

# Visual Schedule Cards

LESSON FOR SPECIAL ED TEACHERS



## Visual Classroom Schedule Cards

In this lesson, created with special education teachers in mind but also suitable for primary classrooms, you will find *Visual Classroom Schedule* cards designed to help you and your students plan and follow a daily schedule. A wide variety of cards can be found in the printables section of this lesson, so you have right cards for the right part of the school day.

While there are endless options for these cards, as you share them with your students, narrow it down to ones that are most meaningful to avoid overwhelming them with too many card choices.

Along with an array of schedule cards, there are several *Planning Organizer Mats* (printables section) that can accompany these cards, and some timesaving tips sprinkled throughout for creating a visually pleasing classroom schedule with the help of the [VariQuest Visual and Kinesthetic Learning Suite](#).

### What is a Visual Schedule?

- A visual schedule is a schedule made with pictures.
- The purpose is to provide a tool students can use to help them move throughout their day.
- A visual schedule might include only pictures or pictures and words. What the schedule looks like will depend on the needs of each child.
- A visual schedule can be used for both verbal and nonverbal students.

### How Visual Schedule Cards Help Students

If you are not familiar with visual schedules in the classroom, you will find there are many benefits to students.

- They are a great tool for helping students plan their next steps or learn to follow routines.
- Visual schedules help set clear classroom expectations.
- They help with transitions. When a student has a schedule in front of them,

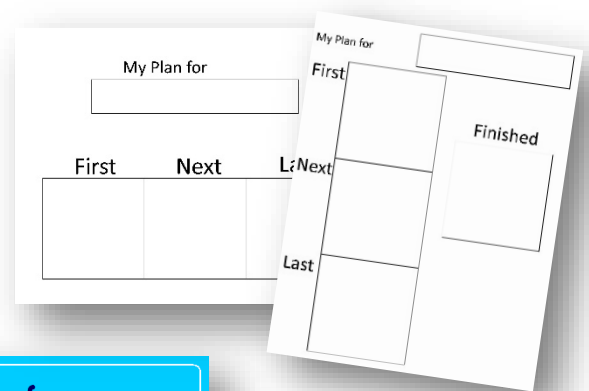
they might have less anxiety about what will happen next. Reducing this anxiety can help minimize meltdowns some children may experience when they become overwhelmed.

- Visual schedules help students build independence and confidence in their abilities.
- For nonverbal students, a visual schedule is a way to communicate. Children who cannot speak, might be able to communicate their progress by moving a schedule card from a 'to do' to a 'finished' section, or simply flip over a card when the task is completed.

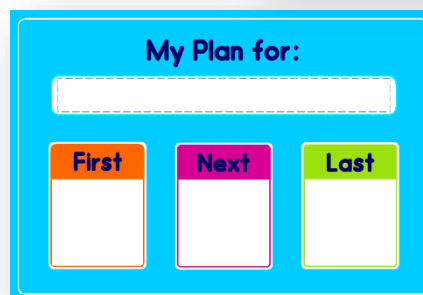
### Instructions for Using the Provided Materials

A visual schedule will often be individualized. You want to make sure what you offer a student for support, is the best fit. Before you begin preparing your materials, start by setting a goal for your student. What will their goal be? As you do this, be sure to think about the skills the student already has, and the skills they are developing. As you introduce your students to their visual schedule, and how to use it, be sure to set them up for success.

In the printables section of this lesson, you will find variety of *Planning Organizer Mats* designed to pair with 3"x3" visual schedule cards to help students visualize the steps in a familiar or new routine.



VariQuest Customers download Planning Mats at the VariQuest Resource Center, *Free!* Print them in full color using the Perfecta® Series Printer and pair them with the Motiva Visual Schedule Cards!



First, choose a planning mat that meets the needs of each student best, then print the mats on card stock (made easy with the [VariQuest Perfecta® STP Series Poster Design System](#) and Heavyweight Coated 13"x19" Paper).

Next, laminate the mats for added durability (consider the [VariQuest Cold Laminator 2510](#) and do away with warmup times and unpleasant fumes).

Last, attach a piece of Velcro inside each 3"x3" square on the mat.

## Implementing a Visual Schedule

Once you have created the mat best for each student, work on printing the schedule cards they will need (be sure to add a piece of Velcro to the back of each card). You will find a collection of *Visual Schedule Cards* in the printables section of this lesson.

*VariQuest Tip:* Save precious time and print them using the [VariQuest Motiva® 400 Specialty Printing System](#) and Visual Schedule Cards Collection (ID # VMC043) available in the [VariQuest Design Center Software and Content](#). Choose to print them on VariQuest 3" cardstock or skip the step of adding Velcro and print them on VariQuest 3" sticker media that's removeable!



*VariQuest Customers* [CLICK HERE](#) to instantly download the full collection of *Visual Schedule Cards* at the *VariQuest Resource Center*, *FREE!*

Start by thinking small. Choose a period of time you can begin with, and steps the student is already familiar with. For example, maybe morning entry is a time a student has mastered – this would be a great place to start!

At the beginning, the goal is to teach your student how to use the materials, so you want to choose an already familiar routine. If you are implementing this resource at the beginning of the school year, some students may not have an established routine so begin by choosing a task that will be easy for them to master.

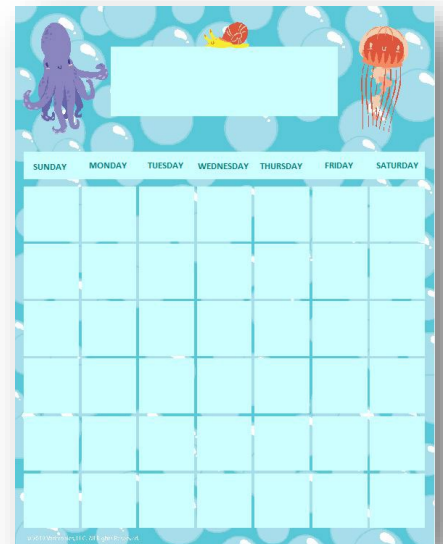
## Using Schedule Cards Without Planning Mats

Although there are a variety of planning mats in this lesson, you may choose to use the visual schedule cards without a mat to convey a class schedule in any classroom.

Print the cards that fit your day as 4"x4" cards (made easy with the [VariQuest Motiva® 400](#)), then laminate them (preferably with the [VariQuest Cold Laminator 2510](#) for a perfect seal every time) and add Velcro dots to the spot where you will display your schedule. This display can be set up vertically or horizontally depending on your space. The larger sized cards will allow students to see the schedule from a distance.

*VariQuest Tip:* Use the [VariQuest Perfecta® STP Series Poster Design System](#) and Card Calendars *ID # TCH020 or TCH021* in the [VariQuest Design Center Software and Content](#), to print as a poster – a great anchor visual to pair with the schedule cards that includes all 7 days of the week!

Laminate the poster (the [Cold Laminator 2510](#) protects your teaching materials for years to come) and you're ready to implement a visually pleasing schedule in your classroom. You may choose to put up the schedule each day or assign this task to a student. You can hand them a written schedule and they can find the correct cards to post for the day.



## Guidelines for Planning Mats

Below are suggestions for creating and using the different planning mats provided in this lesson (*and the full-color versions available at the [VariQuest Resource Center](#)*):

- First, Next, Last (pg. 1) The first mat has a spot at the top for you to place a title. For example, you might write in morning or morning entry and use visual schedule cards, 'put away your backpack', 'eat breakfast' and 'read a book'.
- First, Next, Last Strips (pg. 2) After printing the 2 task mats provided, laminate them (made easy with the [VariQuest 2510 Cold Laminator](#)) and cut the strips.

This small-sized mat is helpful if you plan to place a schedule in the upper corner of a student's desk or use when traveling with a student from place to place.

Steps 1-6 (pg. 3) Create this 6-step mat by cutting on the outside border. Then, lay the flap on box 4 on top of the tab to the right of box 3, laminate the strip and add Velcro to each of the boxes.

First, Next, Last, Finished (pg. 4) This mat starts with a place to write in the task name. Attach 3 schedule cards, then as students complete each task, they can move their cards to the 'Finished' place.

Vertical Steps 1-6 & Finished (pgs. 5 & 6) These 2 pages work well inside a file folder. As students work, they can place each completed step in the 'Finished' box. This is a great option for students who move between classrooms.

Steps 1-4 & Finished (pgs. 7 & 8) This is another option ideal for placing in a file folder for tracking schedules throughout the day.

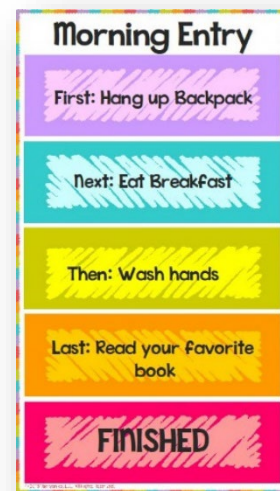
Horizontal Steps 1-6 & Finished (pgs. 9 & 10) Place these pages inside a file folder as another portable option.

### Helpful Tips

1. When planning student activities, it's a good idea to place a challenging activity in between two tasks the student enjoys.
2. Some of the mat choices provide students with a 'Finished' spot or an option to flip cards over – both require adding a small piece of Velcro to the front and back of the cards.
3. Consider creating a clip chart to use with your visual schedule. Print and laminate the First, Next, Last Strips, or the 1-6 Steps Chart, and instead of removing the cards, instruct the student to move a clothespin along the schedule. This will also help incorporate fine motor practice.

- If your first step is to help students make a connection between a card and the actual activity, work on this before implementing the schedule. How this is done will depend on the needs of each student. For some students, start with 3 or 4 cards, say the name of the activity, and have students find the card. For example, you might say 'read aloud' and ask the student to find that card. For other students, it is helpful to repeatedly point to the card during an activity to help them make the connection. For example, while eating snack, provide students with the snack card and say 'snack' as they are eating.

*VariQuest Tip:* Print full-color Clip Chart posters using the [VariQuest Perfecta® Series Poster Design System](#) and template ID # TCH208 or ELA067 in the [Design Center Software and Content](#), easily customized to fit your visual classroom schedule. Create and print the same clip charts (ID # MTCH204 or MTCH205) as stickers with the help of the [VariQuest Motiva® 400](#), and place in student notebooks as they work towards mastering a routine.



## Extensions

- Use pictures in your collection of visual schedule cards to extend the possibilities. Suggestions include pictures of teachers, aids, and even specific spots in your school. For example, rather than using the provided lunch card, make it more meaningful by taking a picture of the cafeteria. Print the picture on a card the size of the other cards you are using to help make the schedule more concrete for your students. You may not use a picture for every card, but it will be helpful when you weave them in.

*VariQuest Tip:* The [VariQuest Design Center Software and Content](#) makes it easy to upload a photograph to any poster or sticker template – ideal for printing your visual schedule cards in a snap!

- Create clock cards with set times, analog and digital, for students to match with

the corresponding visual schedule card. This activity can be used with the planning mats or as a math activity. A clock could be placed to show the time along with the activity to be completed next to it.

*VariQuest Tip:* Use the **VariQuest Motiva® 400 Specialty Printing System** and to print a set of colorful Telling Time Flashcards on white cardstock to save precious prep time!

VariQuest Customers download the Telling Time Flashcards at the VariQuest Resource Center, *Free!* Great addition to your math centers and to use with your visual classroom schedule.



Finally, as students show signs of mastering daily routines from a visual classroom schedule, share this process with their family so they can create a visually pleasing home schedule helpful to their child.

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# Visual Schedule Cards Printables

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My Plan for

--

First

Next

Last

--	--	--

**First**

**Next**

**Last**

--	--	--

---

**First**

**Next**

**Last**

--	--	--

1.	2.	3.	
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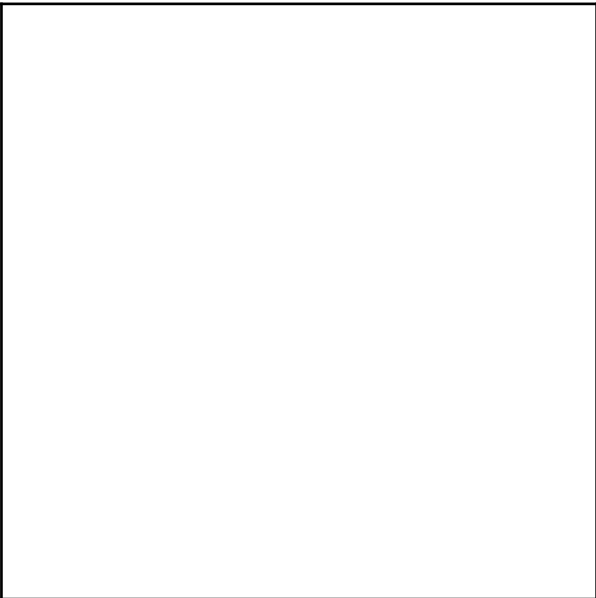
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4.	5.	6.
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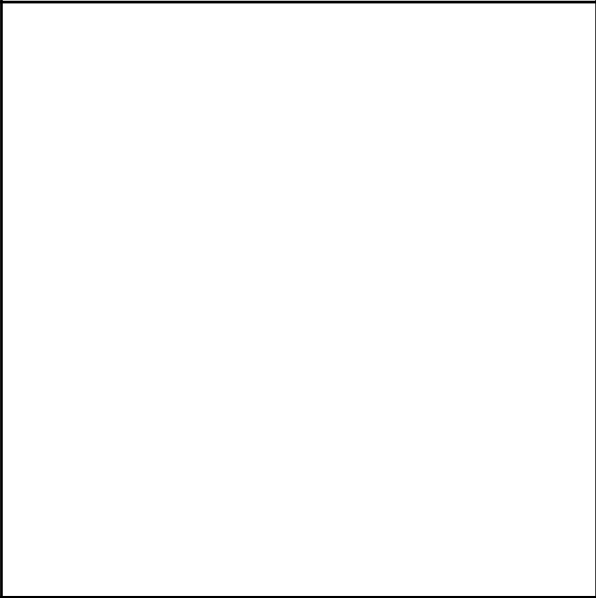
My Plan for



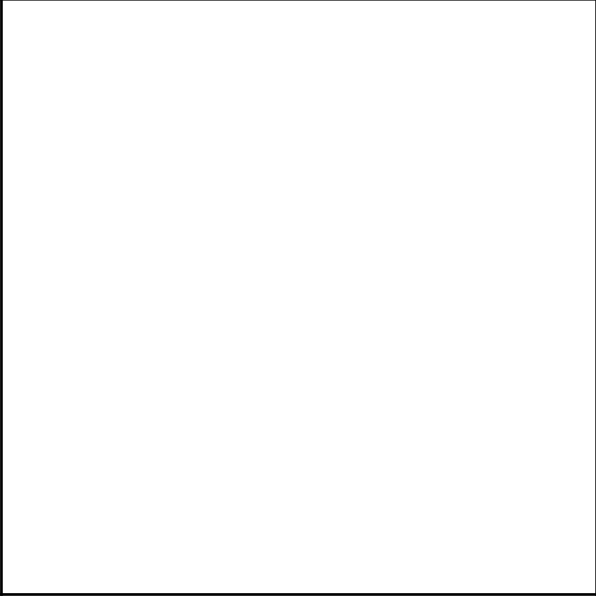
First



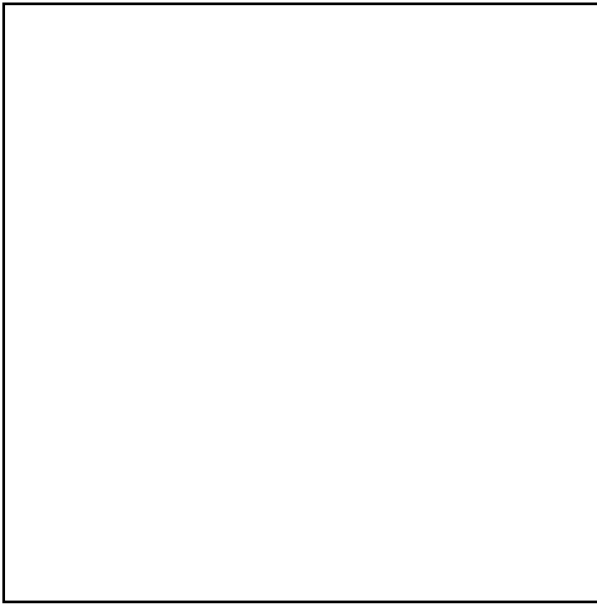
Next



Last



Finished



My Plan for

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

Finished

4.

5.

6.

My Plan for

--

1.

2.

**3.**

**4.**

**Finished**

My Plan for

--

1.

2.

5.

6.

**3.**

**4.**

**Finished**

Visual Schedule Cards



**After-school  
program**

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**Come to school**

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**Art**

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**Band**

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**Bathroom**

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**Breakfast**

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Visual Schedule Cards



**Calendar**

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**Centers**

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**Choir**

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**Circle Time**

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**Computer**

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**Daily work**

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**English**



**Free time**

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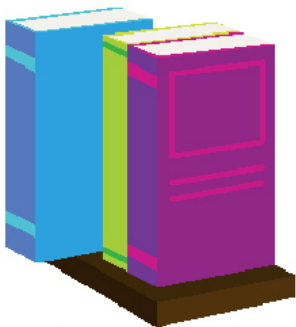
**Group Work**

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**Gym class**

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**Independent Reading**

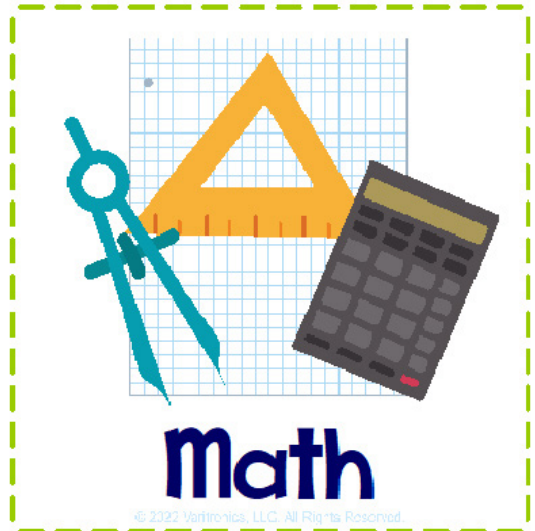
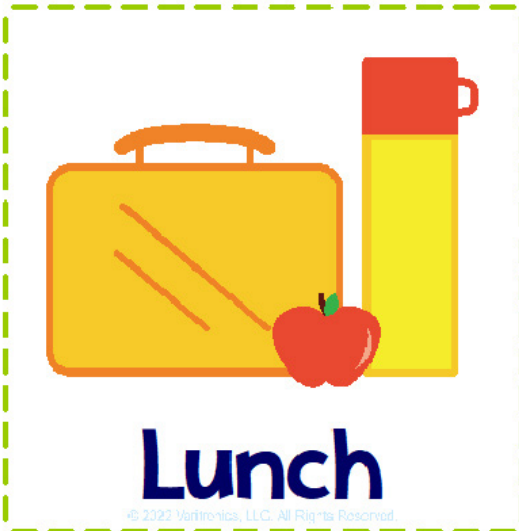
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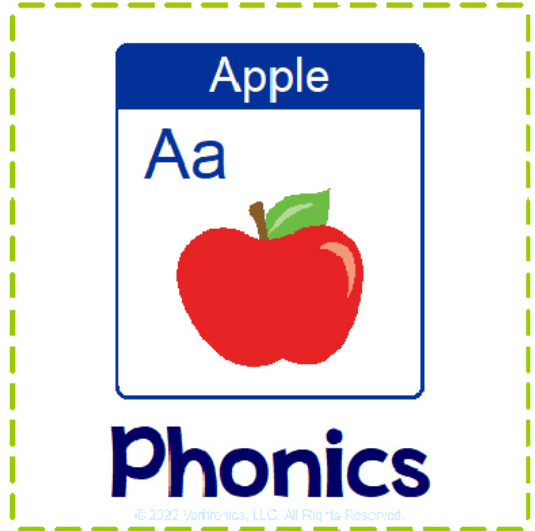
**Library**

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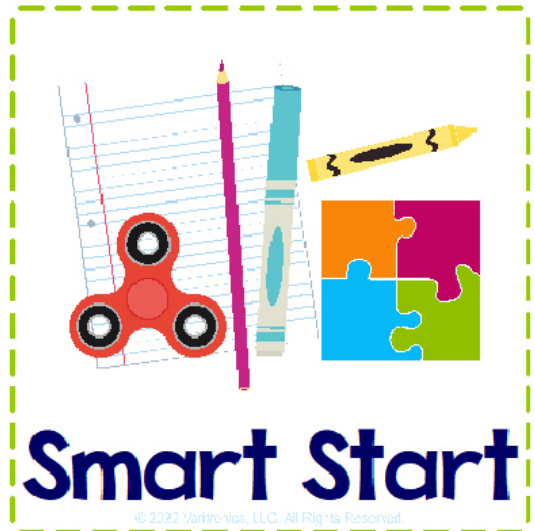
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**Snack**

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**Social Studies**

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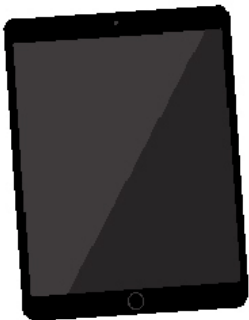
**Speech**

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**Stretch break**

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**Tablet**

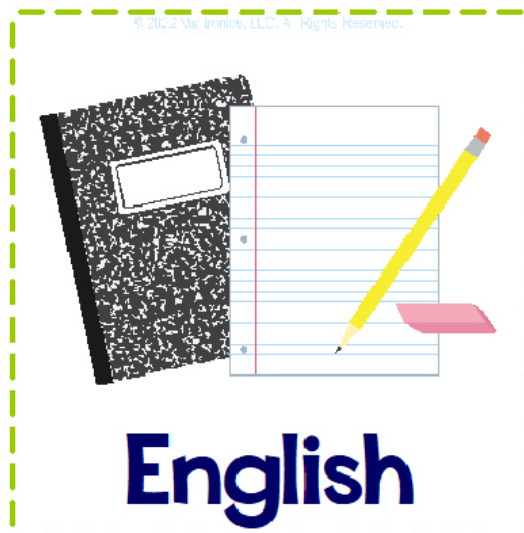
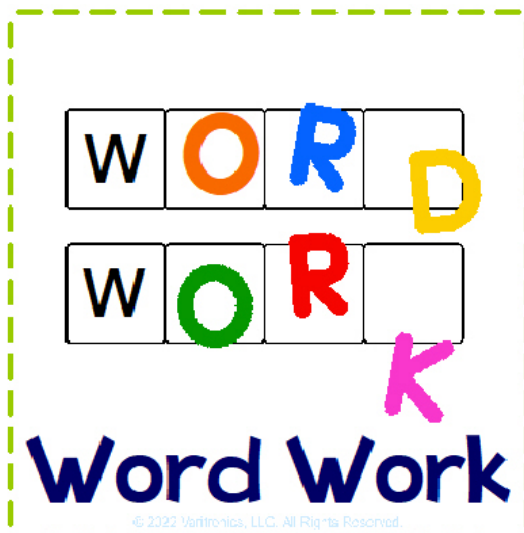
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**Unpack**

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