

Finding a Time and Place to Study

The **BIG** Idea

- How can I organize my homework, materials, and study space to make the best use of my study time?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up: Are You a Super Studier? (5 minutes)
- II. First Things First: Do You Have What You Need? (10 minutes)
- III. Finding the Time, Setting a Goal (10 minutes)
- IV. Finding a Special Study Spot (15 minutes)
- V. Wrap Up: Study Skills Checklist (5 minutes)

MATERIALS

STUDENT HANDBOOK

- Student Handbook page 23, Are You a Super Studier?
- Student Handbook page 24, Homework Assignments
- Student Handbook page 25, My Time, My Place
- Student Handbook page 26, Study Skills Checklist

Chart paper

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Create a place to write down their daily homework assignments.
- Consider the best time and place to study for themselves, understanding the importance of keeping this time and place consistent.
- Identify at least two students they can call for help if they have questions about their homework assignments.

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will talk about how to make the best use of their time when they study, from how to keep track of homework assignments to finding the best time and place to study. They'll begin with a quick quiz that asks about important study habits. Then they'll discuss the importance of homework preparation, and how to keep track of each day's assignments and materials to go home. Next, they'll talk about finding the best time to study, and how to make the best use of their time. Then they'll explore finding the best place to study—including when a computer is required—and draw a picture of their own special “study spot.” Finally, they'll assess their own study habits with a study skills checklist.

PREPARATION

- Make multiple copies of **Student Handbook page 24, Homework Assignments**.
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
 - **Student Handbook page 24, Homework Assignments**
 - **Student Handbook page 26, Study Skills Checklist**
- If feasible, copy the **Study Skills Checklist** on the back of the Family Newsletter. This will allow students to review this checklist with their families.
- Write the day's **BIG IDEA** and agenda on the board.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Middle school is a big transition for many students. In elementary school, they had one or two teachers who were there to hold their hands and remind them of assignments and responsibilities. In middle school, they suddenly have five or more teachers—each with their own expectations and demands. Classes are held in different places, so their “home base” becomes a locker that they (and they alone) are responsible for. They also have more materials stored in that locker, with textbooks, notebooks, and other materials for each class. Notes and reminders may reach parents less frequently, so it's up to students to keep track of their own schedules, papers, and

test dates. And most importantly, students in middle school are facing much higher expectations.

To stay on top of everything, students need to be very organized—but this doesn't come naturally for many seventh-graders. They need assistance to organize their assignments, their notebooks, their lockers, and, most of all, their time. Otherwise, students may suffer academically — not because of a lack of talent, but because they simply haven't learned to organize their time to study effectively.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

DO NOW:

If you prefer, you may choose to use **Student Handbook page 23, Are You a Super Studier?** as a DO NOW. Give the students three minutes to answer the questions. Once the students have completed their quiz, go over the answers and then begin with the discussion in the **Warm Up**.

For **Activity II, First Things First: Do You Have What You Need?**, if your students' school planners look very different from **Student Handbook page 24, Homework Assignments**, you may prefer to create a model page, on either chart paper or the overhead, that matches your students' school planner.

You may choose to have the students complete the **Student Handbook page 25, My Time, My Place** after you have discussed both topics, as described in **Activity III** and **Activity IV**.

As a final homework assignment, state that you'll be checking their assignment notebooks the following week, specifically looking at the students' list of assignments for the previous day. You could also announce that you'll spot check assignment books over the coming weeks, providing raffle tickets or small prizes to students who can find the previous day's assignments in one minute or less. Also, you could announce that you will spot check for students' study-buddy numbers in the same way.

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. Warm Up: Are You a Super Studier? (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Welcome, everybody! For the next few weeks, we're going to focus on study skills. Figuring out how to get organized, take good notes, and use your time well are keys to success in seventh grade.

How many of you think you make the best use of your time when you study? Well, you're going to take a little quiz to find out! Please turn to **Student Handbook page 23, Are You a Super Studier?** Take a minute to complete the quiz.

[Give students a few minutes to complete the quiz. Then ask students to identify the right answer for each question. As the answers should be fairly obvious, this is really meant to reinforce some major ideas in the lesson. If time permits, quickly go through the quiz, asking students to raise their hands to show which letter best fits their current behavior.]

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** So, how did you do? If you got five or more answers right, then you ARE a super studier. If you didn't, then you could be a super studier—you just need to learn a few basic tips about studying. Today, we're going to discuss an important aspect of study skills—finding a consistent time and place to study that works for you.

II. First Things First: Do You Have What You Need? (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Who's ever gone home and realized you don't have the book you need to do your homework? (Show of hands) Or maybe you have the right books, but you don't know what your assignment is. As you've seen first-hand, you can't study well unless you know exactly what you need to do, and have what you need to do it.

[Ask for volunteers to explain how they keep track of their assignments for each class. You may want to write their ideas on chart paper, an overhead projector, or the board. Use this brainstorming to explain the importance of writing their assignments down in one place.]

You are exactly right! The best way to keep track of your assignments is to have one place where you write down your homework in every class every day. A small notebook is ideal, especially if it's small enough to tuck into a pocket in your book bag.

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** It's also important to know what you need to take home each night for every class. To help you remember, you could write a simple note or symbol into your planner—something that's easy to read at the end of the day when you're packing up your book bag. For example, you could simply write a "TB" or "NB" next to the assignment if you need to take home the textbook or notebook in that subject.
3. [Allow students to share any notes or symbols they use to remember their assignments and/or supplies. To show students one way to organize these assignments, have them turn to the **Student Handbook page 24, Homework Assignments**. Call on two volunteers to share one homework assignment they have that week. On the overhead, model how to record the assignment and needed supplies using shorthand. (See **Implementation Options** for suggestions.)]
4. [Emphasize the importance of reviewing this list at the end of the day to make sure you have all the books and materials you need to take home.]
5. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** No matter how organized you are, chances are you'll leave a book at school, forget to write down an assignment, or maybe realize you don't understand an assignment once you sit down to study. This is when it helps to have at least one "study buddy," or someone you can call for help, in each class.

I'd like you to open your assignment book, or the notebook you use for most of your classes. On the inside front cover, write down two people in your classes that you could call if you have a question about an assignment. If you know each person's phone number now, go ahead and write it down, too. If not, do this after class. You could also keep these numbers in another handy place that works for you: programmed into your cell phone or written in a card in your wallet or book bag.

III. Finding the Time, Setting a Goal (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** What time do you sit down to do your homework? [Take a few answers. Ask the students why they choose that time.] This time may vary with each of you. It really depends on your schedule, other commitments, and even what time of day you feel most alert. Maybe it's easier to study right when you get home. Or maybe you need a break after school, so you study after dinner. Whenever you study, it's important to get into the habit of studying at about the same time every day.
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** It's also important to have enough time to study—and to use this time wisely. One way to do this is to have a clear goal when you sit down to study.

This goal should clearly state what you need to accomplish in each subject. You should also prioritize the assignments—tackling the most urgent and difficult assignments first. To make sure you’re leaving yourself enough time to study, try to estimate the time each subject will take.

- 3. SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Of course, we all need to take breaks while we study. You need a change of pace when you start to feel fidgety, bored, tired, or your mind wanders. Just remember to keep breaks limited—and short. What are some other good things to do if you want to take a quick break? [Students respond; stand up and stretch, pet the dog, go to the bathroom, listen to one favorite song, walk outside and take a deep breath.] If you find your breaks are stretching out, try setting a timer to limit breaks to five minutes or less.
- 4.** [Have students turn to their **Student Handbook page 25, My Time, My Place**. Have them complete the first part of the page, “My Time,” in which they’ll consider the best time of day for them to study and explain why. (See **Implementation Options** for suggestions.)]

IV. Finding a Special Study Spot (15 minutes)

- 1. SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Just as it’s important to try to study at the same time every day, it’s also important to try to study at the same place every day.

[Have students share their favorite places to study—places where they really feel like they can focus on their homework without distractions; this can be inside or outside their home. (If students do not seem to have a quiet place to work, have them describe their ideal study setting.) List these places on the board.]

- 2.** [Point out how different these places are. What works for one person may not for another. It’s up to them to find the place that works best for them. Briefly discuss some important things to consider when finding a good place to study:

NOTE: Write the four factors (bolded words) below on the board, overhead, or chart paper to assist in your class discussion.

- **Comfort:** This could be a desk, kitchen table, bed, comfortable chair, or even the floor. Just be sure you’re comfortable and have room to spread out your books.
- **Sound:** Turn off any noises that are distractions—the television, a loud radio, or an iPod.
- **Interruptions:** Find a place where you won’t be interrupted or distracted by

anyone. Put a sign on the door and turn off your cell phone and instant messaging on your computer.

- **Materials:** Be sure you have everything you need where you study—paper, pens, pencils, calculator, dictionary, and access to any books, phone numbers, or websites you'll need.]

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** What if you need a computer for your assignment? Of course, lots of students don't have computers at home.

[Have students name places where they can use the computers (besides their own homes) and make a list on chart paper. Next to each, talk about what you might need to do to use that computer. For example, you would need to sign up to use the computer lab at school, making sure there's not a class using the lab. If you use a computer at the library, find out when the busiest times are so you don't get there to find out all the computers are in use. Help students see that they do have different options.]

4. [Have students turn to their **Student Handbook page 25, My Time, My Place**. Have them think about a place they know of that would be a good place to study and write that place under "My Place." Then have them draw a picture of this special "study spot." Have them write a caption or include labels to point out what makes this a good place to study. Maybe there's room to spread out, pens and paper, a comfortable chair, their favorite hat, or a radio to play soft music.]
5. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** If you are going to try a new place to study or use the computer, it might take some getting used to. When you begin anything new, it can feel weird at first. If you're studying at the library for the first time, you might walk in and immediately feel like you want to leave. But give it a few times—I promise it will feel a little less strange each time you do it. By the end of the week, you may have found the perfect study spot.

V. Wrap Up: Study Skills Checklist (5 minutes)

1. [Have students take a minute to share their **Student Handbook page 25, My Time, My Place** with a partner.]
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Before we end for the day, I'd like you to reflect on your own study skills.

[Have students turn to **Student Handbook page 26, Study Skills Checklist**, and check each one they feel they do.]

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Take a look at your list and think about which study skills might still need some work. The first thing I'd like you to focus on is keeping track of homework assignments. Your assignment for next week is to bring in your list of assignments from the previous school day. Remember, your list should clearly show the assignment in each subject, and the materials needed for each one.

4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** You all have done a great job today. Remember, if it takes some time to find a perfect time and place to study, don't get discouraged. It might take some time to find what works best for you. You have lots of people who want to help you — parents, teachers, counselors, librarians. All you need to do is ask!

Are You a Super Studier?

Below are some familiar situations. Circle the best answer for each one.

1. It's time for school! Before you rush out to meet the bus, you:
 - A. Run around the house looking for your book bag, stuffing in whatever notebooks and textbooks are lying around.
 - B. Grab your book bag from your room, but wonder if all your notebooks and textbooks are in it as you head out the door.
 - C. Grab the book bag from its regular spot. You know everything you need is there, because you packed it the night before.
2. The bell has rung and you're walking out of class with a friend. Your teacher says, "Tonight, please read chapter 3 and answer the questions at the end." You:
 - A. Keep walking out of class, telling yourself you'll remember the assignment.
 - B. Write it on a scrap piece of paper and shove it into your book bag.
 - C. Take out your homework notebook and write it in the day's list of assignments.
3. You get home and realize you didn't write down your math homework. You:
 - A. Call someone you know in that class to find out the assignment.
 - B. Plan on doing your math homework during your science class.
 - C. Celebrate! No math homework tonight!
4. Your social studies teacher wants your paper typed on a computer. You don't have one at home, so you:
 - A. Ignore her request and write it in your neatest handwriting.
 - B. Figure you'll use the computer lab the day it's due.
 - C. Sign up to use the library computer at least twice that week, in case it takes longer than you expected.
5. It's time to head home, so you swing by your locker. You:
 - A. Pick up your book bag and whatever books you think you might need for homework that night.
 - B. Check your homework notebook to see what books and other materials you'll need for homework that night.
 - C. Look at all the books in your locker, feel overwhelmed, and go home with an empty book bag.
6. You know you have a paper, math homework, and lots of reading to do before tomorrow. Before you get started, you:
 - A. Eat a snack, call a friend, check your e-mail, call another friend, check your e-mail again...
 - B. Grab your books and turn on the television.
 - C. Go to your special, quiet spot for studying and set a goal for what you need to accomplish.

Homework Assignments

Name _____

From _____

to _____

(beginning of the week)

(end of the week)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1st Period Subject:					
2nd Period Subject:					
3rd Period Subject:					
4th Period Subject:					
5th Period Subject:					
6th Period Subject:					
7th Period Subject:					
8th Period Subject:					
9th Period Subject:					

You are responsible for writing down your assignments for class. If there's no homework, write "NH" (for "no homework") so you know you didn't forget to write something down.

If your school has fewer than nine periods a day, cross off the extra spaces at the bottom. If your school is on a six-day cycle, fill in your homework assignments for one week only.

My Time, My Place

My Time

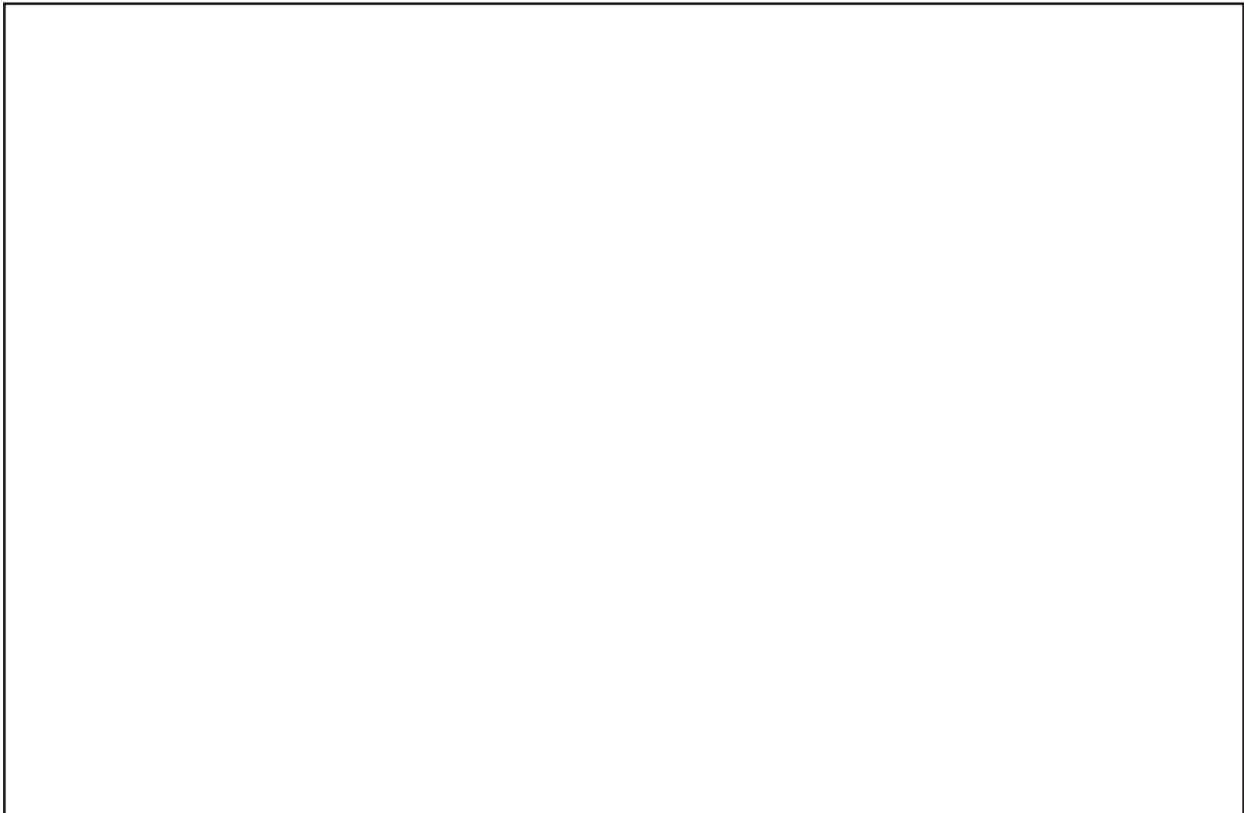
The best time of day for me to study is

because

My Place

The best place for me to study is

Draw a picture of this special study spot below. Include a caption or labels to point out why it's the best place for you to study.



Study Skills Checklist

How are your study habits? Read the list below, and check each item that applies to you most of the time.

I have one place to write down my homework assignments and any books that need to go home every day.

I check this list every day when I'm packing my book bag to go home.

I have a special place to study that's comfortable and quiet.

I have all my study materials in one place—including paper, pencil, calculator, and dictionary.

I have a place to use a computer if I need it.

I study at about the same time every day, and know that this is the best time for me.

When I sit down to study, I have a clear goal of what I want to accomplish in each subject.

I usually have enough time to finish my homework.

I have the phone number of at least one person in each class who I could call with a question about an assignment.

Every night, I put all the things I need to take to school the next day in the same place.