

## GETTING STARTED WITH SMARTS Elementary

Welcome to the SMARTS Elementary community! You now have access to a comprehensive online curriculum for teaching executive function strategies. SMARTS-Elementary Online features 30 lessons complete with adaptable PowerPoint presentations, engaging classroom activities, handouts, and multiple opportunities to promote a reflective and self-aware approach to strategic learning in your students.

Ready to get started? It's easy—just follow these five steps:

1. [Get to know SMARTS Elementary](#)
2. [Choose your units and lessons](#)
3. [Schedule your year](#)
4. [Teach](#)
5. [Share](#)



Questions? Need Assistance? [Contact us.](#)

### STEP 1: GET TO KNOW SMARTS ELEMENTARY

- **Head to the SMARTS Elementary video page and build your executive function expertise.** Learn more about current theory and research on executive function and metacognitive awareness, watch our website walkthrough, and more.
- **Build your knowledge of executive function strategies** with:
  - » **Unit Overview Videos:** Each unit overview video highlights best practices as well as tips for addressing areas of challenge.
  - » **Lesson Overviews:** Every lesson begins with a one-page overview of key concepts and suggestions for integrating selected executive function processes into your teaching.
- **Learn more about executive function:**
  - » **Books:** [Promoting Executive Function in the Classroom](#) , [The Power of Peers in the Classroom](#), and [Executive Function in Education](#), edited by Lynn Meltzer, Ph.D. These books provide the background information for the SMARTS Online curriculum.

- » **Conferences:** ResearchILD's [Executive Function Conference](#) (held in the fall) offers practical ways of implementing executive function strategies in the classroom. ResearchILD's internationally renowned [Learning Differences Conference](#) (held for the past 35 years in the spring) focuses on cutting-edge theory and research focused on executive function processes and the impact on the educational and social-emotional needs of diverse learners.
- » **Workshops and trainings:** SMARTS hosts trainings, workshops, and webinars throughout the year. Join us for hands-on executive function strategies with teachers from across the country.

## STEP 2: CHOOSE YOUR UNITS AND LESSONS

With 7 units and 30 lessons, SMARTS provides a range of resources that you can adapt to meet the unique needs of your classroom. You may choose to teach the entire curriculum over the school year or teach specific units and lessons based on:

- [The available time you have to teach a lesson](#) (e.g., once a week or several times a week).
- [Your curricular needs](#) (e.g., preparing students for projects, tests, writing assignments or reading texts)
- [Your school calendar](#) (e.g., beginning of the year, around report cards, end of the year projects, etc.)

SMARTS Elementary is specifically designed for grades **2–5**. SMARTS Elementary can be implemented in a variety of settings, including special education classes and general education content classes. See the [SMARTS Elementary Curriculum Overview](#) for a complete listing of units and lesson plans.

Whichever path you choose, we recommend that you teach Unit 1 in its entirety to give students the appropriate background and vocabulary to benefit from strategy instruction.

## Adapt SMARTS Elementary Based on Your Goals

How will you teach SMARTS lessons? The chart below outlines a range of different options.

	Academic Intervention	Weekly "Executive Function" Time	Integrated into Academic Tasks with a High EF Demand
<b>Lesson Frequency</b>	1-2 times a week, 20 min- 80 min	1-2 times a week, 20 min- 80 min	As needed, 20 min- 80 min
<b>Setting</b>	One to one or small group instruction	Mainstream classroom during a dedicated "executive function" period	Mainstream classroom
<b>Taught by</b>	Support teachers (Special education teachers, SLP, OT, Reading Specialists, School psychologists)	General education teachers, Support teachers (Special education teachers, SLP, OT, Reading Specialists, School psychologists)	General education teachers
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Individualized:</b> SMARTS Elementary strategies can be easily customized to the unique needs of students. Can be aligned with IEPs or 504 goals. Pacing and reading level can be differentiated as needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Consistency:</b> Having a dedicated "executive function" block can create consistent support to help students internalize what they are learning. Creates a classroom culture of strategy use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Generalization:</b> Teaching SMARTS Elementary strategies directly in the context of challenging academic work, helps students apply the strategies and understand the importance of strategy use.</li> </ul>
<b>Tips</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Build connections:</b> Select lessons that have a clear connection to what students are learning in their other classes.</li> <li>• <b>Time sessions carefully:</b> Consider splitting each lesson into 2 forty-minute sessions. This will give students the opportunity to practice the strategies they are learning and to apply the strategies to different content areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Maintain consistency:</b> Be sure to schedule SMARTS Elementary during a time of the week that will not be disrupted. This helps students to recall content/strategies from lesson to lesson.</li> <li>• <b>Select lessons carefully:</b> Choose SMARTS Elementary strategies that align with assignments of students' other classes. This will help students apply the strategies they are learning more readily.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Make time for explicit instruction and reflection:</b> When pairing SMARTS Elementary with other academic subjects, it can be hard to carve out time for explicit instruction and reflection; however, these steps are essential to promote students' use of executive function strategies.</li> <li>• <b>Differentiate as needed:</b> Students will vary in their ability to apply the strategies they are learning to their work. Make time to provide additional instruction to students who are struggling.</li> </ul>

## Adapt SMARTS Elementary Based on Your Curricular Needs

Social-emotional Outcomes	
Lesson	Rationale
<b>1.3</b> How Do I Think Flexibly?	Students discuss the concept of cognitive flexibility and its importance for strategy use. They complete an activity that shows them how flexibility can help them to navigate conflicts.
<b>3.2</b> I'm Wearing Your Shoes	Students learn how to shift between multiple perspectives in social situations.
<b>7.1</b> Monitor My Focus	Students discuss and define what it means to focus and avoid distractions. They identify the situations that do and do not help them focus, and they practice monitoring their behavior to stay on task.
<b>7.4</b> Manage My Mood	Students learn to develop an awareness of their moods in different situations and the impact it on learning.
<b>7.5</b> What Hat am I Wearing?	Students check their behavior to ensure this matches the situation and the task at hand.

Preparing for Projects	
Lesson	Rationale
<b>2.1</b> I CAN DO My Goals	Students learn to create personalized and achievable goals that can be implemented. They can create goals that will guide them as they complete their projects.
<b>3.4</b> Purposeful Highlighting	Students use highlighting to identify multiple perspectives for reading and taking notes. This strategy can also help them to break down project directions into easy-to-follow steps.
<b>7.2</b> Check Your Sources	Students learn checking strategies to evaluate the sources they are using to collect information for their projects.
<b>7.3</b> Top-3-Hits	Students use their own work to check for their most common errors. Students generate lists of their personal Top-3-Hits for checking their own future projects.

Lessons with Lower Reading Demands	
Lesson	Rationale
<b>1.1</b> How Do I Think About My Thinking?	Students engage in a discussion about “metacognition”. They identify their personal strengths and challenges and the strategies they use in their everyday lives.
<b>2.1</b> CANDO Goals	Students learn to create personalized and achievable goals that are Clear, Appropriate, Numerical, Doable, and take account of Obstacles (CANDO).
<b>3.2</b> I’m Wearing Your Shoes	Students learn how to shift between multiple perspectives in social situations.
<b>4.1</b> The 4 C’s Strategy	Students learn the 4 C’s strategy for organizing. They apply this strategy by organizing their belongings e.g. their backpacks, lockers, bedrooms.
<b>4.3</b> Estimating Time	Students learn to improve their ability to estimate time while completing tasks. They also learn about the importance of time estimation.
<b>6.2</b> Cartoons and Associations	Students learn two mnemonic strategies that help support their working memory. They use pre-existing knowledge to create cartoons and associations to remember important information.
<b>7.1</b> Monitor Your Focus	Students discuss and define what it means to be focused and ignore distractions. They identify the situations that do and do not help them to focus, and they practice monitoring their behavior to stay on task.
<b>7.4</b> Manage My Mood	Students learn to develop an awareness of their moods in different situations and the impact on learning.

Reading Comprehension	
Lesson	Rationale
<b>1.3</b> How Do I Think Flexibly?	Students discuss the concept of cognitive flexibility and its importance for strategy use. They complete an activity that illustrates how words can have multiple meanings.
<b>3.3</b> Skim and Scoop	Students learn how to comprehend what they read and how to differentiate between the main ideas and details in a text.
<b>3.4</b> Purposeful Highlighting	Students use highlighting to identify multiple perspectives when they read and take notes. This strategy also helps students to highlight effectively and to avoid over-highlighting (the “yellow page syndrome”).

<b>5.3 Triple-Note-Tote</b>	Students learn “Triple-Note-Tote,” a three-column strategy for note-taking and organizing information, which can be used across content areas.
<b>5.4 Summarizing Stories</b>	Students learn to create summaries using the Star strategy, which helps them to understand the “who, what, where, when, why and how” of text.

Organizing Writing	
Lesson	Rationale
<b>3.3 Skim and Scoop</b>	Students learn how to comprehend what they read efficiently and how to differentiate between the main ideas and details in text.
<b>5.1 Sorting and Categorizing using BOTEK</b>	Students learn strategies for organizing information to improve their writing. The BOTEK strategy helps students learn to brainstorm, organize, write topic sentences, provide evidence, and reach conclusions.
<b>5.4 Summarizing Stories</b>	Students learn to create summaries using the Star strategy, which helps them to understand the “who, what, where, when, why and how” of a text.
<b>7.2 Check Your Sources</b>	Students learn checking strategies to evaluate the sources they are using to collect information for their projects.
<b>7.3 Top 3 Hits</b>	Students use their own work to check for their most common errors. Students generate a list of their personal Top-3-Hits for checking their own future projects.

Self-Awareness	
Lesson	Rationale
<b>1.1 How Do I Think About my Thinking?</b>	Students engage in a discussion about “metacognition” and identify their personal strengths and challenges as well as the strategies they use in their everyday lives.
<b>1.2 How Can I Manage My Work?</b>	Students complete an activity that introduces them to the five executive function processes and helps them to identify their strengths and challenges in three of those areas.
<b>2.2 I CAN DO My Goals</b>	Students learn to create personalized and achievable goals that are Clear, Appropriate, Numerical, Doable, and address any Obstacles (CAN DO).
<b>6.1 Why is Memory Important?</b>	Students identify their own strengths and challenges in working memory and learn how memory connects to their ability to follow directions and complete school-related tasks.



<b>7.3</b> Top-3-Hits	Students use their own work to check their most common errors. Students generate a list of their personal Top-3-Hits for checking their assignments.
<b>7.4</b> What Hat am I Wearing?	Students think about their behavior to ensure that this is appropriate for the situation and the task at hand.
<b>7.6</b> Wrap-up: Stop, Review, Reflect	Students review the SMARTS Elementary strategies they have learned and they create a Strategies for Success work sheet they can use.

### Adapt SMARTS Online Based on Your School Calendar

Beginning of the School Year	
Lesson	Rationale
<b>1.1</b> How Do I Think About my Thinking?	Students engage in a discussion about “metacognition” and identify their personal strengths and challenges as well as the strategies they use in their everyday lives.
<b>1.2</b> How Can I Manage My Work?	Students complete an activity that introduces them to the five executive function processes and helps them to identify their strengths and challenges in three of these areas.
<b>1.3</b> How Do I think Flexibly?	Students discuss the concept of cognitive flexibility and its importance for strategy use. They complete an activity that illustrates how words can have multiple meanings.
<b>1.4</b> How Can I Use Strategies to Help me?	Students identify how to make strategies individualized, systematic, efficient, and effective (I-SEE). Then, they examine their own strategies, refining them to ensure they fit the I-SEE model.
<b>2.1</b> I CAN DO My Goals	Students learn to create personalized and achievable goals that are Clear, Appropriate, Numerical, Doable, and take account of Obstacles (CAN DO).
<b>4.1</b> The 4 Cs Strategy	Students learn the 4 C's strategy for organizing. They apply this strategy by organizing their belongings e.g. their backpacks, lockers, bedrooms.

Parent Conferences/ Report Cards	
Lesson	Rationale
<b>1.1</b> How Do I Think About My Thinking?	Students engage in a discussion about “metacognition” and identify their personal strengths and challenges as well as the strategies they use in their everyday lives.
<b>2.1</b> I CAN DO My Goals	Students learn to create personalized and achievable goals that are Clear, Appropriate, Numerical, Doable, and address Obstacles (CAN DO).

<b>4.5 Planning Production Time</b>	Students use strategies to practice short-term planning and to identify 'production time'; they apply these strategies to organize their planners/calendars.
<b>7.1 Monitor Your Focus</b>	Students discuss and define what it means to be focused and ignore distractions. They identify the situations that do and do not help them to focus, and they practice monitoring their behaviors to stay on task.
<b>7.3 Top-3-Hits</b>	Students use their own work to check their most common errors. Students generate a list of their personal Top-3-Hits for checking their assignments.

Standardized Testing Time	
Lesson	Rationale
<b>3.3 Skim and Scoop</b>	The Skim and Scoop strategy helps students quickly identify the main idea and supporting details in a reading passage. This strategy helps students to master timed reading comprehension tests.
<b>3.4 Purposeful Highlighting</b>	Purposeful highlighting helps students interpret directions, question prompts, and word problems strategically by creating numbered checklists.
<b>3.5 Shifty Math</b>	This lesson helps students approach math problems, especially word problems, more flexibly and with greater confidence.
<b>5.1 BOTEK</b>	The BOTEK strategy helps students develop organized and thoughtful responses to writing prompts.

End of the School Year	
Lesson	Rationale
<b>1.1 How do I think about my thinking?</b>	Repeat this lesson to have students reflect on how their areas of strength and challenge have evolved throughout the year.
<b>1.4 How can I use strategies to help me?</b>	Review the definition of a strategy and have students comment on the strategies they have developed over the year.
<b>4.4 Prioritizing Time</b>	Keep students on track by helping them understand what to prioritize, especially during the last weeks of school.
<b>4.5 Planning Production Time</b>	Help students to map out the last few weeks of classes and assignments so that they create defineable goals and objectives to keep themselves motivated and on track.
<b>7.6 Stop, Review, and Reflect</b>	Teach this lesson at the end of your SMARTS Elementary curriculum. Help students develop a list of strategies that were useful to them and that they can continue to use the following year.



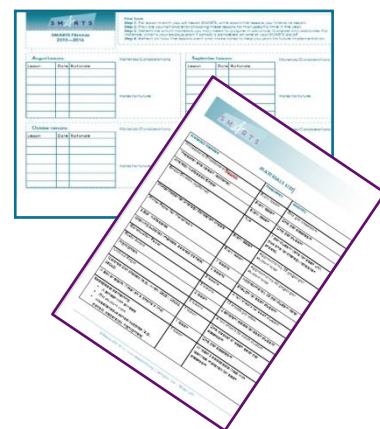
You can choose to teach all the lessons from each unit, and to alter the sequence in which you teach the units based on your calendar or curricular needs. For example:

Month	Unit	Rationale
<b>Sept–Oct</b>	<b>Unit 1:</b> Introduction to EF	Provide students with background information.
<b>Oct–Nov</b>	<b>Unit 4:</b> Organizing Time and Materials	Help students organize themselves early in the year.
<b>Nov–Dec</b>	<b>Unit 6:</b> Remembering: Accessing Working Memory	Help students learn routines by teaching them working memory strategies.
<b>Dec–Jan</b>	<b>Unit 2:</b> Goal Setting	Helps students adjust goals midway through the year to maintain their motivation.
<b>Jan–Feb</b>	<b>Unit 3:</b> Cognitive Flexibility	Teach students the importance of using multiple perspectives for reading, writing, communicating, and making transitions.
<b>Feb–Mar</b>	<b>Unit 5:</b> Organizing Information	Help students prepare for larger assignments (e.g., long-term projects and book reports).
<b>Mar–April</b>	<b>Unit 7:</b> Self-Monitoring and Self-Checking	Help students review their work and determine their most common errors.

### STEP 3: SCHEDULE YOUR YEAR

Once you have determined the timing and sequencing of your SMARTS Elementary lessons, it's time to schedule your year. We have developed two tools to help you do this:

1. [SMARTS Planner](#): Use this planning tool in conjunction with your individual school calendar to map out your year of SMARTS instruction.
2. [Getting Started Survey](#): Fill out the “Getting Started with SMARTS Elementary” survey to get customized suggestions and tips for teaching SMARTS.



## STEP 4: TEACH

### As you prepare to teach a new unit:

- Review the Unit Overview page and look ahead to each lesson to make sure you understand the themes and directions in the unit.
- Determine which lessons will be most critical for your Specific students. Decide how much of the lesson you will be able to cover (i.e., entire lesson or just two modules?).
- Take a look at the “Teacher Preparation” section for each upcoming lesson to determine if you need to collect outside materials in advance.

### As you prepare to teach a new lesson or module:

- Review the “Lesson Overview” page to explore the theory behind the lesson.
- Review the “Teacher Preparation” section to ensure you have made copies of materials and collected any necessary outside supplies.
- Ask yourself how students can integrate this lesson or the strategies within the lesson into their daily academic work. Helping students to make explicit connections to the curriculum will enable them to see the value of the lessons and to become strategic learners who think flexibly.

### Reinforce and extend SMARTS Elementary strategies throughout your curriculum:

- Starting with Unit 2, you will be provided with Strategy Reflection Sheets and Strategy Shout-outs that you can use to help your students develop metacognitive awareness.
- If you are **not** using the **workbooks** that accompany the SMARTS Elementary program, provide 3-ring binders for each of your students. Students can use the binders to collect these Strategy Reflection Sheets and other SMARTS Elementary handouts. These binders will become their Strategy Notebooks. Ideally, each notebook should have seven dividers, one for each unit plus one for Strategy Reflection Sheets so that students can keep them organized.
- Encourage your students to reflect on which strategies work best for them in the workbooks or in their 3-ring binder. Through this process, they will be creating a personalized resource of strategies to refer to throughout the year.
- Encourage students to use their strategies when completing homework, studying for tests, or taking tests. Find ways to reward students for doing this!

- Build a culture of strategy use in the classroom – this is a very powerful catalyst for ongoing change. Some teachers designate weekly Strategy Shares - a period of 5 or 10 minutes for students to share and discuss the strategies they have used in their homework or personal life. They might want to share an effective strategy that their parents or a family member uses. Other teachers create Strategy Walls- bulletin boards containing good examples of each of the learned strategies. These activities simultaneously serve as a reminder for students to use strategies in their schoolwork and as a celebration of their excellent work.

## STEP 5: SHARE

You are now part of the SMARTS Elementary Online community, a dynamic group of educators who, like you, are committed to helping students learn strategies for success.

- **Share your adaptations and ideas:** We want to know how you are using SMARTS Elementary. Please share the adaptations you have made and the stellar examples of student work you receive. If you send us your examples, we can share these with others!!
- **Provide lesson feedback:** Use the lesson feedback forms to let us know which elements of our curriculum are working for you and which are not. We take your feedback seriously, and we will do our best to continue refining the curriculum so that it evolves and improves on an on-going basis. Your feedback will help us to create strategic classrooms for all students!

