Day Middle School
Survival Guide

Forgot your homework?

Absent yesterday?

Backpack too heavy?
Welcome!

Welcome to the F.A. Day Middle School Survival Guide. This handbook was designed to help students and their families navigate the complex world of middle school. We hope that it will be a practical and useful guide that helps students to have a successful and enjoyable experience here at Day. Don’t forget that there is also a wealth of useful and important information available in the front of the student assignment book as well as on our school website:

http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/day

Enjoy!
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How To Open a Combination Lock

1. Hold the combination lock in one hand and use your dominant hand to grasp the dial in the center with the thumb and index finger.

2. Clear the lock out by turning the knob clockwise (to the right) at least three full rotations.

3. Rotate the dial further to the right and stop when the arrow notch is pointing to the FIRST NUMBER of your combination.

4. Turn the dial counterclockwise (to the left) past the SECOND NUMBER once and then stop when the SECOND NUMBER is directly below the arrow notch the second time around.

5. Twist the dial clockwise (to the right) and stop when the arrow notch is directly above the THIRD NUMBER the first time around.

6. Pull up on the shackle to open the lock. The shackle should easily come out of the lock if the combination was properly dialed.

Tips:
Memorize your combination.
Do not share your combination with other students.
Write your combination someplace in your assignment book.
Ask your homeroom teacher to keep a record of your combination.
Lighten Your Load!

Many students struggle with backpacks that are overloaded and weighing them down. Lighten your load by following some of these tips and tricks:

- Consider using those light, flexible binders. They take up less space in your bag and are considerably lighter than the hard-cover binders.

- Try out one of those bags-on-rollers. Sure, you might look like you’re off to catch a flight, but at least your back will be healthy.

- Remove unnecessary papers from your binders, including those that are from previous units and graded assignments that are from a previous term.

- Don’t lug around more than 20 pieces of notebook paper in each binder. When your supply gets low, you can reload from the stash you keep in your locker or at home.

- Visit your locker at strategic times to switch out binders that you need for the next several classes.

- Only bring home the binders you really need each night.

- Try using a homework folder. That way you can place papers you need for the night’s homework in the folder and avoid carrying your entire binder.

- Take the time at the end of class to put papers where they go.

- Before you begin your homework, take some time to organize your backpack and binders and weed out any papers and items that you don’t need.
# Learning Styles and Strategies

*Find the category or categories that fit you and learn some tips!*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Visual (Seeing)</th>
<th>You ...</th>
<th>Strategies/Tips</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ think in terms of pictures.</td>
<td>➢ Make flashcards with words and pictures.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ prefer to see things written down in a handout or on the board.</td>
<td>➢ Draw visual representations of what you are learning.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ find maps, graphs and charts easy to read.</td>
<td>➢ Mark up the text or sticky notes using colors, symbols, etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Write out summaries or make graphic organizers of what you are learning.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Take notes and read the notes later.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Follow along in the text when the teacher reads aloud.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auditory (Hearing)</td>
<td>You ...</td>
<td>Strategies/Tips</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ learn best by listening.</td>
<td>➢ When studying, say the information out loud.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Study with a friend to talk about the information.</td>
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<td>➢ Say information in your own words.</td>
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<td>➢ Talk about the information with someone - even at the dinner table.</td>
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<td>➢ Read directions and text out loud to yourself.</td>
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<td>➢ Listen to audio recordings of texts.</td>
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<td>➢ Make up acronyms/mnemonics – HOMES (Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior).</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Make up a rhyme or song to help you remember.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kinesthetic (Touching and Moving)</td>
<td>You ...</td>
<td>Strategies/Tips</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ learn best through ...</td>
<td>➢ Create a movement that goes along with each piece of information you need to learn.</td>
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<td>➢ touching (moving objects, building models or maps)</td>
<td>➢ When studying, walk around the room.</td>
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<td>➢ moving around</td>
<td>➢ Create manipulatives (things you can move with your hands) - For example: (1) cut out the countries on a map handout and place them back together (2) place vocab cards around the house near objects that their definitions somehow connect with.</td>
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<td>➢ experiencing what you are learning (debates or acting out the parts of a story)</td>
<td>➢ Type or write out the information you are studying.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Move your hands or feet in small, unnoticeable ways when sitting in class.</td>
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Steps for Successful Homework Completion

Completing homework and turning it in on time actually involves a number of steps. Use the checklist below to help you successfully complete and turn in homework.

☐ 1. Copy homework assignment word-for-word from the board into my assignment book.

☐ 2. Ask for clarification from the teacher if I don’t understand the assignment(s).

☐ 3. Bring home what I need to complete the assignment(s) - directions, worksheets, resources, etc.

☐ 4. When I get home, look at my assignment notebook.

☐ 5. Read the directions for the assignment(s) at least TWICE, carefully.

☐ 6. Complete the assignment(s) to the best of my ability.

☐ 7. Check over my work. Make sure my work looks professional, is set up properly, and has been proofread, edited, and revised.

☐ 8. RE-READ the directions to ensure that I completed the assignment(s) completely and correctly.

☐ 9. Put the completed work into the appropriate binder or folder and pack it in my bag.

☐ 10. Check the assignment off in my assignment book.

☐ 11. In the morning before leaving for school, double check that the work is in my bag.

☐ 12. Bring the correct binders/folders to class.

☐ 13. Turn in the assignment(s) during class at an appropriate time.
Academic Integrity

Integrity is another word for honesty. If a person has academic integrity, it means that s/he is honest about school work and always strives to do the right thing.

Cheating on a Quiz or Test:

This one is pretty straightforward. If you are taking a quiz or test, the answers you write down must come only from your head. It is cheating to write down answers that come from anywhere else (unless a teacher has clearly stated that you can use a resource during the quiz or test).

Collaboration Vs. Cheating:

Decide whether each of the following scenarios is collaborating or cheating:

I’m not sure I understand this - can we talk it through?

You do the front, I’ll do the back, and then we’ll share answers.

Many students find it helpful to work with others on assignments. The benefit of working together is that students can often help one another understand a concept better than each would have understood it on his/her own. When collaborating, students talk through an assignment together to better understand it, and then students individually write their thoughts and answers in their own words on their own paper. The example above on the left is one way that students can collaborate.

Cheating, however, occurs when a student avoids doing part or all of an assignment by sharing or copying ideas or answers from other students or sources. Doing this literally “cheats” you out of the learning and practicing you were supposed to do. If working together means that one student is learning or practicing LESS than s/he was supposed to, that student is cheating him/herself and being dishonest about who has done the work. If only your name appears on the paper, it suggests that you have done all of the thinking, figuring, problem-solving, and writing involved in the assignment. When one student copies another student’s work, BOTH students are guilty of cheating. If you are ever asked to share your work with someone, try using one of the following responses:

“No way. We’ll both get a zero if we get caught.”

“It’s better to turn it in late than to cheat.”

“You should do it yourself so that you learn the material.”

“No, but I can try to help you understand it.”

“Gee, I can’t put my hands on it right now.”
Plagiarism:

It is never okay to use someone else’s ideas and/or words and pretend that they are your own. For example, copying and pasting a book summary from a website and turning it in as your own would be a clear case of cheating. But even if you change some of the words in that summary, you still can’t pretend that it is your own work. The only way to have true academic integrity in this scenario would be to write the summary by using the book itself and the knowledge in your mind from having read it.

When writing about a topic that you have researched, you need to be really careful. When you take notes on the topic, you should write them in your own words and/or use sentence fragments. That way you won’t be tempted to use the author’s words or phrasings later. Even though you will certainly present some of the same facts that you found through research, you must do it using your own wording and phrasing. [Insider’s Tip: If you copy from a book or online source, your teacher will be able to tell right away that the writing is not that of a middle-schooler!]

You always need to cite (list) the sources you have used for research and projects in a bibliography. That way, you are being honest about where you got the facts, information, and/or graphics from.

Plagiarism is a serious breach of academic integrity and, if discovered, it generally leads to a zero on the assignment and communication between school and home. If you ever need help ensuring that your work is your own and does not plagiarize the work of others, see your teacher or the librarian for help.

Being Honest with Teachers:

Which of the following scenarios represents academic integrity?

(a.) Maybe if I pretend I’m looking for my homework, the teacher will forget about me and move on.

(b.) I don’t have my homework, but I’m going to bring it in tomorrow.

(c.) So, last night the CRAZIEST thing happened... . . .

If you don’t have an assignment on the day it is due, don’t tell or make up a story about why you don’t have it or avoid admitting that you don’t have it. Instead, focus on telling your teacher what your plan is for getting it done and/or turning it in.

Getting Help from Adults: Parents, tutors, and other adults in a student’s life often help out with homework and projects. This is great, but we need to make sure that the work is an honest representation of the student’s abilities and understandings. One simple way to ensure this is to follow this suggestion: Adults should not hold the pen, pencil, keyboard, or any other tool when helping. Adults can, however, talk with students about their work and offer verbal advice. Discussing a student’s work is an effective way of helping the student become aware of how an audience will view and make sense of their work and can guide the student to think critically about and revise their own work.
PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism includes making sure you have met the following expectations for an assignment **BEFORE** bringing it in to class on the day it is due:

- First name, last name, date, and section # at top right hand corner
- Appropriate title
- Clean, uncrumpled paper with no doodles, rips, or fringe (8 ½ x 11” white-lined or computer paper)
- Neat handwriting in pencil, blue ink, or black ink or if typed - standard size font, double-spaced (see "How to Format a Typed Paper" for more details)
- 1” margins around all edges
- Directions followed carefully
- Complete
- Proofread carefully for . . .
  - Capitalization
  - End punctuation
  - Missing or repeated words or letters
  - Complete sentences
  - The spelling of common words
  - The spelling of words that are printed right in the text or on the handouts you were given
# ORGANIZATION

| Preparation for Class | Come to class with:  
|-----------------------|----------------------|  
| - subject binder  
| - assignment notebook  
| - loose-leaf paper  
| - 2 sharpened pencils  
| - any other required materials  
| Assignment Notebook | At the beginning of class, take out your assignment notebook to copy down the homework word-for-word. Write “None” if there is no homework. Each assignment should be checked-off after it has been completed and placed in your bag.  

*If you forgot your assignment book, write all assignments on a blank piece of paper, keep it in one binder, and then transfer them into your notebook when you get home.*  
| Binder Set-Up | - When given a handout, put (don’t shove) it in the correct section in your binder right away.  
| | - Make sure sections are labeled correctly.  
| | - Have 20 pieces of extra paper in each binder and refill when needed.  
| | - Clean out binders frequently and leave papers from old units at home.  
| Assignment Format | - Place name, date and section on the upper right hand corner.  
| | - Answers should be neatly spaced apart with all work/explanation shown.  
| Absences | - Call a friend.  
| | - Check teachers’ websites to see what you missed.  
| | - When you return, check-in with each teacher **before** homeroom.  
| | (Leave enough time to see ALL of your teachers!)  
| | - Make up any missed work a.s.a.p. and turn it in **on your own**.  
| Unexcused Missing Work | - Make it up a.s.a.p. in accordance with teacher’s expectations.  
| | - Turn it in a.s.a.p. **on your own**.  
| Time Management | - Plan after-school activities so that there is ample time to get homework done.  
| | - Plan out long-term assignments to avoid becoming overwhelmed as the due date approaches.  
| Locker Use | - Practice using your lock before the 1st day of school.  
| | - Tell only your homeroom teacher the combination.  
| | - Store extra school supplies in your locker (like extra pencils & paper).  
| | - Before homeroom, put away materials (books/binders) for classes that meet after lunch.  
| | - Clean/Organize your locker at the end of each week.  

It can be hard to become a part of a new school community. We want you – yes, you! – connected to Day. You can become a valuable, contributing member of the Day community in a lot of ways. Here are some ideas:

1. Join a club. There are so many clubs at Day that there is at least one bound to interest you. You can find out more about clubs by listening to the morning announcements, checking the clubs board in the cafeteria, and visiting Day’s website at day.newton.k12.ma.us.

2. Start a club. Have an idea for a new, cool club? Ask a teacher about what you need to do to get the club up and running.

3. Perform on stage or participate as a member of the stage crew. Day students have opportunities to participate in the arts and drama. Take advantage of these opportunities.

4. Attend sports games after school. The athletic event may be on the field, but the social scene is off the field and on the sideline.

5. Attend school sponsored social events.

6. Identify an adult school advocate. An advocate is someone who helps and supports you, no matter what your concern may be. Get to know your teachers and guidance counselor and be aware that you may approach any of them at any time. They will help you out as best they can.

7. Build new friendships. Join a new lunch table or welcome others to join yours. Through conversation, find out how you are connected to a wide range of your peers.
Classroom Etiquette

Entering the classroom
When you enter a classroom at the start of class, please do not stop and socialize near the door. There are other folks who need to get in and out of the classroom, and you have other business to attend to once you’re in the room, so the best choice is to keep moving.

If you are late to class, do your best to enter the classroom quietly. If your teacher is addressing the entire class when you come in, hand your pass to him/her and head straight to your seat. You should look at the board and observe your classmates for clues about what to do next. You might need to take out last night’s homework or pick up a handout for today. When your teacher has a chance, s/he will check in with you to be sure you know what’s going on. If your teacher is available (meaning not addressing the entire class), bring him/her your pass and ask what they would like you to do next.

Leaving your seat
If you need to leave your seat (for example, to sharpen your pencil, go to the bathroom, or get a tissue), please do so quietly. Try to find a route (to the sharpener, door, tissue box, etc.) that goes along the edges of the classroom and/or that prevents you from walking in front of your teacher. That way you won’t get in the way of other students. A special note about the pencil sharpener: Please wait for a moment when your teacher is not speaking so that the sound of the pencil sharpener does not drown out what s/he is saying. Whenever you leave your seat, be sure to push in your chair, even if you’ll be back in a minute.

Packing up
Sometimes students pack up early towards the end of a class when they think they’re done with their work or the bell is about to ring. This isn’t a good idea. It is disrespectful to the teacher (imagine how you’d feel if a friend came over to hang out and then kept asking when s/he could go home or suddenly put their coat on to leave in the middle of something!), and it wastes valuable learning time. Instead, wait for the teacher’s signal that it’s okay to pack up.
If you finish class work early and are not sure what to do, check in with your teacher or follow the class routine. Teacher check-ins are helpful during these times because you might learn that: (1) you need to make corrections and/or additions to your classwork; (2) there is something you could do to help the teacher or a classmate; (3) you may try a special activity or challenge; (4) you can get an early start on your homework; or (5) something else entirely!

**Listening**
In order to be a good, active listener, you need to pay a lot of attention to your body. Before doing anything else, check your posture. You should sit up straight because slouching or putting your head on the table shows that you are bored, tired, or sick. (If you are sick, then go to the nurse!) Next, when someone is speaking, turn to face him/her and try to make eye contact. That is the best way to signal that you are paying attention. This is the case if someone is speaking to you directly (for example, your partner is explaining her idea about a project on which you’re collaborating) and if someone is speaking to the entire class (for example, a student offers an answer to a question that your teacher asked). Good listening also means refraining from making negative comments about the speaker or his/her remark. Like you’ve heard since you were little, if you can’t think of anything nice to say, don’t say anything at all. And if you DO think of something nice to say, by all means, say it!

**Sportsmanship**
It can be easy to feel lousy after something does not turn out the way you wanted it to. Maybe you didn’t get a very good grade on a recent test, or your team lost the kickball game, or you did not get the part you were hoping for in the musical. Whatever you do, don’t take your disappointment out on other people. It shows strength of character to face a challenge or disappointment and to keep your head held high. Stay true to yourself and don’t let bad feelings lead you to say or do something unkind.

**Health**
No one wants to be full of germs, but there are times when it happens. Knowing how to act when you’re sick can help you get better faster and prevent others around you from becoming ill too.

When you cough, turn your head away from the people near you, and put the inside of your elbow up to your mouth to “catch” the germs that fly out. Sure, now your elbow is all germy, but it’s unlikely that someone would catch an illness from that. When you sneeze, try to get a tissue and use it to catch the sneeze. Wash your hands frequently, including after every use of the restrooms, and use hand sanitizer to keep those germs at bay!
How to Format a Typed Paper

When you type a paper for school, there are a number of formatting expectations that you should follow. Because you want your typed work to look professional and meet your teachers’ expectations, you should refer to this document any time you are typing a paper for school. The tips and tricks mentioned in this paper are specific to Microsoft Word, but most word processing programs work similarly, including Google Docs. Following these guidelines will help you create documents that you can be proud of and that will impress your teachers.

There are a few settings that you can make to the word processing program you are using so that the document will appear correctly on the page. First, you will want to set up the margins. If you go to “File” and then “Page Setup,” you will be able to set all four margins (top, bottom, left, and right) to be one inch wide, which is the standard for all word processed papers. Secondly, if you go to “View” and then scroll down to “Toolbars,” you will want to make sure “Standard” and “Formatting” are checked. That way you can use the small icon in the top toolbar labeled “Line Spacing” to make sure that your heading is single spaced and that your paragraphs are double spaced. Finally, you will want to select a standard font, such as Times New Roman size 12 which is what this document uses. With these settings in place, you’re ready to start typing.

As you type, there are a few tips that you want to be aware of. First of all, you should type one space after every comma and one or two spaces after every period. Secondly, you should only hit the “return” key at the end of a paragraph, and you only need to hit it one time. Once you do hit the return key at the end of a paragraph, you should hit the “tab” key so that your next paragraph will be properly indented.
Another important step to take while typing papers is to save your document frequently. Make sure you have selected an appropriate place to save the file so that you will be able to return to the document later. Give the document a name that will help you identify it in the future. Then, every few minutes, hit the “save” icon in the toolbar at the top of your page. That way, if something goes wrong with the computer you’re using or with the document itself, you will have a copy saved that contains most, if not all, of the work you have done. If you are using Google Docs, your work will automatically be saved every few seconds.

In addition to the format of your paper looking professional, you of course will want to make sure that your grammar and mechanics are as correct as possible. To do this, you should use the built-in grammar and spell checks that are included in your word processing program. But you can’t just stop there. Many errors are overlooked by a computer’s spell check. For example, notice that none of the misspellings in the following sentence would be noticed by an automated spell-checker: “Eye mite knead sum knew shoos four Jim,” Hairy tolled hour ant An. Computers are not as smart as humans . . . yet. So we need a human’s brain and eye to notice that the words in this sentence are not spelled correctly based on the context of the sentence. You should always proofread your own work carefully after completing the grammar and spell checks that your word processing program offers so that your work is as accurate as possible.

One final suggestion about typing your work is to practice your keyboarding skills so that typing papers becomes quick and painless. There are some terrific free online sites that you can use to train your fingers to fly across the keyboard at lightning speed. In order to see how many words you can type per minute and track your improvement, try out a one-minute typing test at www.typingtest.com. For a fun, zany program that teaches the proper way to type, try Dance Mat Typing at www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing. Now, get those fingers flying and create some documents that you can be proud of!
When Calamity Strikes . . .

How to Survive Daunting Disasters

Forgot Your Homework: It happens to everyone at one point or another. You get to school and realize your homework is back at home, on the bus, in your parent’s car, or maybe even . . . not done!

What NOT to do: First of all, don’t panic. Everyone forgets something now and then. Just make sure it is a rare occurrence. Don’t ask if you can call a parent and have them deliver it to you – they MUST have better things to do, and besides, you want to show some independence at this point in your life. Don’t try to complete the assignment in class hoping the teacher doesn’t notice. This will look sneaky and is dishonest. If you are caught doing homework in class, it will likely result in a zero for the assignment.

What TO do: Do write a reminder in your assignment book to bring it the next day (nothing is worse than forgetting it again!) Do be honest with your teacher. Tell him/her that you don’t have the assignment but that you have written a reminder in your assignment book to bring it the next day. Do accept the late penalty (if there is one) and use it as an opportunity to remind yourself of how important it is to make sure all work is completed and in your bag before you leave for school.

Computer Trouble: Maybe your computer freezes on you in the middle of typing an assignment, maybe you accidentally hit the “delete” button and your work disappears, maybe your little brother kicks the power cord out of the wall (accidentally, of course), or maybe your computer just spontaneously explodes in a fiery ball of flames. Whatever the problem, there is a solution. First of all, save your work every few minutes or use Google Docs. That way you should be able to recover it. If, however, the problem is something that can’t be fixed easily, you should handwrite the assignment. If typing was required, explain the situation to the teacher, show him/her the handwritten version, and explain that you plan to use a school computer that afternoon to type up the assignment.

Can’t Print: Maybe you don’t have a printer at home, maybe it ran out of ink, or maybe it will only print upside down in neon yellow wingdings font. Whatever the reason, there is a solution. Head to the library or computer lab before school to print your work - either from an email you sent yourself, a thumb drive, or from Google Docs.

No Assignment Book: Some day you may find yourself in class without your assignment book. Simple solution: write assignments on paper and transfer them into your assignment book once you find it. If you think your assignment book is permanently missing, go to the office to purchase a new one. If you forget to bring your assignment book home with you, call a classmate and/or check your teachers’ websites.
Don’t Understand an Assignment: First of all, make it your goal to never leave school without understanding an assignment. But if it does happen, seek the advice of a trusted classmate, get help from an adult or older sibling in your household, and/or seek the teacher’s help before school the next day.

Don’t Have the Papers Necessary to Complete an Assignment: Not having the papers you need does not excuse you from work. If it is at all possible, you need to reproduce that handout in some fashion. Call a friend to find out what was on the papers you forgot. If that is not possible, then come to school early the next morning to receive a new handout and do the assignment or turn it in late the following day.

A Legitimate Event Prevents You from Completing Homework: If an emergency, medical issue, or unforeseen event prevents you from completing homework, please have a parent or guardian write a note or send an e-mail. Talk to the teacher the next day to see if and how the assignment can be made up.

An Assignment is Taking Forever: If an assignment is taking much longer than expected, you should stop after significant time and effort has been spent. Bring a note from home or have a parent/guardian e-mail the teacher. If it is an ongoing concern, communication is extremely important so accommodations can be considered and action plans put in place to help students manage homework responsibilities. Students, teachers, parents, and guidance counselors all need to work together to help students who are struggling with homework.

Missed Class or School: If you miss part or all of a class or are absent for one or more days, you need to be very responsible about catching back up. First of all, let teachers know ahead of time about planned absences and ask if there’s anything you can do while you are gone to keep up with the class. Another proactive strategy is to find out what happened in class before you even return by visiting a teacher’s website or calling a classmate. Once you do return to school, check in with your teachers as soon as possible — no matter what. That usually means **before homeroom on the day you return**. Don’t show up to class after an absence and plop down like nothing has happened. If for some reason you were not able to check in with a teacher before homeroom, at least remind your teacher on the way in to class that you were absent and ask when s/he is free to meet with you about what you missed. Don’t expect a teacher to catch you up during class or for a teacher to remind you that you were absent.

Oh, and here’s an important **INSIDER’S TIP** — Don’t ask a teacher **IF** you missed anything. Duh. Of course you did. Ask **WHAT** you missed. This will go over a lot better!
You will be tackling a variety of different types of reading in middle school: articles, editorials, textbook chapters, web sites, stories, poetry, word problems, primary sources, and lab procedures, to name a few. When you read for school, it's important to have a plan of action that will help you successfully comprehend the ideas and information presented in the text. The acronym **g.o.t. c.o.m.p.** is designed to remind you of seven helpful comprehension strategies you can use when reading for school.

**gOAL**: Before beginning to read, think about the goal or purpose for the reading. Why has the teacher given this assignment? What specifically are you supposed to get out of it? Take a look at anything that the teacher has asked you to do while or after reading to get a sense of what he/she wants you to learn from the text. And don't be shy about asking a teacher what the most important goals are for an assigned reading. Knowing what's expected of you as a reader can really help you to focus in on what parts of the text are most important.

**OVERRIDE**: Get a broad overview of the text before beginning to read by checking out how it's organized and the kinds of graphics that are included. Look at the title, headings in bold, graphics, captions, maps, charts, side panels, links, number of pages, etc. This overview will help you become familiar with the topic and the structure of the text, both of which can help you anticipate what will be important as you read.

**TALK**: As you begin to read, interact with the text by talking to it. Yes, talking! Pretend you're having a conversation - either in your head or out loud - about the ideas in the text. As you read, tell the text or the author that what you're reading is confusing, funny, interesting, boring, brilliant, wrong, or even insane! Talk about what the text is making you think, picture, realize, connect to, or imagine. Ask the author questions. Talking can help you to stay connected to and involved with what you're reading. It can also help you to make meaning of the text and alert you when your comprehension breaks down.
COMPOSE: Write down information and thoughts as you read in your own words. Take notes right on the text, on stickies, a piece of paper, or the computer. Jot questions, summaries, predictions, inferences, realizations, brilliant new ideas that occur to you, reasons you’re confused, connections you’re making to other things, cartoons or drawings of what you’re learning -- anything that seems important as you read. You can also try organizing your notes by making categories or an outline, by drawing lines or using highlighters, or by using a graphic organizer. Composing and organizing notes helps your brain get a sense of how the ideas all relate to one another and will help you better remember the information later.

OPERATE: When the going gets tough and you’re having a hard time understanding or staying connected to the text, don’t give up! Those are the moments when you’ve really got to focus and work hard. Imagine that you’re a doctor operating on a patient. Lean in close and yell, “Scalpel!” The following strategies will help you “operate” on difficult sections of text:

- read slowly
- re-read several times
- read out loud
- stop frequently and summarize each small section in your own words
- tackle a word you don’t know by seeing if you can recognize its parts or syllables and by using context clues to help guess its meaning
- get help with words you can’t figure out (from another person, a dictionary, or dictionary.com)
- ask for or find a text on the same subject that is easier to understand (from your teacher, the library, or online), and then return to the assigned text once you have some background knowledge
- mark or write down areas that you can’t successfully “operate” on and see your teacher before class to ask for help

MASTER: In order to really master the reading, you need to take a few minutes when you’re done to write down the main ideas presented in the text in a short list or summary. If you want, include a quick sketch or cartoon to go along with it. Also, include a list of any new or interesting ideas that the reading sparked in your own mind.

PARTICIPATE: Teachers generally ask you to participate in some kind of follow-up to the reading. It might be a class discussion, a written assignment, or even a quiz. Use your notes and your final summary to prepare. It’s a great idea to have your notes out during follow-up assignments and class discussions so that you can quickly refer to them. And besides, it will REALLY impress your teachers!
Internet Survival
Tips for You!

Never give any personal information to anyone you meet online. That means first or last names, phone numbers (they can be used to track down your home), passwords, or birth dates.

Never meet up with anyone you don’t already know. Don’t tell anyone your schedule; don’t say where you’ll be hanging out. People are often not who they say they are.

Don’t fill out any “fun” questionnaires that are forwarded to you, even if they’re from your friends. Remember, you’re in a world where everything can get forwarded or posted on a public site. All those personal things about you could land in the hands of someone who could use them to harm you.

Make sure you know everyone on your buddy list. If you haven’t met the people face-to-face, they may not be who they pretend to be. Also, Instant Messaging strangers is an invasion of their privacy.

You do not have to answer emails or IMs from people you don’t know. As a matter of fact, you shouldn’t. Who knows who they are? Even if they say they’re “David’s friend,” David could be a lucky guess. “Kids” you meet in chat rooms may actually be creepy adults.

There’s no such thing as “private” or “temporary” on the Internet. You may think so, but it’s not true, even on web sites where there appear to be “privacy” settings. People can find anything they want to and keep what you post forever. Don’t ever type or post anything that you wouldn’t be okay having family, peers, or teachers see.

Be careful about posting pictures of yourself. If you must, don’t post ones that you wouldn’t want your parents, teachers, or future employers to see. Also, be careful about including any identifiers along with pictures (such as name or school) since strangers could use it to track you down.

Don’t send embarrassing pictures of other people or mean comments about anyone. Doing so is a form of bullying. Mean comments and pictures you post can be forwarded along or posted on public sites and then seen by just about anybody. How would you like it if someone did that to you?

Don’t visit sites or download content without your parents’ permission. Many sites have spyware that will damage your computer. Other sites have really inappropriate content. Your parents can check your computer’s URL history, so you can’t hide where you’ve been.

Never share your password with anyone but your parents. That includes your closest friends. They may casually mention it to others without realizing how dangerous that can be. It allows easy access to your information and even the possibility of someone going online pretending to be you.

You may only use the computers at school for school-related work. Check out the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook for the Internet, Email, and Computer Network Safety Policy.

Content modified from www.commonsense.com
Self Advocacy

“Whatever you want, he thought, you got to make your own way. During the night now, let’s find that path through the forest...” Ray Bradbury from Dandelion Wine

If a student has a problem in school the teachers at F.A. Day are here to help them, but teachers are not the only ones who can solve problems in a school. You, as a student, have the most control over the success you have at Day. If you can learn how to work with your teachers and advocate for yourself your time in middle school will be very rewarding.

The following guide offers students some resources and suggestion on how to navigate common middle school issues.

Keeping Up

What should I do if I am falling behind?

If you realize that you are falling behind in a class you should make a plan to deal with the issue. Here are some suggestions for a plan:

Make an appointment to meet with your teacher(s). Teachers appreciate when students seek them out, but trying to deal with making up work during class is usually difficult. Rather than asking a teacher what to do during class, ask a teacher if there is a good time to meet to discuss the issue. The teacher might be able to talk to you during class, or they might ask to meet before or after school.

Ask for help in prioritizing the work you have to complete. When you meet with a teacher, ask them for assistance with deciding on what work should be completed first. Until you know where to start, missing work can seem overwhelming.

Use the resources that are available at the school. A teacher might offer to have you stay after to complete missing work, or you could use the homework club.

Do not ask for extra credit assignments. Teachers want you to complete the work that is assigned and for you to do the work well. An extra credit assignment will not make up for missing work.

Homework

What do I do if...

I don’t know what the homework assignment is?
I forget my homework at home?
I cannot complete my homework at home?
I forget the directions?
I don’t understand the directions?

Use the assignment notebook. Take the time that is given at the start of class to write down your assignments. Do not rely on your memory. Do not rely on anyone but yourself to keep track of your homework assignments.
Have a place in your binder for homework. Get into the routine of always keeping your homework in the same place. If you completed a perfect homework assignment, but you then forget the assignment at home, you will not get credit that day. The last crucial step of homework is making sure the work makes it in to school!

An attempt at completing homework is always appreciated. If homework is taking you a long time, or is unusually challenging, complete as much as you can. Having an assignment partially completed is better than having a blank page.

Know what homework resources are available to you. Does your teacher have a web page that has the homework? Do you have a planning sheet from class that will help you understand an assignment? Is there a classmate that you can call to help you figure out an assignment? Know what your options are if you run into trouble with homework.

Classwork

What do I do if...
I don’t understand the directions
I forget the directions
I was not listening to directions

Know and follow the class routines. Following the class routine is the first step in making sure you understand the directions. Do your best to get settled in your seat and write your homework assignment in the assignment notebook. You can expect that there will be directions from your teacher at the start of class.

Listen to the questions of other students. Teachers appreciate questions, but they do not appreciate answering the same question over and over again. Listen to the questions that your classmates ask.

How should I phrase questions?

Try to be specific when you ask a question. Try to identify a part of the assignment that is confusing. The teacher’s ability to assist you is improved when students ask specific questions.

How and when should I ask to go to the rest room or water fountain?

Avoid asking to leave the room during the first 10 minutes of class and the last 5 minutes of class.

How can I be a good classmate, teammate and friend?

What do I do if...
I have a conflict with a friend
I have a conflict with a peer (Any student at the school)
I have a conflict with a teacher
If you find yourself in a conflict with anyone in the school you should talk to a teacher or guidance counselor that you trust. If you feel uncomfortable talking to a teacher or counselor, talk to a parent/guardian and they can contact the school.

There is also a Peer Mediation Program that specializes in mediating conflicts. A group of 8th graders are trained each year in peer mediation strategies. If you seek out peer mediation the meetings will be confidential. The Peer Mediation Program is a great resource that is available at Day.

**How to work in groups**

*How can I make sure that group work goes well?*

*A little leadership goes a long way.* Introduce yourself to the group members you do not know. Restate or reread the directions and figure out how you can share the work. In a true team, everyone contributes. If you find one group member doing all the work, pause, and make a plan to share some of the responsibilities.

*How can I be a good friend and a good team member?*

If you are given an opportunity to choose a partner your best friend may not be the best choice. Will you distract each other and spend more time socializing than working? If the answer is “yes” then you may want to reconsider working together. Group work gives you a great opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. Your best friend will still be there for you after class.
Advice from Former 6th Graders

Former Day 6th graders wanted to share the following advice with you. Who knows better how to survive sixth grade than kids who have lived through it?!

◆ Being organized is REALLY important; you are responsible for things that are given to you and having a clean binder can keep you feeling more on top of things.

◆ Set up systems that work for you in your assignment book, binder, and other things.

◆ If you need help, ask! Don’t just assume it’s no big deal. Raise your hand or talk to the teacher afterwards.

◆ Every paper you do counts, so try your hardest on everything. The way you are graded is on everything you do, so missing four assignments is a BIG deal.

◆ Get involved in after school things, like the musical, cabaret, clay club, track and field, cross country – it’s a great way to make friends.

◆ Start studying for a quiz at least 4 days before and study for at least 20 minutes every day.

◆ Don’t worry if you are wrong, raise your hand anyway.

◆ Don’t get stressed out.

◆ Stay true to yourself! Even though you might be overwhelmed by all your new friends, don’t ever change yourself.

◆ Branch out! Use after-school clubs and sports to make some new friends.

◆ Always check in after absences! Missing work doesn’t just disappear.

◆ Tape a copy of your schedule in your assignment book and locker, and then keep another one in a binder. Color-coding helps!

◆ Homework first! Don’t save it for 9 p.m. Watch t.v. later.
◆ Go above and beyond. Surprise your teachers by always writing more and exceeding expectations.

◆ Be yourself. Some kids try to create new images to become popular, but being yourself is always better. Let people know you for who you really are.

◆ Be very organized and have extra supplies.

◆ Figure out how you learn best.

◆ Stay away from traffic jams in the halls.

◆ Make trustworthy friends.

◆ Have at least 3 pencils and 3 pens in your backpack every day.

◆ Pay attention during classes.

◆ Enjoy your time at middle school.

◆ Get flexible binders.

◆ Use combination locks, not word locks.

◆ Try to make friends with a teacher.

◆ Take notes even when not asked.

◆ Always have a schedule-buddy and homework-buddy to check with.

◆ Know who you can work well with.

◆ Always study and do your best because it will help you in the long run.

◆ Get all long term projects done earlier. Don’t save them for the last night.

◆ Be brave in the area of participation.

◆ If you can’t listen to a teacher just pretend to.

◆ Keep extra gym clothes in your locker in case you forget.

◆ Get enough exercise. Get enough sleep. Get enough food.

◆ Be as organized as possible.

◆ Be nice to people. Say hi. Be friendly.

◆ Sixth grade isn’t as scary as it seems.
GUIDANCE FROM . . .
THE GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

WHAT IS A GUIDANCE COUNSELOR? DO I EVEN HAVE ONE?

Of course you have one. Every student at Day Middle School has a guidance counselor. Who your counselor is depends on the team you’re on. Look on your schedule or ask your homeroom teacher.

What we do in the guidance office is a bigger question. Actually, we do a little bit of a lot of things, such as . . . meet with parents, help out with scheduling snafus, support students when they are going through a hard time, celebrate the steps toward academic and personal achievement, and simply be there for our students, their families and teachers.

Guidance counselors have offices in Student Services which is room 238 on the second floor.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I NEED TO SEE MY GUIDANCE COUNSELOR?

Am I overwhelmed? What bus do I take after school? Something is happening at home and I need to talk to an adult confidentially. I’m lost...where is the lunch room? I can’t open my locker. Can I switch my extension/elective with another one? How do I join a club? I can’t wait to show my guidance counselor my science project! All great reasons to see your guidance counselor. There are many more instances and reasons to come visit us in room 200, but we were given a limited amount of space in the survival guide. Movin’ on...

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST COMMON THINGS STUDENTS AND COUNSELORS TALK ABOUT?

WOW, good question...what don’t we talk about? Here are a few of the things we help with:

Organization is the key. Your teachers give you the secret weapon in staying organized...an ASSIGNMENT BOOK. Use this book and your academic experience will be off on the right foot.
Friendships. Middle school is a roller coaster ride of change. Some changes we handle very well on our own and for some, we may need a little support from Guidance. Friendships can be one of those times when a counselor can be very supportive and helpful. Some of you may maintain the same friendships throughout your three years at Day Middle School. However, many of you will experience some degree of change in your friendships. This can feel uneasy and exciting at the same time. You will have incredible opportunities to meet new people and begin forming new friendships. The best way to go about this is to join a club after school. You never know . . .

Rumors can be tough. We are all vulnerable to being part of a rumor, whether the rumor is about you, about a friend of yours, or even if you help spread the rumor. Because all of us share this vulnerability, ALL of us can help HALT the rumor by simply not passing it along to a classmate.

Family Stuff: We all have it. Counselors, teachers and families work hard together to make your experience at Day the best ever. Parents and guardians often meet with your counselor and/or teachers to seek help in working through a range of concerns that may be impacting you. Below are a few scenarios:

• A scheduling issue.

• A family is going through a hard time and it's affecting their child's school work.

• A parent/guardian would like an update on how their child is doing in class.

• A student is having a hard time balancing school work with outside activities.

• A teacher(s) have noticed a drop in their student's grades and have the team's guidance counselor schedule a parent conference with the parent/guardian.

Well that's a brief overview about what we do in Guidance / Student Services. We see kids for lots of different reasons . . . no issue is too small or too big. The goal is always to support our students to help ensure a positive F.A Day Middle School experience for everyone.
WELCOME TO DAY

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Here you will meet...

Teacher  Interpreter  Student
Edco Welcomes You!

Edco is the program here at Day that works with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. You may have some questions or notice some things that are new to you, like...

Hey, there is a Deaf kid in my class!
Here at Day we have both Deaf and hard of hearing students. These students use an interpreter and some may also use a special FM system to get classroom information.

Deaf? Hard of Hearing? What’s the difference?
Some students have no hearing at all. They are Deaf. Other students may be able to hear some sounds or speech. Those students are hard of hearing.

Wait, is it okay to call them Deaf?
Yes, the preferred term is Deaf or hard of hearing. Don’t be afraid to use them.

Do Deaf kids hear anything? Can they talk?
Depending on their level of hearing loss, Deaf kids can go from hearing nothing at all to hearing quite well using a hearing aid or cochlear implant. Both help to amplify sounds. Some students use their voice, others do not. It is their choice.

Who is that person in the classroom waving their arms around?
That person in the classroom waving their arms is an interpreter. Interpreters use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate the classroom information between the teacher, the Deaf student(s) and hearing students.
Why is my teacher wearing a microphone?

That microphone is part of a specialized piece of equipment called an FM system. It sends a clearer voice signal to a student's hearing aid or cochlear implant.

How do I talk to that kid?

There are various ways of communicating with EDCO students. During the school day you can use the interpreter, gesture, write a note using pen and paper or the computer. After school you can use your phone's texting abilities, email or social networking sites. Be creative! Be brave! Make new friends!

Can I learn to sign?

Anyone can learn to sign. One idea is to ask an EDCO student to help you get started. Here are some good websites you can use: ASLPro.com, DeafMD.org, aslbrowser.commtechlab.msu.edu, or check out Penny Warner's Signing Fun and other books about sign language from the Day library and your public library.

It's good to remember that Deaf and hard of hearing students are just like you and do everything you do except hear! EDCO students like the same things as you do - sports (baseball, soccer, football, hockey and lots more), art, watching TV, playing video games, or just hanging out with friends, joking and laughing.

If you want more information please ask a teacher, interpreter, or the Deaf students themselves!
Signers use the American Manual Alphabet to spell English words that don’t have signs. This is called *fingerspelling*. Each handshape represents a different letter of the English alphabet. Once you learn the alphabet, you will be able to fingerspell any word.
Preparation

Locks
Students need to bring in a combination lock or word lock to the locker room to keep belongings safe and secure. NO key locks are allowed. Make sure to practice a few times before school starts so you are ready to go! Combinations will be given to the PE teachers to keep on file in case you forget.

Appropriate Clothing
Make sure you bring in appropriate clothes that you can move around in comfortably and that you don’t mind getting dirty! It is important that students change out of school clothes and into appropriate PE clothing for hygiene and safety purposes.

Appropriate Clothes:
Athletic Shoes/Sneakers
T-Shirts and Athletic Shorts
Sweatshirts and Sweatpants
Hats (Outside use only)

Inappropriate Clothes:
Sandals/Flip Flops/Crocs
Boots/Heels/Dress Shoes
Jeans/Khakis/Dress Pants
Large Jewelry
Full Value Contract
Students will live by the following rules during our physical education classes.

**BE HERE**
- Be Present
- Be Prepared
- Active Listening
- Be Engaged

**BE SAFE**
- Keep your, your peers’, and your teachers’ bodies safe
- Use equipment properly and safely
- Use respectful language and keep kids emotionally safe

**BE HONEST**
- Be honest with yourself, your classmates and teachers during all class activities

**SET GOALS**
- Set attainable goals as a class
- Set personal goals for yourself

**LET GO AND MOVE ON**
- If you have a disagreement or an unpleasant experience in class, deal with the issue, then come to the next class ready to move on.

**Have Fun!!** The physical education teachers here at Day are excited for the class experience and journey that you are entering into! You will be taught a variety of units including, Adventure, Team Sports, Lifetime Physical Activities, Dance, and Fitness!!
AN IMPORTANT MEMO FROM YOUR LOCAL WORLD LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Since many of you will be studying a second language for the first time, we thought it important to provide you with the inside scoop on what to expect as you dive into a whole new world of languages....

The basics:

- At F.A. Day Middle school, you have the opportunity to study one of four “full time” languages: Spanish, French, Italian, or Chinese. The language that you take in 6th grade will be the language that you continue to study through the end of your 8th grade year. If you would like to experience another language once you get to high school, you will have the option to do so. In 7th and 8th grade, we also offer Latin as an elective that meets twice out of our 6-day cycle.

- In 6th grade, World Language classes meet 4 times out of the 6-day cycle. That means that you won’t have your language class every day, and this can become very tricky if you don’t stay organized. It is very important to always be prepared for class and have your homework completed on time, so you will need to pay very close attention to your schedule, know what “day” it is every day, and when you have World Language. It is also important that you demonstrate a high level of professionalism in your language class. You should have a separate, well-organized binder to keep track of all of the paperwork that you will receive. Most of your resources will be handouts from your teacher.

- All World Language classes are cumulative. Languages are learned by building upon existing knowledge. That means that you need to successfully complete 6th grade Spanish before moving on to 7th grade Spanish, and 7th before moving on to 8th.

- When you feel like you’re struggling and your parents can’t help you because they don’t know the language, check in with your teacher! Ask for help! We want you to learn, and if you need help, we need you to ask for it. We know that it can be scary to approach a new teacher in a new school, but WE are here for YOU! Every teacher’s schedule is different, so it’s a good idea to talk to your teacher directly before showing up for help. Simply say: “I think I need some extra help. When would be a good time for you to meet with me outside of class time?” It’s as simple as that!
Tips for learning a Second language:

TIP #1: DO YOUR HOMEWORK WELL EVERY NIGHT!

Homework is an extremely important part of learning a second language. It is a chance to practice the language outside of class.

In class:

✓ Write down the assignment in your assignment notebook in class.
✓ Listen to your teacher explain the homework.
✓ Make sure you have the homework in your World Language folder/binder before you leave the room.

When working on your homework:

✓ Have your notes, textbook, handouts, class work, etc. out to use as a resource.
✓ WRITE YOUR NAME, SECTION and DATE on it.
✓ Read ALL of the directions carefully.
✓ Complete all parts of the homework.
✓ If you don’t know the answer, avoid "make-it-upitis"! Use your resources!
✓ Double check all work. Make sure that you understand what you’ve written.
  (If you don’t understand what you’ve written, your teacher won’t either.)
✓ If you are really struggling after 20 minutes, and have little work to show for it, STOP. See your teacher for extra help when you get back to school.
✓ Put your homework back in your binder, and your binder into your bag.

TIP #2: “PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT!”

To master new vocabulary & grammar rules, you have to practice. Here are some suggestions:

✓ Look at the word(s) on your vocabulary list closely.
  o Does it look like another word that you know? Can you make a “connection”?
  o Say the word out loud.
  o Spell the word.
  o Cover up the word.
  o Write the word.
  o Check your spelling.
  o Repeat as needed.
✓ Make and use flashcards.
✓ Study with a parent, sibling, or friend.
✓ Label objects at home!
TIP #3: LOOK FOR LANGUAGE “OUT & ABOUT”

Look for the language that you are studying in the world around you and in your community. For example, if you go to a Mexican or Spanish food restaurant and the person waiting on you speaks Spanish, try to order in Spanish! Introduce yourself. Have fun with it! It doesn’t matter if you make mistakes! It matters that you try to use the language, and that you get your ideas across.

Where are some places where you might find your language of study?

- **IN PRINT**: grocery store ads, brochures in your doctor’s office, billboards/signs, restaurant menus, product instructions, newspapers and magazines.
- **ON TV**: Telemundo, Univisión (para español). Watch your favorite movies in a different language! Many DVDs allow you to change the language to either French or Spanish.
- **IN YOUR EARS**: Put your best ear forward! If you hear the language, try to understand it: on the T, in the grocery store, at a Red Sox game, in a museum!

TIP #4: DON’T BE AFRAID TO MAKE MISTAKES! TAKE RISKS AND HAVE FUN WITH IT!

Don’t limit your speaking to the moments when you know exactly what to say. Making mistakes is an important part of the learning process. We know that this is new territory for you, but we want you to test out the waters of your new language. We’ll provide you with a “map,” but you’re the one who needs to steer the ship! Think about what you know and try to build upon it.

- Participate actively in your World Language class.
- Practice at home with a friend, sibling, or parent.
- Practice with anyone you know who is a native speaker of the language.
- Watch a DVD or play a video game with the language options set to Spanish.
Spanish-English Dictionaries

Now that you have started to study Spanish, you will need to buy a good Spanish-English dictionary! And, although it may sound silly, you also need to learn how to use it as well! (note pun down below :)

Why are Spanish-English dictionaries hard to use?

Because language is complex! The English language has many words that are all spelled exactly the same but represent different parts of speech, and therefore have entirely different meanings. As a result, you HAVE to know the part of speech of the word you are looking up. Are you looking for a noun? An adjective "well" for a story that you are writing. (His well ria has the best water in all of Spain). The word well can be a noun, an adverb or an interjection in English. If you look up well in a Spanish-English dictionary, and don't know which well you need, it is possible that you will end up writing something that does not make sense.

Before looking up a word in a Spanish-English dictionary, make sure that you know what part of speech you are looking for!

How does your dictionary tell you which witch is which?

With abbreviations!

It is important to recognize the abbreviations that your dictionary uses for the various parts of speech!

Here are some of the most common abbreviations used in dictionaries:

- **adj** for adjectives (easy, fácil, difficult, difícil; good, bueno)
- **adv** for adverbs (quickly, rápidamente; never, nunca)
- **conj** for conjunctions (but, pero; when, cuando)
- **interj** for interjections (ugh, iuf!: oops, iuy!)
- **n** for nouns (well, pozo; dictionary, diccionario)
  - OR *s for sustantivo (the Spanish word for "noun")
- **prep** for prepositions (with, con; in, en)
- **pron** for pronouns (she, ella; we, nosotros)
- **v** for verbs (study, estudiar; to write, escribir; to sing, cantar)

**Verbs...verbs, oh you difficult verbs:**

Verbs are the most difficult words to look up in a dictionary and therefore might give you a headache from time to time. You must remember that you will not find a dictionary, no matter how big, that offers all of the verb forms (he eats, we are eating, you ate, I used to eat, etc.) for each Spanish verb. Don't give yourself a headache! Instead of looking up the word *como*, or *comen*, you need to look up the **infinitive** form of the verb *comer*. Likewise, if you are trying to say that you *saw* one of your teachers yesterday, you need to look up the verb *see* so that you are not calling your teacher "una sierra," or a deadly too!

**Gender: Is it a "boy word" or a "girl word" or both?**

The Spanish-to-English half of your dictionary will indicate whether a given noun in Spanish is masculine/a "boy word" (*libro, pozo*), feminine/a "girl word" (*mesa, nena, mujer*), or both masculine **and** feminine.

Your dictionary will probably use the abbreviations **m, f**, and **m/f** or **mf** often combined with **n** (for "noun") or **s** (for **sustantivo**, "noun" in Spanish).
For example:

- **chiste nm**: in the Spanish-to-English section of the dictionary, tells you that 1) it is a noun and 2) it is masculine. (joke)

- **chiste m**: in the English-to-Spanish half, under the listing for *joke*, tells you that the word is masculine. (The abbreviation *n* is not needed since *joke* is initially listed as a noun.)

- **mano sf**: a feminine noun

- **artista sm/f**: a noun that may be either feminine or masculine

**Adjectives**

In most dictionaries, you will not see more information on adjectives aside from the meaning of the word itself. Adjectives are listed in their **masculine** and **singular** form. For example, the adjectives *guapo, triste* and *hablador* will not be given in their feminine or plural forms. You will soon learn that *guapo* has other forms, (*guapa, guapas, guapos*) as do *triste* (*tristes*) and *hablador* (*habladora, habladores, habladoras*). Your Spanish-English dictionary assumes that you already know this. (This is done to save space.)

**Other abbreviations and “indicators”**

Dictionaries use a large number of abbreviations in order to accommodate as much information as possible in a limited amount of space.

Here are a few other abbreviations that you should be aware of:

- **- or ~**: These abbreviations are used for repeating the main word or expression within the listing. For example, the listing for *life* (*vida*) might include "for the ~ of me," or "to run for one's ~", or "to come to~."
• *(Mex) (Guat) (Arg) (SAM): These will tell you if a word or phrase is a regionalism used in a particular part of the Spanish-speaking world. *(Mexico, Guatemala, Argentina or South America)*

• * or **: Complete dictionaries will tell you if a particular expression is slang or impolite.

• (nav), (educ), (elec): navigation, education and electricity
  Good dictionaries will offer additional information to help you identify the proper word, giving the situation where it might be applied. These labels will be given immediately before or after individual expressions.

  *Note: Your dictionary will have a complete listing of all labels and grammatical abbreviations at the beginning. That is a resource that you should use often.

**Closing tips**

1. Make sure you correctly spell the word you are looking up! *(It will save you a lot of time!)*

2. Make sure that you are on the right side of the dictionary! Don’t look up *pozo* under the Ps in the English-Spanish side of the dictionary as you won’t find it, no matter how hard you look. *(By now you should know that a *pozo* is a well.)*

3. **USE BOTH HALVES OF THE DICTIONARY!** If you look up a word/expression in the English-Spanish section and there are several possibilities given, look them up in the Spanish-English part of the dictionary to make sure that you have the best one.

4. **Do not** use an online translation site to translate your thoughts into Spanish! Computers are not people and do not know which “well” you need for your story or which “may” you mean when you say May 5th.
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THIRD FLOOR PLAN
Credits:

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