



PLANS

Background and Implementation



Understanding the PLANS Strategy

The PLANS strategy is designed to support students in organizing their thinking **before** and **during** the writing process, specifically for informational and expository writing. It uses a mnemonic to guide students through a structured planning and drafting routine.

A mnemonic for **organizing ideas and content for informational writing**.

- **P**review topic, audience, and goals
- **L**ist main ideas and details using the Frame Think Sheet
- **A**ssign numbers to order main ideas and details
- **N**ote ideas in complete sentences
- **S**earch for errors and correct them



Understanding the PLANS Strategy

This strategy...

- **Supports:** Planning and Drafting
- **Applies To:** Informational and Expository Writing
- **Grade Levels:** Upper Elementary through High School



Purpose and effectiveness

What it Helps Students Do:

Critically evaluate their own writing by considering the **topic, audience, and purpose** before writing.

Extract and organize content using the FRAME graphic organizer to logically structure main ideas and supporting details.

Refine writing by systematically checking for clarity, grammar, and overall coherence in the Search step.



Purpose and effectiveness

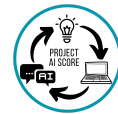
Why it's Effective:

- Provides an explicit, tactile process for developing internal **planning and revision habits**.
- Encourages **metacognition** by prompting students to think about their own decision-making (e.g., how ideas connect, what order makes the most sense).
- Demonstrates positive outcomes across diverse learners, including students with learning differences, by building a **repeatable, visual process** that reduces cognitive overload.



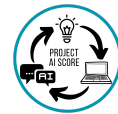
PLANS

Step-by-Step



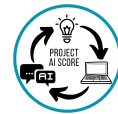
Step 1: Preview topic, audience, and goals

Step	Action	Guiding Question
P	Gather information about the topic; think about the audience and the goals for the writing.	"What do I know about this topic? Who is my audience and what do I want them to learn or feel?"



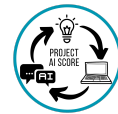
Step 2: List main ideas and details using the Frame Think Sheet

Step	Action	Guiding Question
P	Gather information about the topic; think about the audience and the goals for the writing.	"What do I know about this topic? Who is my audience and what do I want them to learn or feel?"
L	Write the title, subject, main ideas, essential details, and the ending "big idea" on the Frame graphic organizer.	"What are my key points and supporting details? How can I organize them visually?"



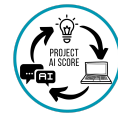
Step 3: **Assign numbers to order main ideas and details**

Step	Action	Guiding Question
P	Gather information about the topic; think about the audience and the goals for the writing.	"What do I know about this topic? Who is my audience and what do I want them to learn or feel?"
L	Write the title, subject, main ideas, essential details, and the ending "big idea" on the Frame graphic organizer.	"What are my key points and supporting details? How can I organize them visually?"
A	Decide which main ideas will be written first, second, etc., and then determine the order of details for each main idea.	"What order makes the most sense for my reader?"



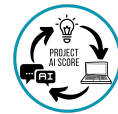
Step 4: Note ideas in complete sentences

Step	Action	Guiding Question
P	Gather information about the topic; think about the audience and the goals for the writing.	"What do I know about this topic? Who is my audience and what do I want them to learn or feel?"
L	Write the title, subject, main ideas, essential details, and the ending "big idea" on the Frame graphic organizer.	"What are my key points and supporting details? How can I organize them visually?"
A	Decide which main ideas will be written first, second, etc., and then determine the order of details for each main idea.	"What order makes the most sense for my reader?"
N	Follow the numbered plan to draft the essay, starting with an introduction, putting each main idea and its details into a new paragraph, and writing at least two sentences per detail.	"How can I turn my plan into full paragraphs?"



Step 5: Search for errors and correct them

Step	Action	Guiding Question
P	Gather information about the topic; think about the audience and the goals for the writing.	"What do I know about this topic? Who is my audience and what do I want them to learn or feel?"
L	Write the title, subject, main ideas, essential details, and the ending "big idea" on the Frame graphic organizer.	"What are my key points and supporting details? How can I organize them visually?"
A	Decide which main ideas will be written first, second, etc., and then determine the order of details for each main idea.	"What order makes the most sense for my reader?"
N	Follow the numbered plan to draft the essay, starting with an introduction, putting each main idea and its details into a new paragraph, and writing at least two sentences per detail.	"How can I turn my plan into full paragraphs?"
S	Read aloud to fix sentences that don't make sense or are incomplete/run-on; read silently to fix spelling, punctuation, tense, and subject-verb agreement errors.	"Does my writing make sense? Is it free of errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation?"



Implementation Tips

Tip 1: **Explicitly model each step**

- Use **think-alouds** to show students the mental processes for each phase.
- Practice the strategy with the **PLANS Frame graphic organizer** and discuss the purpose of each step.
- Use the provided lesson plan and slide deck/presentation

Tip 2: **Scaffold for learners who need support with sentence structure**

- Offer **sentence starters** (e.g., for introductions or transitions) or **paragraph frames** that model the structure of a body paragraph.
- *Example:* A frame for a body paragraph can include slots for the Topic Sentence, Supporting Detail 1, Supporting Detail 2, and a Closing Sentence.
- Gradually remove scaffolds as students gain independence.

Tip 3: **Use teacher conferencing during the process**

- Conduct **brief, targeted conferences** (3–5 minutes) during independent work to provide individualized feedback.
- Use specific prompts tailored to the student's current step (e.g., for the 'Preview' step: "What do you want your audience to know after reading?").
- Keep a log to track which steps need repeated reteaching for specific students.



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