Notice Nonverbal Cues

Don't Interrupt

Paraphrase What Was Said

Ask Open-Ended Questions

Explanation

Put away distractions and give your full attention to the speaker.

Focus on what is being said instead of planning your reply.

Show you are engaged and paying attention by looking at the speaker.

Pay attention to tone, facial expressions, and body language.

Let the other person finish before you speak; interruptions break focus.

Repeat back the main idea in your own words to confirm you understood.

Encourage deeper conversation by asking questions that need more than yes/no.

Part 2 - Listening Practice Activity

Your teacher will read a short passage aloud. Write down as many details as you can remember. Afterward, share with a partner and compare notes.

Details I remembered:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Part 3 - Real-Life Application

Think about times in your own life when active listening would be useful.

1. In class: _____
2. With friends: _____
3. At home: _____

Part 4 - Reflection - Exit Ticket

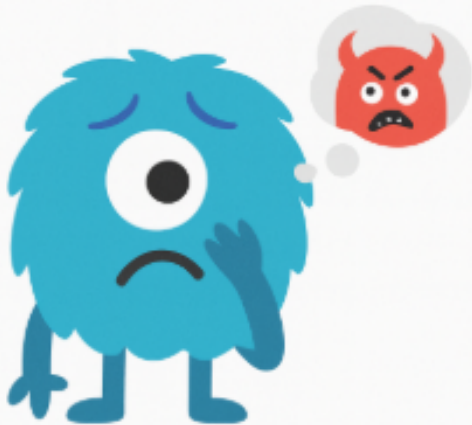
Complete this sentence:



One way I can practice active listening today is: _____

Student Homework: Photos below are intended to be printed for the student to take home for homework. Please print enough for your class size.

SCENARIO



You are worrying
about something
unrelated to
homework

FEELING TIRED

I'm too sleepy
to think about
homework.



Outside noises
from neighbors
or cars



The room
is too hot
or too cold

Parents are talking loudly



Thinking about having
to do chores



Kids are
playing
outside

Key Takeaway Cards for the lesson. Print and cut out the cards, then give one to each student as a reference and reminder of what they have learned.

Active Listening Key Takeaways: 1. Be fully present and maintain eye contact 2. Listen to understand, not to respond 3. Notice nonverbal cues 4. Withhold judgment and don't interrupt 5. Paraphrase and ask open-ended questions	Active Listening Key Takeaways: 1. Be fully present and maintain eye contact 2. Listen to understand, not to respond 3. Notice nonverbal cues 4. Withhold judgment and don't interrupt 5. Paraphrase and ask open-ended questions
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STUDENT HOMEWORK

Homework: Practicing Active Listening

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Tonight, you will practice active listening with a friend, parent, sibling, or another person in your life. Use the strategies from today's lesson to guide you.

Step 1 – Conversation Practice

1. Choose someone to talk with for at least 5 minutes.
2. Ask them about their day, a hobby they enjoy, or something they're looking forward to.
3. While they are speaking, practice these strategies:
 - Be fully present.
 - Maintain eye contact.
 - Do not interrupt.
 - Paraphrase what they said before responding.
 - Ask at least one open-ended question.

Step 2 – Reflection Questions

Answer in complete sentences:

- Who did you talk with, and what was the topic of conversation?

- What active listening strategies did you use?

- What was easy about using active listening?

- What was challenging about using active listening?

- Did the other person notice that you were listening more closely than usual? If yes, what did they say?

- One way I can improve my listening skills at school is:

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

PARENT HOMEWORK (OPTIONAL)

Parents should navigate to [HabitCoach.com](https://habitcoach.com)
and click on Coach Your Own Child.

In the box titled, 'Communication choose "Active Listening."

Alternatively, you may use this URL address or QR code.

<https://dashboard.habitcoach.com/cyoc-lessons/28/>

SCAN HERE



Outline of 7th/8th Grade Topics

Executive Function (1)

- Topic 1 – Day 1 – Self Assessment
- Topic 1 – Day 1 – What is Executive Function?

Organizing and Planning (7)

- Topic 1 – Day 1 – Improving your Digital Organization
- Topic 1 – Day 2 – Improving your Digital Organization
- Topic 2 – Day 1 – Planning out Longer Term Projects
- Topic 2 – Day 2 – Planning out Longer Term Projects
- Topic 3 – Day 1 – Breaking down Big Assignments and creating Interim deadlines
- Topic 3 – Day 2 – Breaking down Big Assignments and creating Interim deadlines
- Topic 4 – Day 1 – Keeping Track of Assignments
- Topic 4 – Day 2 – Keeping Track of Assignments
- Topic 5 – Day 1 – Planning your Study Time
- Topic 5 – Day 2 – Planning your Study Time
- Topic 6 – Day 1 – Handling Timed Assignments
- Topic 6 – Day 2 – Handling timed Assignments
- Topic 7 – Day 1 – Organizing your Ideas into Essays
- Topic 7 – Day 2 – Organizing your Ideas into Essays

Academics (12)

- Topic 1 – Day 1 – Being on Time for class/Transitioning between classes.
- Topic 1 – Day 2 – Being on Time for class/Transitioning between classes
- Topic 2 – Day 1 – Keeping track of Time
- Topic 2 – Day 2 – Keeping track of Time
- Topic 3 – Day 1 – Active Listening
- Topic 3 – Day 2 – Active Listening
- Topic 4 – Day 1 – Remembering what you just read or heard
- Topic 4 – Day 2 – Remembering what you just read or heard
- Topic 5 – Day 1 – Proofreading
- Topic 5 – Day 2 – Proofreading
- Topic 6 – Day 1 – Getting Started on Homework

- Topic 6 – Day 2 – Getting Started on Homework.
- Topic 7 – Day 1 – How to take notes
- Topic 7 – Day 2 – How to take notes
- Topic 8 – Day 1 – How to study for a test
- Topic 8 – Day 2 – How to study for a test
- Topic 9 – Day 1 – Building Endurance
- Topic 9 – Day 2 – Building Endurance
- Topic 10 – Day 1 – Taking Timed Tests
- Topic 10 – Day 2 – Taking Timed Tests
- Topic 11 – Day 1 – Making To-Do-Lists
- Topic 11 – Day 2 – Making To-Do Lists
- Topic 12 – Day 1 – Learning to Self-Advocate in school
- Topic 12 – Day 2 – Learning to Self -Advocate in school

Focus – Avoiding Distraction (6)

- Topic 1 – Day 1 – Dealing with Distractions that keep you from studying
- Topic 1 – Day 2 – Dealing with Distractions that keep you from studying.
- Topic 2 – Day 1 – Having a Healthy Relationship with technology
- Topic 2 – Day 2 – Having a Healthy Relationship with technology
- Topic 3 – Day 1 – Do you have a screen addiction
- Topic 3 – Day 2 – Do you have a screen addiction
- Topic 4 – Day 1 – How much time do you game?
- Topic 4 – Day 2 – How much time do you game?
- Topic 5 – Day 1 – How to set your own time limits on screen use
- Topic 5 – Day 2 – How to set your own time limits on screen use
- Topic 6 – Day 1 – Keeping your Electronics Charged
- Topic 6 – Day 2 – Keeping your Electronics Charged

Outline of 7th/8th Grade Topics

Emotional Control (32)

- Topic 1 - Day 1 - Having a Growth Mindset
- Topic 1 - Day 2 - Having a Growth Mindset
- Topic 2 - Day 1 - Understanding different points of view
- Topic 2 - Day 2 - Understanding different points of view
- Topic 3 - Day 1 - Taking ownership of your mistakes
- Topic 3 - Day 2 - Taking ownership of your mistakes
- Topic 4 - Day 1 - Learning the Power of an Apology
- Topic 4 - Day 2 - Learning the Power of an Apology
- Topic 5 - Day 1 - Don't sweat the small stuff
- Topic 5 - Day 2 - Don't sweat the small stuff
- Topic 6 - Day 1 - Adaptive Thinking
- Topic 6 - Day 2 - Adaptive Thinking

Communication (5)

- Topic 1 - Day 1 - Active Listening
- Topic 1 - Day 2 - Active Listening
- Topic 2 - Day 1 - How to have better 2-way conversations
- Topic 2 - Day 2 - How to have better 2-way conversations
- Topic 3 - Day 1 - How to interrupt less frequently
- Topic 3 - Day 2 - How to interrupt less frequently
- Topic 4 - Day 1 - Thinking before Speaking
- Topic 4 - Day 2 - Thinking before Speaking
- Topic 5 - Day 1 - Refraining from sending an impulsive text
- Topic 5 - Day 2 - Refraining from sending an impulsive text

Flexible Thinking (2)

- Topic 1 - Day 1 - Creative Problem Solving
- Topic 1 - Day 2 - Creative Problem Solving
- Topic 2 - Day 1 - Transitioning to High School
- Topic 2 - Day 2 - Transitioning to High School

Sample 7th/8th grade lesson

Academics

Topic 6 - Day 1 – Getting Started On Homework

Teacher Instructions (in blue): These are guidelines—use the lesson as you see fit. This is Lesson 1 of 2 for the week. In every lesson, write the names of the Executive Functions (EF) on the board and discuss what each EF means. The goal is for students to understand the language of EF and be able to talk about it with their teachers, parents, and peers.

Executive Functions:

Getting Started – Sometimes called Task Initiation, this Executive Function refers to being able to begin a new task without procrastinating. Obviously, getting started helps you avoid procrastination.

Metacognition – This means self-awareness. It's the ability to evaluate your own skills or behavior and adjust them as needed. It means thinking about thinking.

Goal:

- Teach students strategies to help them to avoid procrastination and get started on homework in a timely fashion.

Objective:

- Students will practice strategies to overcome procrastination and “getting stuck” when starting homework or studying, using Hayley’s story as a model.

Materials Needed:

- Printed copy of Hayley’s story
- Whiteboard or chart paper for group notes
- Strategy Takeaway card
- Timer (or phone timer)
- Student notebooks

Whole Group:

Read Hayley’s story aloud.

Hayley knew about her math test tomorrow. In fact, she had known about it last week. She just really struggles with Geometry. Now it is 9 PM on Thursday night. Hayley heard the familiar, ‘Don’t you have a math test tomorrow, honey? Did you study?’

There is only one correct response to that. “Of course I did, Mom, Jeez!”

(insert eye roll here)

But the truth is, Hayley didn’t know where to start. Mr. McClanahan talks so fast and gives notes EVERY day. “I just can’t keep up. I have no idea the differences in parallelograms and trapezoids and rhombi or rhombuses. Who cares?” she told her cousin Keshawn.

“I’m actually doing quite well in this unit. Would you like me to help you get started?” Keshawn said.

“Seriously, that would be amazing!” Hayley replied.

"First, we need to start by getting these notes and your workspace organized," Keshawn said.

"Then, we need a reward. I know. For every 20 minutes you participate in quizzing over your study material, I will sing one karaoke song, and you get to pick the song." Keshawn said.

"Are you serious right now? I would work for hours to see that. Where do I start?"

"Which of these is an octagon?" Keyshawn began with a smirk.

Discussion:

Have you ever struggled to get started with homework like Hayley?

What do you do to get 'unstuck'?

What could Hailey do to make things even easier?

Ask:

- "What was the emotion behind Hayley's unwillingness to get started on her studying?"
- "Have you ever been in Hayley's shoes?"

Write on the board: Getting Started = Biggest Hurdle

Discussion (10 min)

Guide students through reflection:

- Why do YOU sometimes avoid starting homework?
- Which of these reasons fit you most:
 - Anxiety?
 - Distractions?
 - Mixing urgent vs important?
 - Something else?

Students can share out loud or jot quick notes.

Mini-Lesson: Strategies to Get Unstuck (10 min)

Introduce and explain these strategies with short examples:

1. **Remove distractions** → Clear workspace, phone in another room.
2. **Straighten up** → Organize papers and notes first.
3. **Get Started for 10 minutes** → Tell yourself, "Anybody can work for 10 minutes." Once 10 minutes is up, see if you can keep going.
4. **Break it up** → One chunk at a time, with short breaks.
5. **Set a timer** → 20–30 minutes, then stop.
6. **Study Buddy** → Someone to quiz you or keep you on track.
7. **Reward yourself** → Pick something fun after finishing.

Have students each circle two strategies they think would help THEM the most.

Guided Practice (10–12 min)

Activity: *Pick a Study Buddy or Accountability Partner*

- Students identify one person who could hold them accountable for studying (friend, cousin, parent, sibling).
- Role-play:
 - Partner A asks their “study buddy” for support.
 - Partner B practices responding.
- Rotate so everyone practices both roles.

Then ask:

- “What would you say to get them to help you?”
- “What reward or system would make studying easier?”

Practice scenario if students struggle to get started

Scene: Hayley’s Room

(Hayley is slumped at her desk, staring at her messy notes and phone. Keshawn walks in.)

Keshawn: Hey Hayley, shouldn’t you be studying for that geometry test tomorrow?

Hayley: (groans) Ugh, I know... but I don’t even know where to start. My notes are all over the place, and honestly, I’d rather just scroll TikTok.

Keshawn: I get it. But let’s try a few strategies to get you started.

Step 1 – Remove Distractions

Keshawn: First, let’s put your phone in the kitchen. Out of sight, out of mind.

Hayley: (hands over phone dramatically) Okay, fine. Goodbye, TikTok!

Step 2 – Straighten Up

Keshawn: Now, let’s stack your math notes in order. See? Already less overwhelming.

Hayley: Huh... that actually looks better.

Step 3 – Break it Up

Keshawn: Instead of studying the whole unit, let’s just focus on parallelograms for 15 minutes.

Hayley: That sounds... doable.

Step 4 – Set a Timer

Keshawn: (sets timer on watch) Okay, 10 minutes. Even you can study for 10 minutes, right? When it beeps, we stop. Deal?

Hayley: Deal.

Independent Practice (10 min)

Students answer prompts in their notebook or on the worksheet below

1. What subject or test do I usually put off?
2. What’s one reason I avoid it?
3. Which strategy will I try this week to get started?
4. Who could be my study buddy?
5. What reward could motivate me?

GETTING STARTED STRATEGIES - REFLECTION WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to reflect on your study habits. Answer each question honestly. Think about how you can use the strategies we learned in class to help you get started.

1. What subject or test do I usually put off?

2. What's one reason I avoid it?

3. Which strategy will I try this week to get started?

4. Who could be my study buddy?

5. What reward could motivate me?

Reflection / Wrap-Up (5 min)

- Share 1-2 examples as a class.
- Post this mantra: "Getting started is the hardest part. Start small, and keep moving."

TAKEAWAY

Strategies



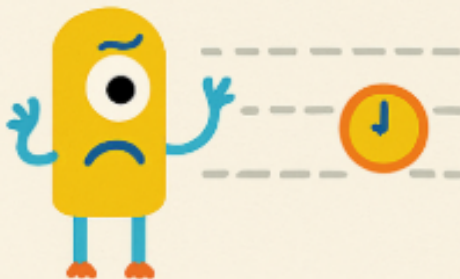
Remove distractions

Clear workspace, phone in another room.



Straighten up

Organize papers and notes first



Break it up

One chunk at a time, with short breaks

Set a timer

20–30 minutes, then stop



Study Buddy

Someone to quiz you or keep you on track

Reward yourself

Pick something fun after finishing



STUDENT HOMEWORK

Homework: Getting Started Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____

Part 1 – Reflection (5–7 sentences)

1. Think about ONE subject you usually put off (math, reading, science, etc.).
2. Write about WHY you think it's hard for you to get started in that subject.
 - Is it anxiety? Distractions? Mixing up urgent vs. important? Something else?

Part 2 – Strategy Match

1. Choose 3 strategies from the “Getting Started” card (Remove distractions, Straighten up, Break it up, Set a timer, Study Buddy, Reward yourself).
2. For each one, write:
 - How you would use it this week
 - What obstacle it might help you with

Example: “Set a timer – I will set a timer for 25 minutes when I study for my science quiz so I don’t get distracted.”

Part 3 – Action Plan

1. Pick ONE assignment or test you have coming up.
2. Write your Get Started Plan:
 - Step 1: Clear workspace (describe what you’ll move or put away).
 - Step 2: First thing you’ll do (specific action).
 - Step 3: Timer amount you’ll use.
 - Step 4: Reward you’ll give yourself when done.

Parent / Guardian Check-In

Have a parent/guardian sign below after you share your plan with them:

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

PARENT HOMEWORK (OPTIONAL)

Parents should navigate to [HabitCoach.com](https://habitcoach.com)
and click on Coach Your Own Child.

In the box titled, 'Homework' choose "Getting Started on Homework
Without Procrastinating."

Alternatively, you may use this URL address or QR code.
<https://dashboard.habitcoach.com/cyoc-lessons/37/>

SCAN HERE

