

WHAT IS A PLAYLIST?

A playlist is a sequence of resources and/or activities for students to complete.

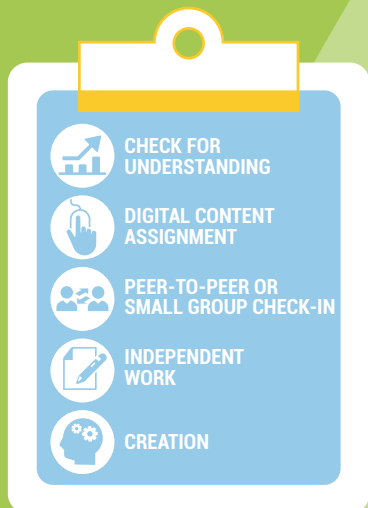
A playlist might:

- Be assigned for a subset of a class period, a full day, a week, or even a full course
- Include content for one skill, one standard, one lesson, one unit, or even cover multi-disciplinary content
- Be assigned to one student, a group of students, or all students

Traditionally, playlist activities & resources get progressively more rigorous. *Example: DOK 1 at the beginning of the playlist and DOK 4 at the end*

Playlists are often in a list or table format.

- They can be printed or online
- All non-digital playlists, resources, and activities should be accessible to students with minimal teacher support



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A PLAYLIST?

When we ask students to complete multi-faceted independent activities, a playlist serves as guidance and sequencing without real-time teacher actions. This allows the teacher to direct students without having to be present, thus freeing up to the teacher to work 1:1 or with small groups of students, manage behavioral challenges, observe & respond to academic blockers, offer tech support, and so much more.

“With playlists, the responsibility for executing the learning plan shifts: Students are given the unit [lesson, activity, etc] plan, including access to all the lessons, ahead of time. With the learning plan in hand, students work through the lessons and assignments at their own pace.” [Reference](#)

Note: **not all playlists are personalized**; they can be assigned the same way to all students. To personalize, teachers implement playlists in conjunction with personalized learning strategies to target specific student interests, skills, and needs.

1 Gather the resources and activities students should explore/complete

- Use your summative assessment as your guide: what do students need to know/know how to do?
- Consider having multiple options for the same topic or skill so students can exercise choice. *For example, if I want students to explore themes in literature, I might offer multiple inputs on a variety of topics or at a variety of lexile levels.*

2 Sequence the resources & activities in a logical way

- Progression suggestions: steps to task completion, DOK level, scope & sequence from your existing curriculum

3 Layer personalized learning strategies to ensure each student's needs are met

- Pull small groups to target students with similar gaps in their knowledge while the rest of the class has work time on the playlist
- Ask students to set goals for playlist completion. Build in reflection time for students to think about their progress (and likely report progress to the teacher).
- Add adaptive digital content as a resource on your playlist

4 Determine if any of these variables apply:

- **Format** - will the resources and activities in your playlist be digital, printed, or a combination of both?
 - *[Example of printed playlist + zoomed in view.](#)*
- **Student choice** - where might students be able to make a choice from multiple resources/activities?
 - Consider a "Must do/May do" [approach](#)
 - What prompts can you include to help students make the best choice for themselves? Is there a data point they can reference from a recent formative assessment or self-reflection to drive the decision?
- **Incremental checkpoints** - a playlist might include pitstops (formative assessments) where students must demonstrate mastery before moving on to the next section of the playlist. *[Example](#)*
 - This strategy is highly effective in preventing failures on summative assessments
 - Checkpoints can be formal quizzes, informal conversations with the teacher, labs - any sort of pulse check to prove to the student and teacher that the student is ready to move on.

HOW DO I BUILD A *PERSONALIZED* PLAYLIST? continued

- **Points accumulation** - assign point values to playlist items if the sequence is less critical. Challenge students to accumulate a minimum number of points, and let each student determine his/her path to doing so. [Example](#) & [Template](#)
- **Minimum pace** - is there a cadence that students should keep in order to stay on track? Consider collaboratively building a target timeline with students (or subgroups of students) for the first playlist you introduce. Then, gradually release the responsibility to students to manage their own time.

WHAT RESOURCES SHOULD I EXPLORE?

[Using Playlists to Differentiate Instruction](#)

Article + Artifacts: 10 minutes

"A Rhode Island teacher shares her system for customizing instruction to meet the needs of every student...an individualized digital assignment chart that students work through at their own pace."

[ES: Defaulting to individual playlists](#)

Article + video: 10 minutes

"Creating rules in the calendar app to ensure students are always learning in a personalized way during instructional time"

[HS: Self-Pacing with Playlists](#)

Google Slides: 10 minutes

ISTE presentation by Jason Appel highlighting his personal classroom playlist adoption experience

[Montessori Model: Non-digital playlists](#)

Article: 10 minutes

Observations and reflections on non-digital playlist implementation based on a visit to a montessori classroom

[Bank of Playlist Pictures](#)

Photos: time varies

Links to photos of playlists that Education Elements has seen in practice in classrooms



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