# Executive Skills Questionnaire for Students

Peg Dawson & Richard Guare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I act on impulse</td>
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<td>I get in trouble for talking too much in class</td>
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<td>I say things without thinking</td>
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**TOTAL SCORE:**

4. I say, “I'll do it later” and then forget about it
5. I forget homework assignments or forget to bring home needed materials
6. I lose or misplace belongings such as coats, notebooks, sports equipment, etc.

**TOTAL SCORE:**

7. I get annoyed when homework is too hard or confusing or takes too long to finish
8. I have a short fuse, am easily frustrated
9. I get upset easily when things don’t go as planned

**TOTAL SCORE:**

10. I have difficulty paying attention; easily distracted
11. I run out of steam before finishing my homework
12. I have problems sticking with chores until they are done

**TOTAL SCORE:**

13. I put off homework or chores until the last minute
14. It’s hard for me to aside fun activities in order to start homework
15. I need many reminders to start chores

**TOTAL SCORE:**

16. I have trouble planning for big assignments (knowing what to do first, second, etc.)
17. It’s hard for me to set priorities when I have a lot of things to do
18. I become overwhelmed by long-term projects or big assignments

**TOTAL SCORE:**

19. My backpack and notebooks are disorganized
20. My desk or workspace at home is a mess
21. I have trouble keeping bedroom tidy

**TOTAL SCORE:**
22. I have a hard time estimating how long it takes to do something (such as homework)
23. I often don’t finish homework at night and rush to get it done in school before class
24. I’m slow getting ready for things (e.g., school or appointments)

**TOTAL SCORE:**

25. If the first solution to a problem doesn’t work, I have trouble thinking of a different one
26. It’s hard for me to deal with changes in plans or routines
27. I have problems with open-ended homework assignments
   (e.g., doesn’t know what to write about when given a creative writing assignment)

**TOTAL SCORE:**

28. I don’t have effective study strategies
29. I don’t check my work for mistakes even when the stakes are high
30. I don’t evaluate my performance and change tactics in order to increase success

**TOTAL SCORE:**

31. I can’t seem to save up money for a desired object
32. I don’t see the value in earning good grades to achieve a long-term goal
33. If I should be studying but if something fun comes up, it’s hard for me to
   make myself study

**TOTAL SCORE:**

### KEY

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<th>Executive Skill</th>
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<td>Response Inhibition</td>
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<td>Working Memory</td>
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<td>Self-Regulation of Affect</td>
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<td>Sustained Attention</td>
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<td>Task Initiation</td>
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<td>Planning/Prioritization</td>
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<td>Flexibility</td>
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<td>Goal-Directed Persistence</td>
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**Your Executive Skill Strengths**

**Your Executive Skill Weaknesses**
Executive Skills Problem Checklist

DIRECTIONS:
1. Check (✓) problem areas that significantly interfere with effective studying.
2. Look over all the items you’ve checked and choose THREE that you think cause the greatest problems. Place a star (*) next to those.

Working Memory
___ Writing assignment instructions without sufficient detail to understand later
___ Forgetting to bring home necessary materials or bring materials to class
___ Forgetting to hand in homework
___ Forgetting long-term projects or upcoming tests
___ Not paying attention to classroom instructions/task directions
___ Trouble remembering multiple directions or multiple problem steps
___ Losing materials
___ Forgetting to complete assignments
___ Forgetting to check agenda/assignment book
___ Not recording when assignment is due

Task Initiation
   Procrastinating/avoiding tasks due to:
     ___ not knowing how to get started
     ___ believing the task will “take forever”
     ___ believing their performance won’t meet expectations
     ___ seeing the task as tedious, boring, or irrelevant
___ Finding other things to do rather than starting homework
___ Difficulty getting back to work after breaks

Sustained Attention
___ Taking frequent breaks when working
___ Taking breaks that are too long
___ Internally distracted—thoughts, states, moods, daydreams. Please specify:

___ Externally distracted—sights, sounds, technology such as phone, computer, tv, video games. Please specify:
___ Rushing through work—sloppy/mistakes
___ Not knowing limits (how long can sustain attention) or when best study time is
___ Not recognizing when off-task

Planning/Prioritization
___ Not making a study plan (may not know how)
___ Can’t break down long-term projects into subtasks and timelines
___ Having difficulty taking notes or studying for test because can’t distinguish important from non-important
___ Not using or not knowing how to use agenda/assignment book
___ Spending too much time on less important elements—can’t prioritize the most important parts or most important assignments
___ Planning unrealistically (e.g., fails to take into account obstacles to the plan)
Organization
___ Not using or know how to design an organizational system
___ Can’t find things in notebooks or backpacks
___ Losing assignments or important papers
___ Not having neat study area
___ Losing electronic data—forgets where work is stored or what name it’s filed under

Time Management
  Can’t estimate how long a task will take—due to:
___ Overestimating how long it will take to do a task (therefore never gets started)
___ Underestimating how long it will take to do a task (therefore leaves insufficient times)
___ Chronically late (for school, tutoring, other appointments, and obligations)
___ Difficulty juggling multiple assignments and responsibilities because can’t judge time involved
___ Over-committed—juggling too many obligations (and they think they can pull it off)
___ Lacking a sense of time urgency (doesn’t appreciate that deadlines are important)
___ Relying on deadline as activator or motivator
___ Not knowing limits (how long can sustain attention) or when best study time is

Goal Directed Persistence
___ Not having a long-term goal
___ Has a long-term goal but lacking a realistic plan to achieve the goal
___ Not seeing how daily actions impact goal attainment
___ Not seeing studying as important and making minimal effort as a result
___ Giving up in the face of an obstacle
___ Having a “good enough” mentality that gets in the way of producing quality work
___ “Not on the radar”— seeing work as not relevant or not important enough to do

Metacognition
___ Can’t accurately evaluate skills (e.g., expects to do well on tests in spite of poor past performance; expects to go to a college or get a job without requisite skills or academic record)
___ Can’t identify appropriate study strategies
___ Can’t plan or organize a writing assignment
___ Can memorize facts but missing the larger context (does better on multiple choice tests than essay questions)
___ Having a hard time understanding more abstract concepts (math as well as content area subjects)
___ Having difficulty making inferences, drawing conclusion, grasping the main idea, reading between the lines
___ Failing to check work/proofread

Other