

First session preparation checklist

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First Session Preparation Checklist (PDF) | PTB

A one-page checklist to prepare for your child's first tutoring session: space, school context, goals and the questions worth asking the tutor.

Twenty things worth sorting before the tutor first arrives, in one printable page: the space, the school context, your goals, and your questions.

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A first tutoring session is an assessment and an introduction, not a test, and your child cannot fail it. It goes best when the practical details are settled in advance, so the hour can be spent on your child rather than on hunting for exercise books.

The checklist below is the complete printable content: twenty items in four blocks, covering practical setup, academic context, goals, and questions for the tutor. Tick each item in the day or two before the session.

Print the page and keep it on the fridge for the few days before the first session. Most items take under five minutes; the only one that needs real thought is the goals block, and even that is three honest sentences.

After the session, flip to the after-session block: four quick lines you fill in while the hour is fresh. That note becomes the baseline you measure progress against a month later.

1. Choose the table or desk where sessions will happen, with decent light and space for two people to sit side by side.
2. Clear the space of distractions: games, toys, the household tablet.
3. Charge the device if any online or screen-based work is likely, and check the wifi reaches the table.
4. Gather pens, pencils, paper, a ruler and a calculator into one box that stays in the space.
5. Arrange a drink and a small snack for your child; an hour of thinking runs on water.
6. Write down your child's school, year group and curriculum.
7. List the subjects to be tutored, with the current textbook or programme for each.
8. Find the most recent school report and set it aside to show the tutor.
9. Collect two or three recent pieces of work: one your child is proud of, one that shows the difficulty.
10. Note any upcoming tests, deadlines or exam dates the tutor should know about.
11. Write down any learning support plans, diagnoses or adjustments the school has in place, if relevant.
12. Complete this sentence in one line: "By the end of this term, we would like our child to"
13. Add one sentence on how your child is feeling about the subject right now.
14. Decide what success would look like in four weeks, in observable terms: a topic mastered, homework finished without battles, a test grade.
15. How will you assess where my child is starting from?
16. What will you cover in the first few sessions?
17. What should we do, or avoid doing, between sessions?

18. How will you update us, and how often?

19. What should we tell our child about the sessions before you arrive?

20. Is there anything you need from the school, and shall we request it?

What the tutor covered, in one sentence.

How your child responded, in their own words if possible.

Your honest read: right fit, or worth a conversation about changing the plan.

If the first session was not right, that is information, not failure. With us, tell us within 48 hours and we refund that session in full, then rematch. Either way, keep the note; it is the first page of your child's tutoring record.

The PDF is the same twenty items laid out on one page with tick boxes, ready to print. Related reading: our guides on how to choose a private tutor and questions to ask before booking go deeper on the decision itself; the homepage gives the service overview; and the contact page is the fastest way to ask us anything this checklist raises.

read about how to choose a private tutor

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The decision framework this checklist assumes you have worked through.

The question bank behind block four of the checklist.

The full library of printable checklists, worksheets and planners.