

BRILLIANT
TEACHING
User's Guide

A guided introduction to creating an engaging, responsive, and rigorous unit with the Brilliant Teaching App.

The app supports the thinking that leads to brilliant teaching.

You remain the driver: noticing your students, exercising professional judgment, and deciding what best fits your classroom.



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How the planning process works

The five planning questions organize your thinking before the app generates ideas for your unit.

THE PLANNING SEQUENCE

- 1 What do I want my students to understand?
- 2 What are the targets for rigor?
- 3 What do I want my students to feel?
- 4 What are the indicators for engagement?
- 5 How can I be responsive?
- 6 How might students perform understanding?

THREE PRACTICES TO KEEP IN MIND

Be specific.

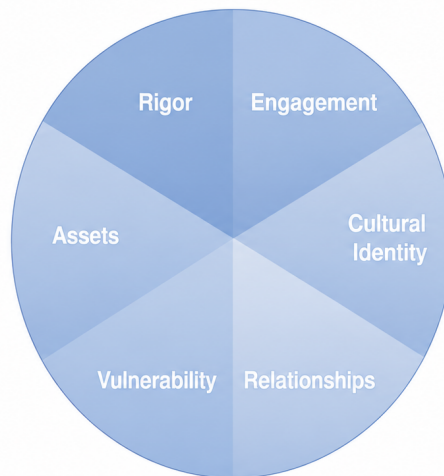
Clear information gives the app stronger context for generating useful ideas. Your knowledge of the content, students, and classroom should guide every response.

Speak into the mic.

Click on the mic icon to speak directly to the app.

Revise as you think.

You may return to earlier steps and refine your answers as the unit takes shape.



CRE Planning Guiding Questions

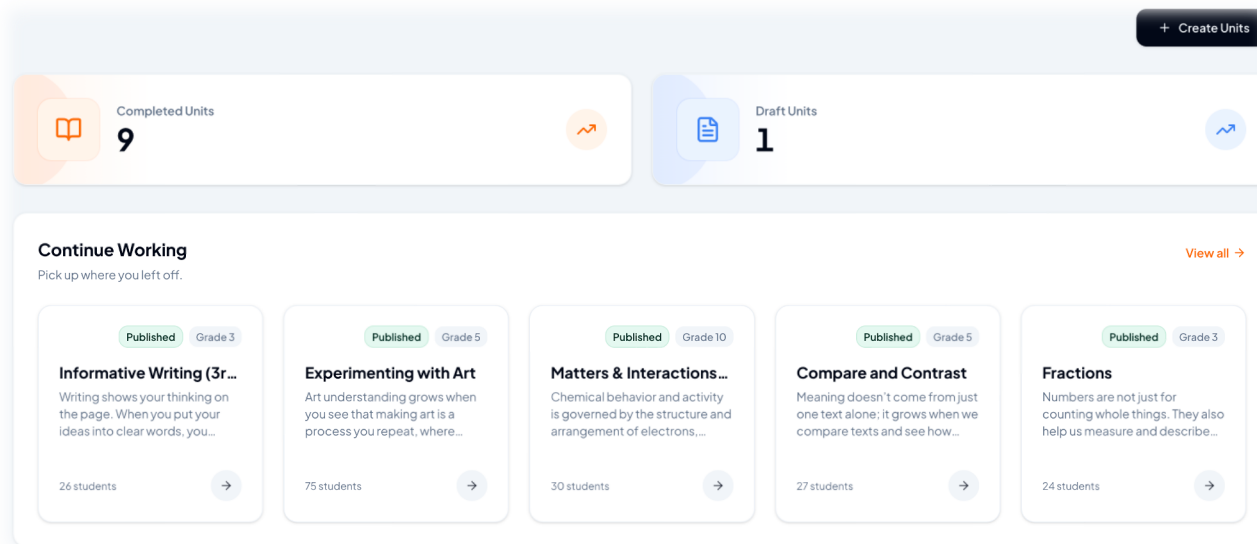
- What do I want students to understand?
- What do I want students to feel?
- What are the targets for rigor?
- What are the indicators for engagement?
- What are the opportunities to be responsive?

DRYEMIS.COM

GETTING ORIENTED

Use the dashboard to manage your units

The dashboard brings your current work, saved units, and next actions together in one place.

**WHAT TO DO**

Select **Create Units** when you are ready to begin. Use the **Completed Units** and **Draft Units** cards to see the status of your work. **Continue Working** lets you reopen a recent unit and pick up where you left off.

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT

The dashboard is your starting point. It helps you move between beginning a new unit, returning to a draft, and reviewing work you have already completed.

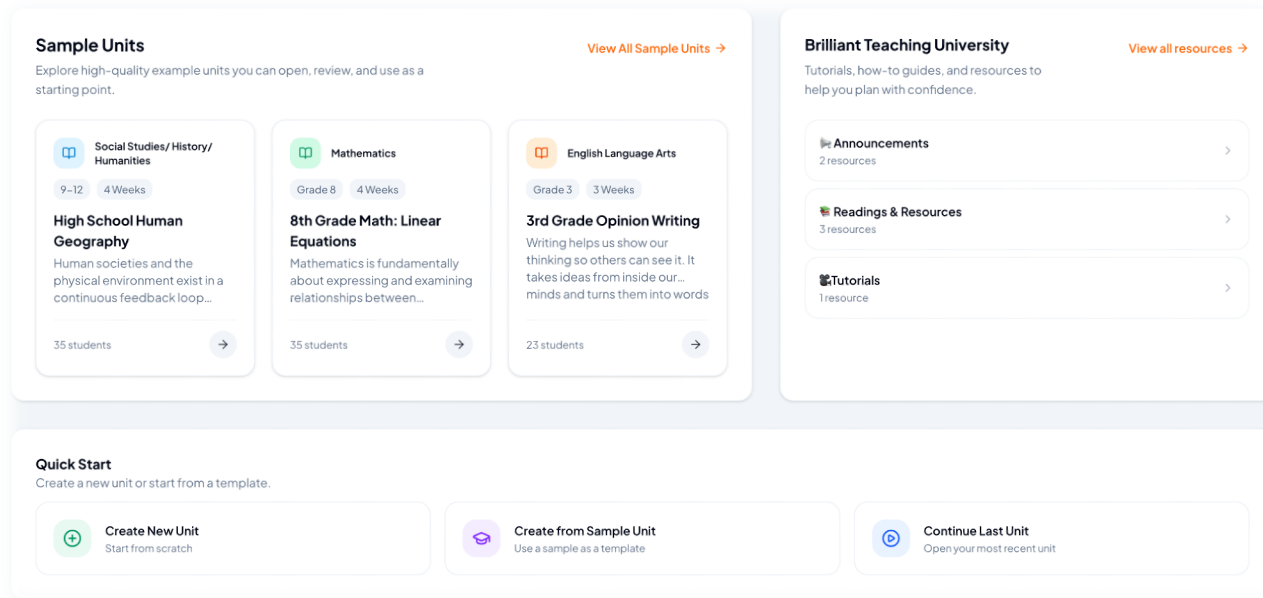
HELPFUL TIP

Use **View all** when the unit you need is not visible in **Continue Working**. The arrow on a unit card opens that unit directly.

GETTING ORIENTED

Explore resources, tools, and support

The navigation panel connects you to examples, learning resources, conversation, account controls, and help.



WHAT TO DO

Click on **My Units** for your saved work and **Sample Units** for completed examples. **Brilliant Teaching University** contains announcements, readings, resources, and tutorials. **Chat** opens a space for AI-chatbot conversation. **Support**, **Your Subscription**, and **Settings** help you manage the app and your account.

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT

Each feature serves a different purpose. **Sample Units** provide models, **Brilliant Teaching University** connects you a community engaged with this process, and **Chat** gives you another place to think through content questions and possibilities.

HELPFUL TIP

Use **Chat** as a research assistant, not as a substitute for your professional judgment. Protect student privacy and do not enter sensitive identifying information.

UNIT SETUP

Create a New Unit

Begin by giving the app the basic information it needs to establish the context for your unit.

Create New Unit

Enter the basic details to start creating your teaching unit.

Unit Title *

e.g. Ancient Civilizations

Subject *

Select subject

Grade Level *

Select grade level

Unit Duration *

e.g. 3

Weeks

Number of Students *

e.g. 25

Next

WHAT TO DO

Enter a clear unit title. Select the subject and grade level, then enter the approximate unit duration and number of students. Choose days or weeks to describe the duration accurately.

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT

The information on this screen establishes the broad instructional context. A recognizable unit title will also make the unit easier to locate later in My Units.

HELPFUL TIP

The number of students does not have to be exact. Use a reasonable estimate that reflects the size of the class or group for which you are planning. This will allow for a better fit of activity and assessment recommendations.

QUESTION 1

What do I want my students to understand?

Clarify the content, the enduring learning you hope students carry forward, and the classroom context in which the unit will be taught.

Step 1 of 7

14% Complete

Q1. What do I want my students to understand?

Let's begin by identifying the core content and enduring understandings for your unit.

What is the primary content standard for this unit? *

Enter the primary content standard...

0/500

Additional Content Standards (Optional)

+ Add Additional Standard

Dream Exercise *

Three to five years from now, I want my students to still know that...

What is your dream for what students will know and be able to transfer into other content areas?

0/1000

Describe your classroom context. *

What grade and how many students? What conditions help your students thrive? What relevant background do they have related to the learning target? Are there any learning needs or other key details to consider?

0/500

Back

Next Step

WHAT TO DO

Enter the primary content standard and any additional standards. Complete the Dream Exercise, then describe the classroom context, including relevant student background, conditions for success, and learning needs.

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT

Look beyond what students will do during the unit. Identify the concepts they must understand first and what you hope will remain meaningful three to five years from now.

HELPFUL TIP

The Dream Exercise is about transfer and enduring value. Complete the thought: "Three to five years from now, my students will still know that..."

QUESTION 2

What are the targets for rigor?

Identify the cognitively demanding work students will engage in as they develop and demonstrate understanding.

Step 2 of 7
29% Complete

OPEN COGNITIVE RIGOR MATRIX
For Rigor Targets 1 and 2 — opens the matrix for the subject you chose when you created this unit.

Q2. What are the targets for rigor?

Identify two rigor targets for the unit.

+ Add additional rigor target.

Rigor Target 1 *
0/200

Rigor Target 2 *
0/200

Back
Next Step

WHAT TO DO

Enter two rigor targets for the unit. Use the Cognitive Rigor Matrix when you want support identifying demanding thinking appropriate to the subject and learning goals. You can copy and paste directly from the matrix screen. Add another target only when it strengthens the unit's focus.

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT

A rigor target should describe the thinking students will do, not simply the activity they will complete. Aim for targets that require students to analyze, reason, synthesize, evaluate, or create.

HELPFUL TIP

Two well-chosen targets provide focus. More targets do not automatically create greater rigor. Choose the language of targets from the DoK 3 & DoK 4 columns of the rigor matrix. The app will offer high- and low-rigor activities for the unit.

QUESTION 3

What do I want my students to feel?

Name the emotional experiences that will help students connect with the learning and sustain meaningful engagement.

Step 3 of 7
43% Complete

FEELINGS WORDS

Q3. What do I want my students to feel?

Learning is not just about what students know – it's also about how they feel while learning.

Enter 3–5 emotions you want students to experience 0/5 emotions

Emotion 1 (Required)

Emotion 2 (Required)

Emotion 3 (Required)

Emotion 4 (Optional)

Emotion 5 (Optional)

Back
Next Step

WHAT TO DO

Enter three required emotion words and up to two additional words. Use the Feelings Words resource if you want a broader or more precise vocabulary for the experience you intend to create.

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT

Choose feelings that matter to this particular content and group of students. Consider how students might feel while taking intellectual risks, collaborating, encountering challenge, or recognizing the relevance of the learning.

HELPFUL TIP

Use precise emotion words. “Curious,” “capable,” or “intrigued” gives clearer design direction than a broad word such as “good.”

QUESTION 4

What are the indicators for engagement?

Translate your intentions into observable signs of cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement.

Step 4 of 7
57% Complete

Q4. What are the indicators for engagement?

These are generated from your previous answers.

Cognitive Engagement

Affective Engagement

Behavioral Engagement *

If someone walked in, what would they see students doing?

0/500

Back
Next Step

WHAT TO DO

Review the cognitive and affective indicators generated from your previous answers. Then describe behavioral engagement: what would someone actually see students doing if the intended engagement were present?

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT

Cognitive engagement concerns the effort of students' thinking. This is the evidence of rigor. Affective engagement concerns their emotional connection. Behavioral engagement concerns their visible participation and actions. Together, the three indicators create a fuller picture.

HELPFUL TIP

Describe observable evidence and actions such as questioning, explaining, raising hands, talking to peers, researching, revising, debating, or making connections.

QUESTION 5

How can I be responsive?

Use evidence of student success and assets to identify possibilities for making the learning more responsive.

Step 5 of 7
71% Complete

Q5. How can I be responsive?

Describe moments of success and assets for each student (minimum 3).

+ Add Student

Student 1

When have I seen this student be successful? What are this student's assets? *

Describe Student 1's successes and strengths...
0/500

Student 2

When have I seen this student be successful? What are this student's assets? *

Describe Student 2's successes and strengths...
0/500

Student 3

When have I seen this student be successful? What are this student's assets? *

Describe Student 3's successes and strengths...
0/500

Back
Next Step

WHAT TO DO

Think of at least three students. For each one, describe moments when the student has been successful and the strengths, interests, knowledge, relationships, or ways of participating that may have contributed. Add students when additional perspectives would improve your planning.

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT

Begin with evidence, not assumptions. This question is not asking you to diagnose students or list deficits. It asks you to notice what has helped particular students thrive and consider how those assets might inform the unit.

HELPFUL TIP

Protect student privacy. Use first names, initials, or another identifier appropriate to your setting, and do not enter sensitive personal information.

QUESTION 6

How might students perform understanding?

Use the six facets of understanding to brainstorm assessment possibilities that make competence visible in more than one way.

SIX FACETS OF UNDERSTANDING

Q6. Brainstorm Assessment Ideas

Complete at least one sentence stem to connect your goals to evidence.

0/6 Completed

EXPLAIN WHAT —

INTERPRET WHAT —

APPLY THE UNDERSTANDING BY —

SEE FROM THE POINTS OF VIEW OF —

EMPATHIZE WITH —

OVERCOME NAIVE OR BIASED IDEAS THAT —

Back

Next Step

WHAT TO DO

Complete at least one sentence stem to begin connecting your goals to possible evidence of understanding. Remind yourself of what you want students to understand. If your students really get “...,” use the prompts to brainstorm ways they might explain, interpret, apply, take perspective, empathize, or reconsider naive and biased ideas.

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT

The six facets offer different ways for competence to become visible. Consider how students might draw on their strengths, experiences, language practices, relationships, identities, and cultural fluencies as they demonstrate (i.e. perform) what they understand.

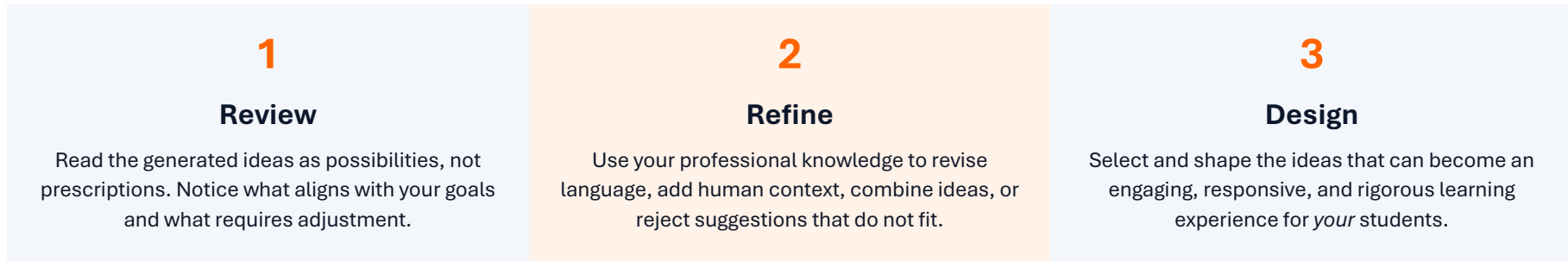
HELPFUL TIP

Offering multiple pathways does not mean changing the standard. Hold the learning goal steady while expanding the ways students can show evidence of competence.

AFTER QUESTION 6

From planning to possibilities

Your answers give the app the context it needs to generate ideas connected to your intentions, your content, and your students.



The app supplies additional reach and stamina to the planning process.

The teacher decides where the learning should go.



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