

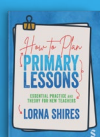


How to Plan

PRIMARY LESSONS

ESSENTIAL PRACTICE AND
THEORY FOR NEW TEACHERS

LORNA SHIRES

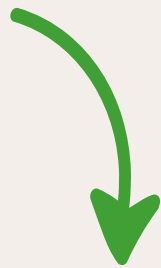


This is an adapted extract from *How to Plan Primary Lessons* by Lorna Shires.
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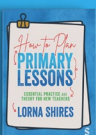
THE IMPORTANCE OF STRUCTURE



Top Tip:

The goal of a primary school lesson is to maximise the opportunities for teachers to teach and for pupils to learn.

Because of that, a lesson needs to be explicitly structured.



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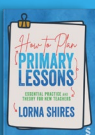
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HOW TO PLAN SO PUPILS REMEMBER WHAT YOU TAUGHT?



- Spend time at the start of each lesson (say 3–8 minutes) **discussing with the class**: What will be new? What will be remembered? How will they use what they already know?
- Try starting each lesson with a **daily review**: ‘What do we (now) know about x?’
- **Use questioning and a variety of prompts** to help pupils recall and apply what they’ve learned.
- Don’t always require pupils to share what they recall by writing it down. Think of other methods you can use.
- **Support pupils** to understand which bits of the lesson and tasks need to be remembered.
- **Provide regular opportunities for pupils to revisit** what they’ve learned to support their long-term understanding.
- **Help pupils see how different parts of the lesson relate** to each other and fit together.
- **Provide pupils with the opportunity to practice** and develop a range of skills across the topic or curriculum.



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UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Top Tip:

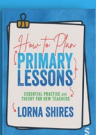
First, check what the **National Curriculum** has to say about the area of study. It's a good idea to have a printed or electronic copy of the National Curriculum in your planning folders.



Analysing the National Curriculum requirements helps you become a curriculum thinker.

When planning, ask yourself:

- What powerful knowledge will help pupils progress in their studies?
- What concepts will enable them to contextualise their thinking?



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LESSON PLANNING CHECKLIST

To teach, you need to have the knowledge of the topic, understanding and skills yourself.

Refresh your memory, and then, you're ready to get started.

Tick off the items in this list as you go to check and polish your lesson plan.

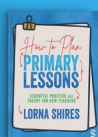


I know...

- ☐ What pupils need to learn
- ☐ What the National Curriculum says about what I'm teaching
- ☐ What the core content is
- ☐ What is the best order to teach this subject-matter on to support learning over time
- ☐ What it means to get better in this subject
- ☐ What concepts pupils need to build to develop their understanding over time
- ☐ How the content I'll teach will build on pupils' previous knowledge, understanding and skills
- ☐ What I need to clarify to unlock the knowledge I'm teaching them
- ☐ What vocabulary I need to teach

Now, you know you have a solid plan in your hands and how to put it in practice.

Next step: sequencing the curriculum!



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CLARIFYING LEARNING INTENTIONS: INSIGHTS FROM LEADING RESEARCHERS

Gage

Identify what your pupils will do with what they will learn.

Who? Nathaniel Gage (1917–2008) was an American psychologist at Stanford University in California.

What? He pioneered the scientific understanding of teaching.

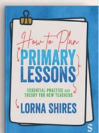
How? Along with his co-author, David Berliner, Gage identified that teachers should begin their planning by asking themselves three questions:

- What do you want your pupils to learn?
- How should your pupils behave (think, feel, move) differently after you have taught a topic or scheme?
- Have you ever wished a teacher had told you more clearly what you should've been learning and why (and how can you make sure your own pupils do not feel this way)?



The background to every kind of teaching is the question 'What do you want to accomplish?'

Gage and Berliner, 1998: 31. Gage, N and Berliner, D (1998) *Educational Psychology*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.



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Gagné

Identify the human capability to be established by your teaching.

Who? Robert Gagné (1916-2002) was an American psychologist at Florida State University.

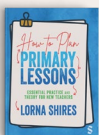
What? It was Gagné who first identified that the clearer the objectives for learning are, the easier it is for pupils to learn. Gagné named five major human capabilities: intellectual skill, cognitive strategy, verbal information, motor skill and attitude (Gagné et al., 1992)¹.

How? Thinking in terms of these five categories helps teachers to identify and clarify learning intentions. Here's an example:



Category of human capability	Definition	What does that look like in practice?	What's the evidence of learning?
Intellectual skills	Enables pupils to interact with their environment in terms of symbols or conceptualisations. An intellectual skill can have the function of becoming a component of further learning or more complex intellectual skills.	Learning how to identify a poem by its rhyme pattern is an intellectual skill.	Seeing the student put that skill into practice a performance of that skill, e.g. showing what a metaphor is in one or more specific instance.

¹ I. Gagné, RM, Briggs, LJ, and Wager, WW (1992) *Principles of Instructional Design*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich



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Hattie

Match the learning intention to the learning phase.

Who? John Hattie is professor of education and director of the Melbourne Research Institute at the University of Melbourne in Australia.

What? Developed a model of learning that divides the learning process into phases: surface learning (recall of facts), deep learning (conceptual understanding) and the transfer of learning to new situations. The aim of the teacher is to enhance all three.

How? Hattie's approach links up skill (what pupils already know), thrill (the aspects of the task they can complete alone) and will (their resilience when tackling something new or difficult) during learning.

William

The language of learning intentions.

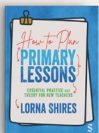
Who? Dylan Wiliam is Emeritus Professor of Educational Assessment at UCL Institute of Education.

What? He spotted that curriculum documents are often written for adults (Wiliam, 2011)². Because of that, teachers need to adapt the phrasing into more age- and experience-appropriate language, so the language is not a barrier to pupils' understanding of what they are about to learn.

How? Jones (2021)³ summed up William's ideas into three golden rules:
Be crystal clear: in terms of content and language so every child in the class can understand
Be specific: everyone must know exactly what needs to be learned and how
Be desirably difficult: the challenge should be appropriate for all pupils in the class

2. Wiliam, D (2011) Embedded Formative Assessment. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press

3. Jones, K (2021) Wiliam and Leahy's Five Formative Assessment Strategies in Action. Woodbridge: John Catt Educational



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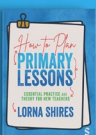


WHAT DOES SUCCESSFUL LESSON PLANNING LOOK LIKE?



Learning intentions define the change learning will bring to pupils.

Success criteria outline the steps to achieve it, describing the desired performance in lesson tasks and activities.



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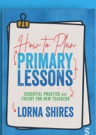


WHAT KIND OF LESSON PLANNER ARE YOU?



Are you a dreamer, a strategist,
or a thinker?

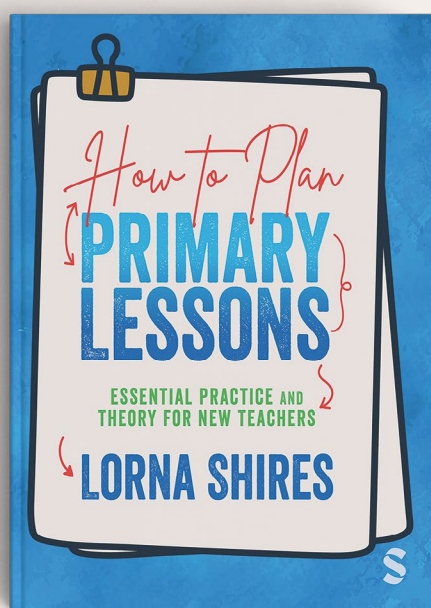
Take a **quick quiz** to find out and get a
personalized recommendation on how
Lorna Shires's *How to Plan Primary Lessons*
can support your teaching journey.



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LEARN HOW TO THINK LIKE AN EXPERT PRIMARY TEACHER AND HOW TO PLAN GREAT LESSONS.



This book explores the knowledge, skills and evidence base that expert teachers use to plan lessons in primary schools. It combines practical principles with robust ideas from theory to offer a flexible approach to fit any school's preferred lesson planning format.

It supports you with:

- Practical examples from across the curriculum
- Expert insight on how teachers construct and teach their own lessons
- Links to the National Curriculum in England, the initial teacher education Core Content Framework (CCF), the Early Career Framework (ECF) and the Teachers' Standards.

and more!