



Lesson plans serve as a framework for the learning activities that will occur in the classroom each day. They focus the class on specific learning objectives and maximize instructional time. The lesson plan is the tool effective teachers use to ensure that each part of a lesson supports a specified learning objective and to ensure that the activities and time spent will lead students to master content and skills. Lesson planning provides time for the teacher to think through resources that will best capture the attention of students and choose learning activities that will clearly convey content required for students to meet the lesson objectives. Effective teachers use lesson plans as a reflective opportunity to make decisions on what activities will best meet the needs of students and to predict/plan reactions to student challenges. When teachers take the time to create detailed plans, they are more likely to present content and skills to students that are objective driven, well-paced, clear, and lead students to mastery. Effective lesson planners plan backwards. This best practice is reflected in the backwards approach in the steps below.

How do I present objectives, concepts, and skills to maximize student learning?

Step 1: Prep Work

- Review the unit planning guides provided by HISD Curriculum Documents and review the Annual Plan.
 - The annual plan will provide the teacher with a yearlong look at the curriculum standards and the timeframe in which the standards are taught.
 - Review the Unit Plan to provide an idea of how the lessons should be structured and ordered, as well as the timing of assessments.

Step 2: Draft Plan

- Identify the curriculum standard(s). Determine what students should know and do by the end of the lesson.
- Develop or select a tool to Assess Mastery that accurately measures the lesson's curriculum standards.
- Select a teaching method for Introducing New Learning.
 - Plan learning experiences that will allow students to interact with the curriculum standards and engage with the instruction. These experiences can be focused on processing new information or reviewing previously learned information.
- Determine how students will practice new learning in the Guided Practice and Independent Practice portion of the lesson.
- Plan for a variety of Checkpoints throughout the lesson cycle and plan for adjustment based on student responses to checkpoints (i.e. scaffold or accelerate).
- Prepare a list of key vocabulary terms students need to know in order to master the learning objective.
 - The HISD Unit Planning Guide provides academic vocabulary and content specific vocabulary for each unit.
- Identify ways to differentiate lesson.
 - Identify any accommodations needed by students in special populations. Plan for Flexible Groups that need acceleration or scaffolding and take time to provide different ways for students to interact with or process content to aid in remediation or intervention.
- Determine what will be used for the Engage/Connect portion of the lesson cycle. This comes first in the lesson cycle, however it is last in backward design planning to ensure it is aligned with lesson's curriculum standards.
- Decide how the lesson will close.
- Create a list of materials that are needed for the lesson.

Step 3: Evaluate the Plan

- Ensure the components of the checklist are included in the lesson plans.
- At the end of the lesson, reflect on whether students mastered the lesson's curriculum standards. If not, determine cause and adjust future lessons utilizing small group instruction or flexible grouping.

Checklist

- I have an activity to introduce lesson.
- I have a list of teaching strategies to engage students in the concept/topic.
- I have provided various opportunities for students to practice/interact with content and skills using "I Do, We Do, You Do" approach within the lesson cycle.
- I have checks for understanding planned during the lesson.
- I have an assessment aligned to selected curriculum standards.
- I will have an activity to close lesson.



TIPS

- When planning learning activities, the WHERETO elements used in Understanding by Design are helpful in making instructional decisions.
- The lesson plan is only as good as its execution. Refer to the plan created during learning activities to stay on track.
- Discuss within the PLC learning activities, or strategies to foster student engagement and depth of learning. Use this opportunity to explore options for checkpoints throughout the lesson.



BURNING QUESTIONS

Should the textbook be used for guidance in creating lessons?

At times teachers rely heavily on textbooks or adopted instructional resources for lesson guidance and often times textbooks are not completely aligned to the course curriculum. Adoptions can be in place for up to ten years. Sometimes the material is outdated and no longer aligned; ensure the materials are aligned to curriculum standards. It is a great idea to use pre-created resources when possible, but not at the expense of lesson, unit, or assessment alignment. Teachers may need to use a variety of resources to successfully meet the expectations of the curriculum standards.

How can time be managed when executing a lesson?

A common challenge for teachers is time management when executing a lesson. Double Plan to anticipate student actions to proposed learning activities and always plans more learning activities than there is time to complete them. It is easier to remove activities from a lesson plan than to add quality learning experiences in the moment that met the rigor of the learning objective. When determining how to adjust for time, remember the closing is an important piece to the lesson. Be sure to reserve enough time for this portion of the lesson cycle. Sometimes time runs out and/or a transition must happen. Account for transitions in the planning of lessons and units. A Pacing Tool can assist in keeping track of time during a lesson.

Should fun be incorporated into lesson activities?

It is easy to choose activities that are engaging for students but effective teachers select activities that are both engaging and aligned to learning targets. While it is important that students enjoy learning and are invested, it is important that activities are meaningful and support the learning objective. Lessons should not be created around the activity, but rather in support of the learning standards.