



# CHUNKING



Organizing tasks into small, sequenced steps with just enough information, allows students to focus on one clear move at a time.



## WHAT?



Chunking is designing your lesson so learning is delivered in manageable pieces, one clear idea at a time, to allow processing.

- **Focus the Segment:** Present learning in short, manageable pieces rather than long blocks.
- **Cut the Noise:** Limit extra details so learners stay focused on the core objective.
- **Process Time:** Build in brief moments to think, talk, write, or check between segments.



## WHEN?

- **During complex/new learning:** When information may overwhelm working memory
- For **key pauses:** After each chunk, add processing, talk, checks, or brain shifts
- **For support:** Especially for novices or when breaks are needed, or confusion occurs



## WHY?

By **controlling how much novel information hits working memory** at once, chunking reduces cognitive load and frees attention for meaning-making and next-step transfer.

- **Especially effective when content is complex & for learners with less prior knowledge** (novices/strugglers) because smaller, sequenced pieces give them space to process now and apply later
- **Prevents overload:** Frequent pauses for processing reduce confusion, frustration, and disengagement



## RESOURCES

[Cognitive Shifts Menu](#)

[Focus Resets Menu](#)

[Movement Breaks Menu](#)



## INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN MOVES

### Chunk by time:

Break the lesson into short segments with built-in pauses **for processing time**, quick checks, brief discussion, cognitive shifts, movement breaks, or focus resets depending on student needs.

### Chunk by structure:

**Organize related ideas**, limiting steps at one time, or group similar problems that use the same strategy or pattern. Using the explicit instruction naturally chunks the structure of lessons.

### Chunk by text/content:

Divide reading, tasks, or procedures into sections, stages, events, or numbered steps. Using a graphic organizer or allow time to illustrate in between each part **enhances recall**.

### Chunk materials/layout:

Reducing the visual load can **enhance focus & limit distractions or overwhelm**. Cover with a blank paper/notecard, or cut into physical pieces. OR Color code (visual cue) the chunk.



## ARTICLES

[Accommodation Central: Chunking](#)

\*Check out the video in the middle of the article!

[Pearson: Unlocking the power of chunking: Reducing cognitive load](#)

[Chunking in Education: A Simple & Effective Guide for Teachers](#)



## VIDEOS

[Chunking Lessons to Increase Attention](#) (2 min.)

[4 Ways to Break Up Lectures](#) (3 min.)

[Chunking: Learning Technique for Better Memory](#) (3 min.)



## AI PROMPT

I am teaching [grade level] [subject] and focusing on TEKS [# & full language]. Using research-based instructional practices, suggest practical ways to chunk instruction (time, content, visuals, or task structure), including what students do after each chunk & how to check understanding before moving on.



## AI IDEAS

- **Napkin** (all content): turns text into visuals or cloze-style notes to support chunking and processing
- **Brisk Teaching** (math): creates step-by-step models, worked examples, & scaffolded practice
- **MagicSchool:** Summarizer/Leveler: breaks text into smaller chunks for access, 7-12: Quiz Me / Question Generator: builds quick checks between chunks