



TOOLS FOR DOCUMENTING WORK

You might not need to use or show all of these tools, but being aware of how each one works can help you create a more effective homeschooling portfolio. (Your teacher will love you for it.)

Tool #1: Weekly planner

A weekly planner lets you take the big picture goals for the year and divide them into more manageable pieces. In the weekly planner, you write down what each student will be doing in each subject for that week. You can check things off as they are completed and move uncompleted items to the following week. The planners are just plans—until you check things off that have been completed, and then they become records of student work.

How can I create this tool? You can create your own weekly planner on paper or on the computer using a simple table, find printables online, or purchase a ready-made planner. Make sure there is enough room to write down assignments for each subject. Having a no-date planner lets you customize it based on your family's homeschooling schedule (you can even just number the weeks instead of writing in the dates ahead of time).

How does it help with documenting student work? You can use your planner to keep notes on which skills are consistently evident and which need more work, jot down which assignments are good samples of student work, keep track of questions for your teacher, etc. You can also use it as a record of the number of instructional days, and a comprehensive record of student work (without having to save every single piece of paper).

Tool #2: Lesson topics/goals

Lesson topics or goals identify the scope of the knowledge that your student will gain. For instance, in social studies, when studying the Renaissance, lesson goals might include gaining an understanding about the following topics:

- Ruling class
- Printing press
- Art and artists
- Architecture
- Humanism
- Scientific revolution

How can I create this tool? Lesson topics/goals can come from your curriculum's table of contents, or you can create them yourself based on the variety of resources you will be using. You can also use state standards or curriculum scope and sequence guides from other schools.

How does it help with documenting student work? The lesson goals help shape your weekly list of what will be covered. They also provide information for supervising teachers or school districts about the content covered.



Tool #3: Learning objectives

Learning objectives focus on specific skills the student will use while exploring the lesson topics or goals. For instance, when studying the printing press, you might identify these learning objectives:

- Conduct research using at least three sources.
- Cite sources in a bibliography or works cited page.
- Take notes, putting information in your own words or using quotation marks for direct quotes.
- Draw a labeled diagram.

Learning objectives are stated with action verbs, indicating what students will do (compare, analyze, summarize, calculate, graph, categorize, etc.)

How can I create this tool? Learning objectives are often found in your curriculum, or they may be provided by your teacher; you can also use state standards to identify key skills to focus on.

How does it help with documenting student work? Knowing which learning targets (specific skills and knowledge) your student is working towards helps you decide which pieces of work to include in your portfolio.

Tool #4: Assignment checklists

Assignment checklists detail how your student will demonstrate the learning objectives (which tasks will be accomplished). For instance, an assignment summary for a lesson on the printing press might look like this:

- Research the early printing press, using at least three sources. Keep track of your sources in a bibliography.
- Summarize what you have learned in writing, using at least one direct quote.
- Draw a labeled diagram to explain how the printing process worked.

How can I create this tool? Assignments are either found in your curriculum or you devise them based on what your student is studying. You can use a weekly planner to keep track of the assignments for each subject and check them off as they are completed.

How does it help with documenting student work? As your student completes the week's assignments, you can note which ones demonstrate the learning objectives particularly well and include those in the portfolio. The weekly planner also becomes a record of student work.

Tool #5: Year-at-a-glance planner

Year-at-a-glance planner can be used to show the scope and sequence of content for each year. This helps you keep track of what to include in your portfolio.

How can I create this tool? Make your own or find a printable one online.

How does it help with documenting student work? It can help you when choosing a representative sample of work (you want to include something that touches on each main topic).