

Using checklists can be an effective way to scaffold pupils' *cognition* by ensuring they remain focused on the success criteria of a task.

This can help break the task down into its constituent components and prompt students' thinking during independent practice. The following examples demonstrate how this might look in different contexts.

Literacy example:

If the independent practice requires pupils to describe a character using metaphors and similes, the checklist might consist of the following:

Describing a character using metaphors and similes

- Have I grouped my ideas into clear paragraphs?
- Have I used a simile effectively using like or as? E.g. His smile is like a ray of sunshine. His smile is as radiant as the sun.
- Have I used a metaphor effectively? E.g. Pools of blue and hazel stare steadily into the distance.
- Have I re-read my work to check it makes sense?

Science example:

If independent practice is to balance chemical equations, the checklist might consist of the following:

Balancing chemical equations

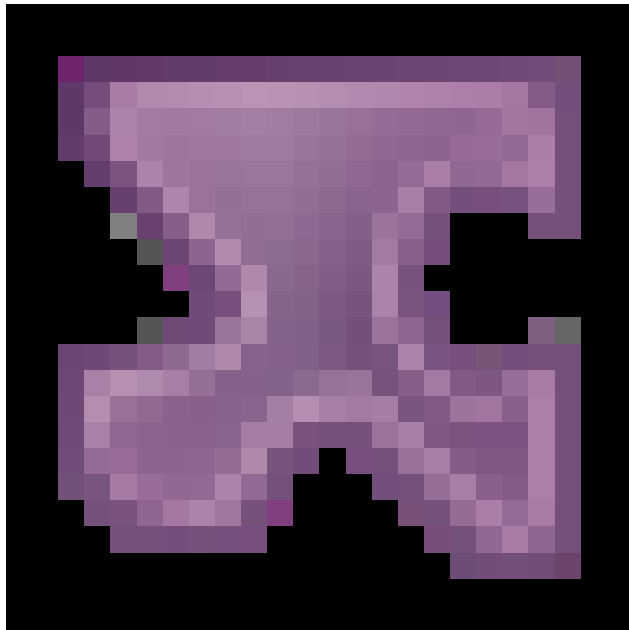
- Have I replaced the name of each substance with its symbol or formula?
- Have I checked whether the equation is balanced?
- If the equation is not balanced, have I used numbers to balance it?

If you are in a setting where reading is a challenge, such as Early Years or a special setting, you can use images as a visual prompt.

Providing pupils with a checklist for cognitive strategies acts as a scaffold to ensure that pupils remain focused on the key learning points. Checklists help break down the task into smaller parts and prompt pupils to consider their next steps. This supports pupils to take ownership over their learning as it means pupils are required to monitor and check their work throughout an activity or task.

Hear from a teacher

Listen to Elizabeth Arkle as she shares how she uses checklists to scaffold pupils during independent practice.



Direct Link: [Using checklists - Elizabeth Arkle, Extol Academy Trust](#)

Transcript: [Using checklists - Elizabeth Arkle, Extol Academy Trust](#)

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