

WELCOME BACK!



Help Students Get and Stay Organized so They're Ready to Learn

Young people's lives are filled with clutter and distractions. With everything that has to be taught in school, being organized is one of the basic skills students need to master before they can begin to learn. Student-created checklists can teach young students the importance of setting goals and help them build organizational skills. With the assistance of a checklist, students can develop routines to help them stay on task during the busiest times of their day. And with some creativity, student-created checklists don't have to be just a reminder card taped to a desk. They can take the form of a placemat or a bookmark. They can be whatever you can imagine.

Think - Pair - Share:

Start a classroom discussion about the busiest times of your own day. Ask students to think about a time during the day when they feel rushed. Perhaps it's in the morning when they're getting ready for school or at classroom transition time? Introduce a morning checklist idea to the class. Ask students to think independently about what they would put on their own checklist to better organize their morning. Then pair up students to talk about each of their morning routines. Come back together, as a class, to share and record each pair's ideas.

Hands-On:

Ask each student to choose a time of day for which they think creating a checklist would help them stay organized. To make the lists, have items like decorative paper, colored pencils, markers, or stickers available. Encourage students to be creative when they make their lists. Suggest they use drawn shapes (a circle, square or star) or a small image for bullet points. Once completed, laminate the lists, or cover them with clear contact paper, so items can be checked off daily with an erasable dry erase marker.

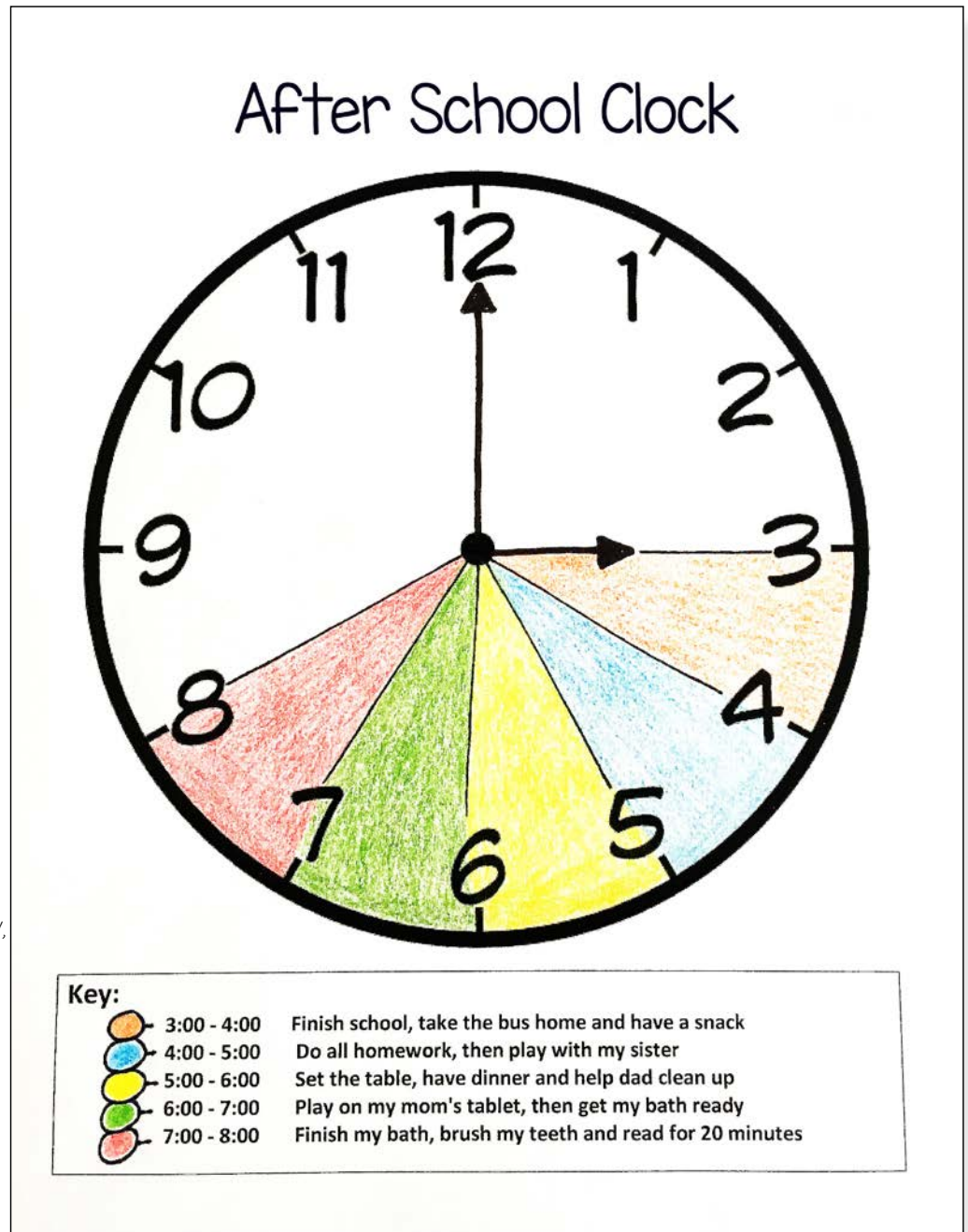


Students can think about their after school routine while they strengthen their chart-making, planning, sequencing, and time-telling skills. Maybe they will even find a little extra time for bedtime reading!

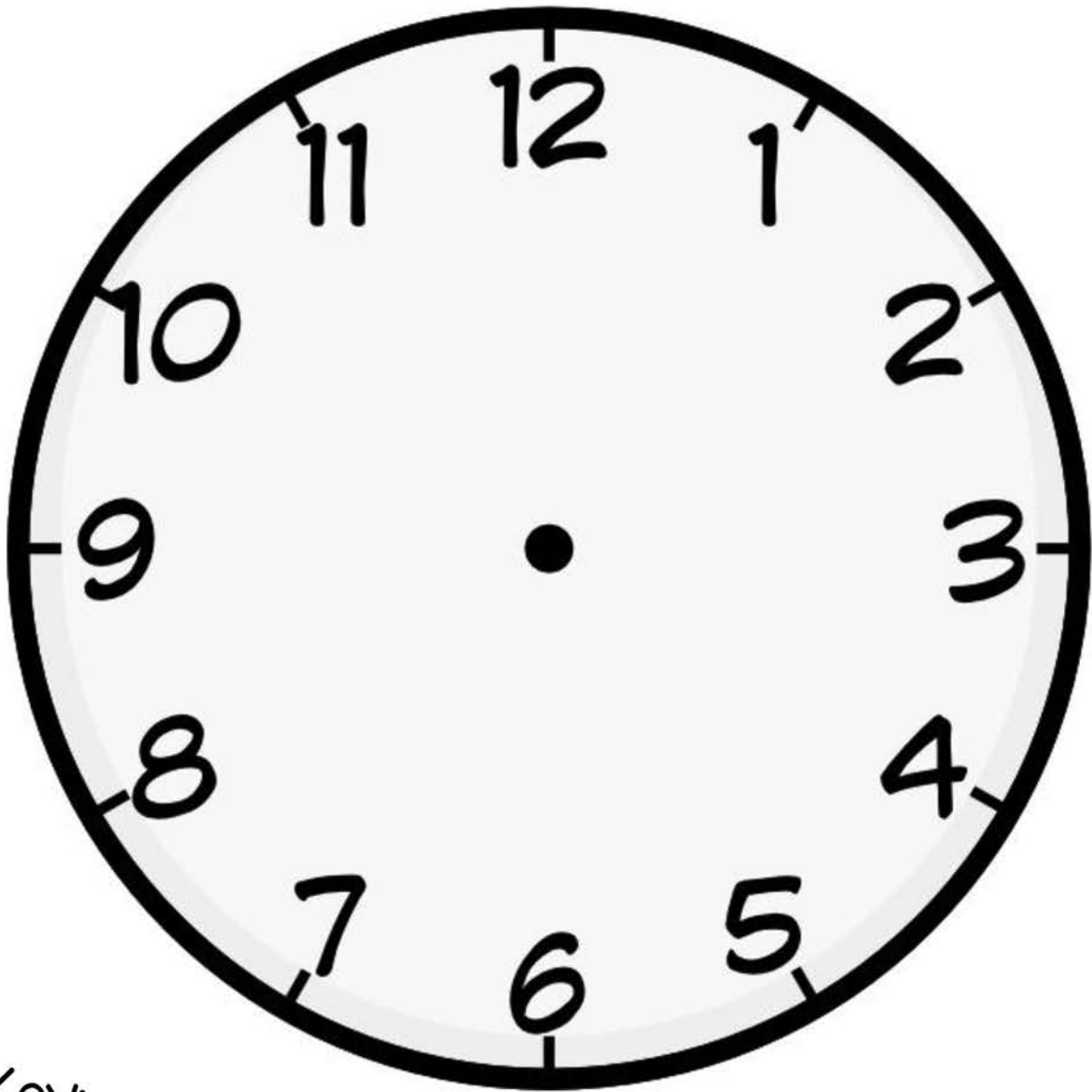
Download our blank **After School Clock** on page 2 to get students started creating their own after school routines.

Need a few new ideas for bedtime reading?

In the book Danny's Dinner, Danny anxiously watches the clock as he waits for Dad to get home with dinner. Reading rhymes in Favorite Nursery Rhymes from Danny is a funny way to spend the last hours of the day. In the Puppy Danny Lap-sized book, Danny goes to Dad with a special bedtime story request. Stuffed Danny, Norman or Abby all love bedtime stories and make terrific listeners!



After School Clock



Key:

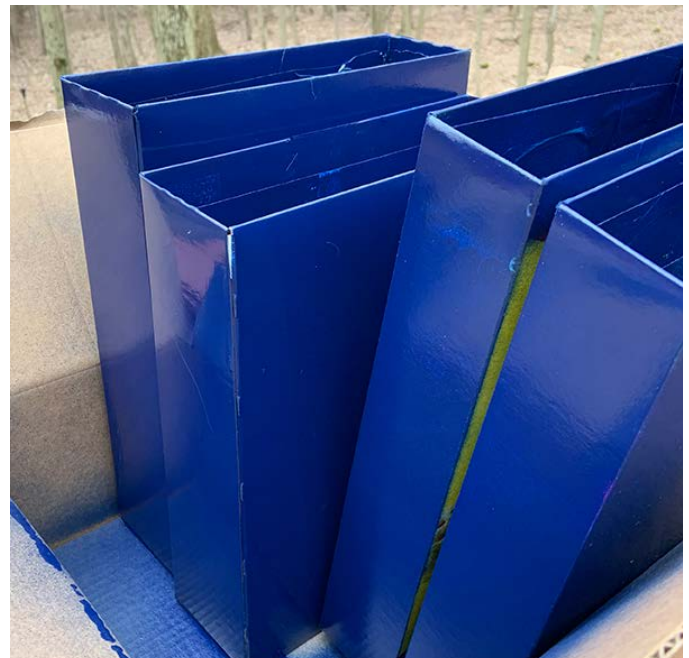
Need help keeping your at-home learner organized?

This easy project uses family-size cereal boxes to make a simple filing system! (Hint: Cheerios and Rice Krispies come in the biggest boxes and will fit 8 1/2 x 11" paper.)

Cut off the box top flaps, or tape them down, so that they're out of the way.



We painted our boxes with some spray paint we had left over from a previous project, but covering them with other household materials will work, too. If you don't want to paint your boxes, you can cover them with construction paper, wrapping paper, or even a brown paper bag from the grocery store.



After you have covered the boxes, label the sides. Labels keep everyone organized! We chose the labels that best fit our first grade learner, but feel free to pick labels that will work for your student.

This project is about keeping your at-home learner organized, so let them personalize it! We used stickers that a kind aunt sent us in the mail. Color, paint, and glue pictures cut from magazines. Use whatever you find at home to make the cereal box organizer a special piece for your at-home learner's space.

Lastly, stack the boxes. You can hot glue or tape the boxes together to keep the stack from shifting. If all your cereal boxes are the same size, you can even tie them with a cute ribbon to keep them in place.



Reading for Comprehension –Finding the Main Idea

The main idea is the primary concept of a sentence and represents what the author is trying to say. Identifying main ideas, and working out the relationship between them and the supporting details, is the basis of reading comprehension. Recognizing the main idea is an important skill young readers need to master in order to fully understand what they're reading.

There are many things for readers to consider when trying to determine what the main idea is. Here's a fun way to help them... and it uses a tool that always "handy."

Your thumb stands for WHO.

The main character in a story is very important. Identifying the most important character in the story helps us find the main idea.

Your pointer finger stands for did WHAT.

What did the main character do in the story?

Your middle finger stands for WHERE.

Where did the main character do what they did?

Your ring finger stands for WHEN.

When did the main character do what they did?

Your pinky stands for WHY.

Why did the main character do what they did?

Using the fingers on their own hand is an easy way for young readers to remember all five components. When they can identify these components, help them think about what finally happened in the story. This will lead them to the main idea. Young readers will need lots of practice with lots of stories. It might be helpful for students to have a print out of the next page in the classroom.



I've got
the main idea...

why?

when?

where?

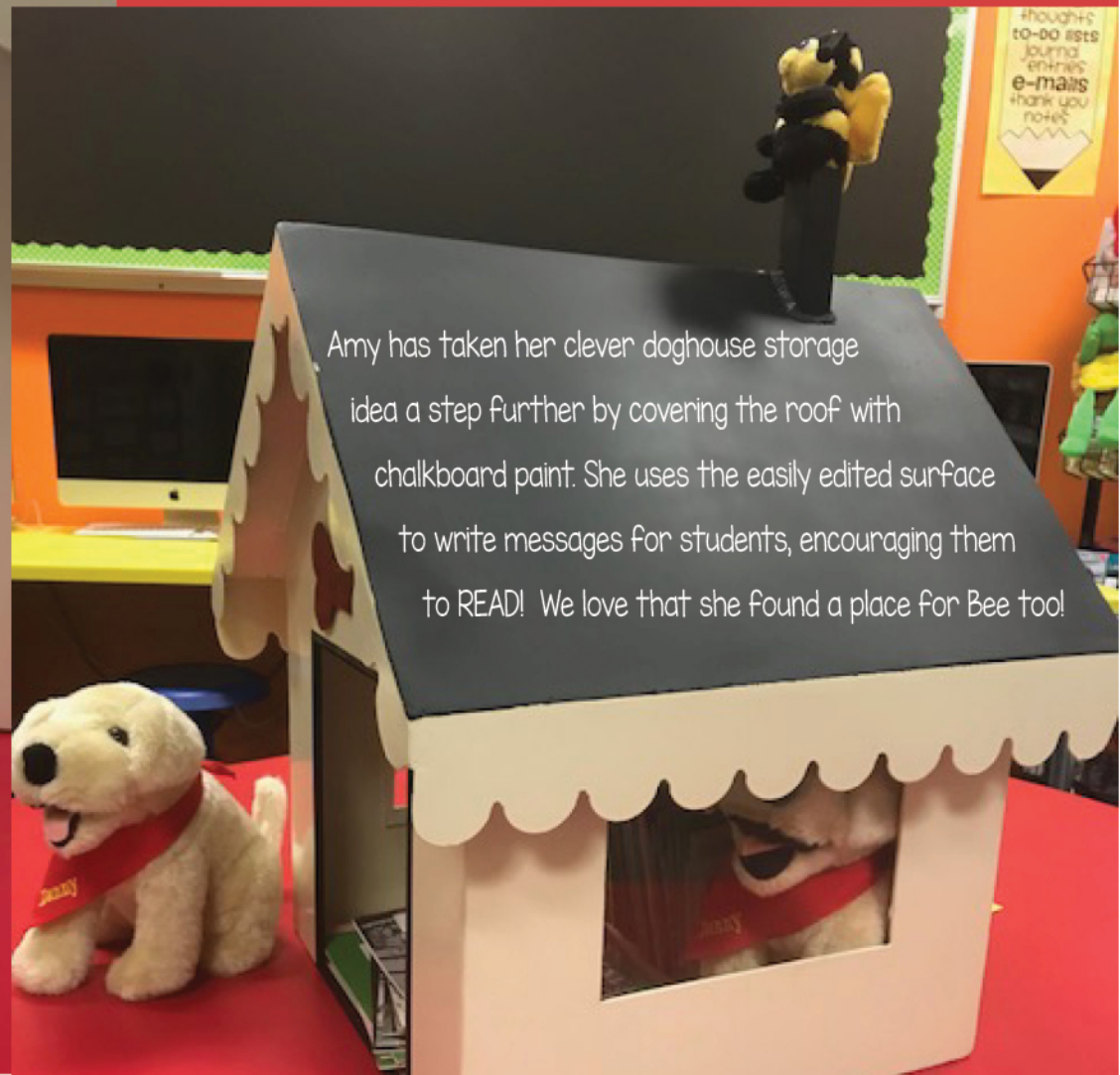
did what?

who?

in my hands.



We can't stop talking about the charming book-storing idea shared with us by Amy Treptow of Pineview Elementary School in Reedsburg, WI. As a Reading Interventionist, Amy keeps her students' Danny books in an ingeniously designed Danny Doghouse.



Amy has taken her clever doghouse storage idea a step further by covering the roof with chalkboard paint. She uses the easily edited surface to write messages for students, encouraging them to READ! We love that she found a place for Bee too!