Classroom idea with printables · ADHD

The Task Checklist

assignments with several steps

Elementary school | Middle school | High school | Helpful for ADHD, good for the whole class

What you need

- Printer and scissors
- Laminating pouches or a laminator
- A dry-erase marker
- Tape to stick the checklist to the desk

How to prepare

1. Page 3: cut out and laminate the task checklists
2. Page 4: cut out and laminate the verb cards
3. Page 5: print the working list for high school

Step by step

1. Break the assignment into single steps, one step per line.
2. Put a checkbox in front of each line.
3. Put the checklist on the student's desk or post it in the class chat.
4. The student checks off each step. When the work is done, take a quick look at the checklist together.

Tip: Laminate the checklists once and rewrite them each day in dry-erase marker, so you only have to print them once.

Why it helps

With ADHD, a multi-step assignment can slip out of working memory. The task checklist keeps every part of the job outside the student's head and makes the finish line visible. Visible steps are recommended as an external support.

How to adapt it

- **Elementary school:** Three or four steps at most, ideally with small picture symbols for pencil, scissors or notebook.
- **Middle school:** Each step starts with a verb: “Read …”, “Underline …”, “Write …”. A “Done when” line shows when the task is finished.
- **High school:** The checklist turns into a working list for longer assignments. Over time the student writes more of the steps, and you just look it over.

AI tip

Give an AI tool the wording of an assignment and have it draft a task checklist: one step per line, each starting with a verb, with a checkbox in front. It saves you breaking things down, and you can trim the draft as you go. From middle school on, students can practice this themselves and compare the checklist with their own version, if your school allows it.

Copy and paste: “Break the following assignment into [number] steps or fewer. Write one step per line, start each step with a verb and put a checkbox in front. Add a final line, “Done when …”. Assignment: [insert assignment text here]”



Last checked: November 2026. AI changes quickly, so this tip may soon be out of date. It works with ChatGPT, Gemini and Claude; use whatever your school allows. Never enter student data or student tests, not even anonymized.

Keep in mind

- One assignment per checklist.
- Still give the directions out loud, briefly, and point to the checklist as you do.
- In remote learning, post the checklist as a chat message so it doesn't get lost among the files.

How you know it's working

There are fewer “What do I do next?” questions, and fewer steps get skipped.

Cut out and laminate. Fill in with a dry-erase marker.

Task checklist

Task: _____

- ☐ Step 1: _____
- ☐ Step 2: _____
- ☐ Step 3: _____
- ☐ Step 4: _____

Done when: _____ Next: _____

Task checklist

Task: _____

- ☐ Step 1: _____
- ☐ Step 2: _____
- ☐ Step 3: _____
- ☐ Step 4: _____

Done when: _____ Next: _____

Task checklist

Task: _____

- ☐ Step 1: _____
- ☐ Step 2: _____
- ☐ Step 3: _____
- ☐ Step 4: _____

Done when: _____ Next: _____

Task checklist

Task: _____

- ☐ Step 1: _____
- ☐ Step 2: _____
- ☐ Step 3: _____
- ☐ Step 4: _____

Done when: _____ Next: _____

Task checklist

Task: _____

- ☐ Step 1: _____
- ☐ Step 2: _____
- ☐ Step 3: _____
- ☐ Step 4: _____

Done when: _____ Next: _____

Task checklist

Task: _____

- ☐ Step 1: _____
- ☐ Step 2: _____
- ☐ Step 3: _____
- ☐ Step 4: _____

Done when: _____ Next: _____

Cut out and laminate. Put the right card next to each step so every step starts with a verb.

Read	**Underline**	**Highlight**
Write	**Calculate**	**Draw**
Cut out	**Glue**	**Compare**
Check	**Ask**	**Hand in**
Clean up	Your own verb, in dry-erase marker	Your own verb, in dry-erase marker

For high school

Working list for longer assignments

Break the assignment into steps yourself, give each step a date and check it off.

Assignment: _____

Due on: _____

Done when: _____

Step (starts with a verb)	By when	Done	Notes
Write the outline	*Mon*	*yes*	*talked it over with Ms. M.*

The gray row is an example. At first, your teacher will take a quick look at your list.