

LEARNING COACH RESOURCE

Coach for Active Learning: Middle School

You can help your middle school student develop an active mindset. Active learners understand that passively reading through lessons and textbook assignments or casually viewing tutorials and movies isn't sufficient.

- Students must:
 - **Engage** in learning **by thinking** deeply about concepts.
 - **Self-monitor** their understanding.
 - **Get clarification** if their understanding breaks down.
- Your middle school student will need to work independently at times and alongside you at other times. Determine when your student is ready to work independently by **assessing their ability to complete lessons** as an active learner.

Organize Lesson Content

Organizing content into a **functional, note-taking format** leads the learner to think at a deeper level and increases the learner's level of understanding.

- Your student should take notes that support the lesson objectives and include **main ideas and details**.
 - Decide on a note-taking format and guide your student on how to **summarize new concepts**.
 - If your **student is unsure** about how to effectively take notes:
 - View the "Effective Notetaking" series of quick clips on Learning Coach Central by opening the Helpful Links & Resources category and selecting the Help Your Student Learn tab. The series can also be found in the Daily Tasks category by selecting the Navigating Lessons tab.
 - **Contact a teacher** for suggestions.
 - **Review** your student's notes to ensure that the notes include the words and definitions from the curriculum.



Being an independent, active learner is important in any setting, but in the virtual learning environment it is critical to student success.

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- Before beginning the lesson, your student should define the **key vocabulary words**. Many courses include a glossary in the yellow backpack at the bottom of each lesson slide.
 - Direct your student to read the words and definitions and **make connections** to what they already know about the words.
 - Your student should regularly use the **key word definitions** as they are reading the lesson material to help understand the content.
 - **Review** your **student's notes** to ensure that the notes include the words and definitions.

Encourage Self-Monitoring

- Effective readers monitor their own understanding as they read.
 - Encourage your student to periodically **stop and think** as they read lesson material. This can be done every few paragraphs, after each page, or after reading a paragraph with a lot of details.
 - **Independent learners ask** themselves who, what, where, when, why, how questions and answer appropriately.
- In many lessons, students are instructed to read material or watch a recording and answer specific questions. The questions are followed by a **Show Answer** button. The student should:
 - First follow the directions.
 - Next answer the questions **independently**.
 - Then check their answer by viewing the correct answer. If they didn't get the correct answer, encourage them to redo the problem.
 - Add the questions and corresponding answers to their notes.
- For **math courses**, your student should:
 - Read the lesson.
 - Watch the tutorials.
 - Complete the practice problems.
 - Self-check their answers.
 - Use another instructional resource (e.g., teacher, Khan Academy) to further understanding of the material or practice new skills.
- For **all courses**:
 - Encourage your student to **review related parts of lessons** if an answer is incorrect.
 - Continue to work with your student until this practice of **self-checking becomes a habit**.

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- **Worksheets, section review questions, and concept maps** are found throughout lessons, with completed versions provided at the end of many lessons.
 - Use these resources as opportunities for your student to **check for understanding and as study guides** for assessments.
- **Portfolio assessments** include **grading rubrics** for students to use prior to drafting the assessment and submitting it to the drop box.
 - **Use** the **grading rubric** alongside your student to check the assessment, determine the quality of the work, and then decide if the portfolio should be submitted or revised.
 - Your **student** should **evaluate** their own work independently as much as possible before reviewing it with you or submitting it to a teacher.

Get Clarification

- **If your student doesn't understand** a new concept, model the following actions and encourage your student to complete them independently:
 - **Reread** the content or repeat parts of the lesson leading up to the new concept.
 - **Explore** the topic further using another **instructional tool**, such as Khan Academy, found in Connexus®.
 - **Contact** the teacher.