SchoolObjects: forethought

Teacher Scheduling Guide

Schedule Concepts

Before jumping into Forethought, it is best to understand the basic concepts of setting up the lesson planner. Forethought requires that you have at least one schedule. Without a schedule, it will prompt you to create one upon entering the application for the first time. The schedule is the first and primary concept to understand when getting started, and it should be well thought out before entering Forethought.

Essentially, a schedule is a **day of time**. It will be composed of entries, and each entry will reflect a unique event within your day. For instance, you may have morning warm-up every day, and this would be the first entry in your schedule.
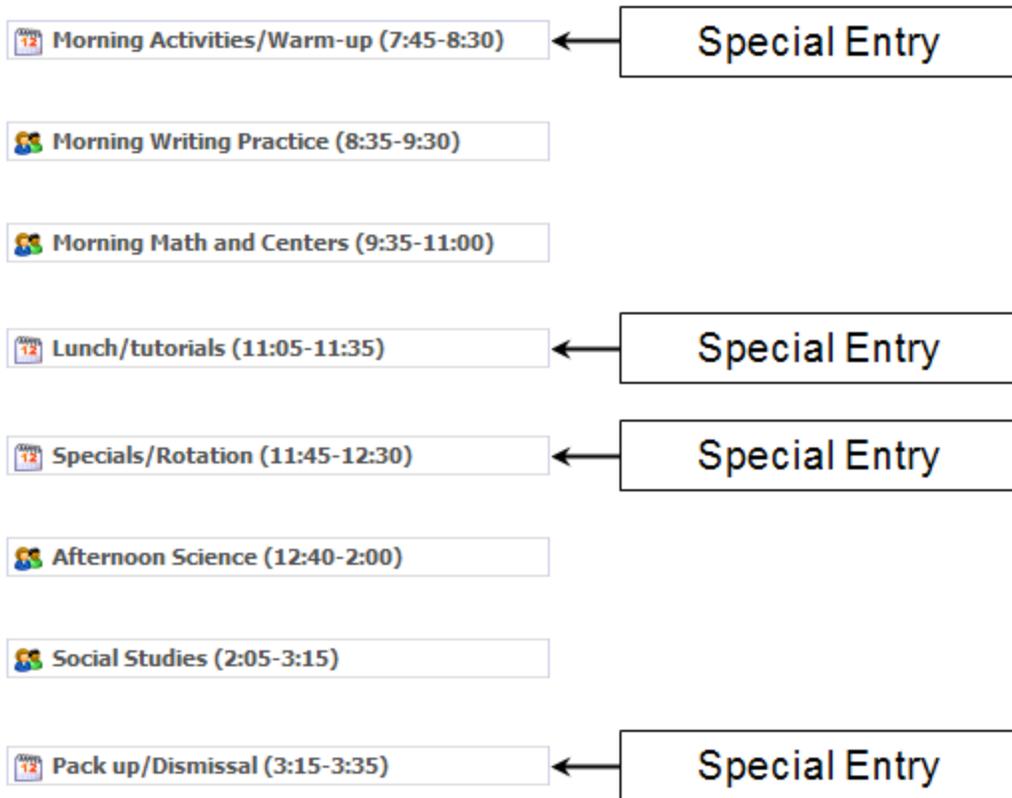
Schedules, and the entries within them, are based on groups of students.   Most primary teachers will probably only need one schedule, as this reflects a single group of students. A teacher only creates another schedule when they have a different group of students in different classes on different days. For example, secondary campuses that use block scheduling will have varied schedules, classes, and students from day to day. Using two schedules in that situation is ideal. Even if a teacher teaches the same courses on those days, they should still be separate schedules and entries to reflect the different groups of students.

As mentioned above, schedules are composed of entries. **Any event in your day can be an entry.** These range from actual courses that contain curriculum content, courses that mirror other courses, or simply Special Entries**. Special Entries are the placeholders for various events within your day that do not contain learning standards.** For instance, you may need to make comments about lunch, dismissal, or an assembly. You may also want to leave placeholders for bathroom breaks or recess. Special Entries combined with courses allow you to reflect every event within your day. This is ideal when printing your plans for a sub, but it is not always necessary.
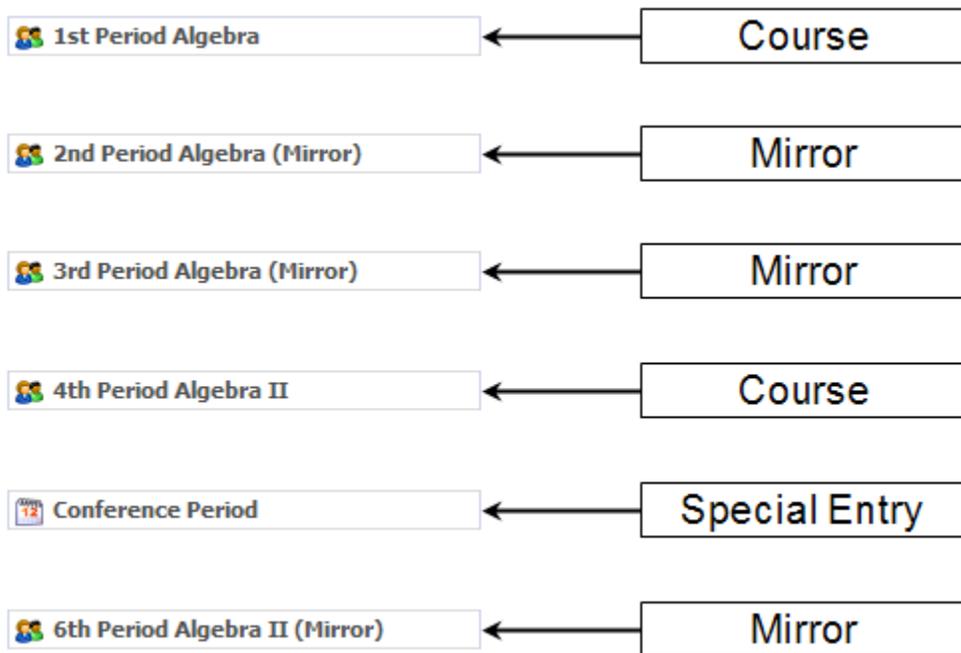
EXAMPLES

Now that we have covered the concepts and building blocks of a teacher's planner, let's look at some examples.

Primary Teacher

📅 Morning Activities/Warm-up (7:45-8:30)	←	Special Entry
👥 Morning Writing Practice (8:35-9:30)		
👥 Morning Math and Centers (9:35-11:00)		
📅 Lunch/tutorials (11:05-11:35)	←	Special Entry
📅 Specials/Rotation (11:45-12:30)	←	Special Entry
👥 Afternoon Science (12:40-2:00)		
👥 Social Studies (2:05-3:15)		
📅 Pack up/Dismissal (3:15-3:35)	←	Special Entry

The above image is a good example of how a primary teacher could create their schedule in Forethought. It is composed of a combination of courses and Special Entries. The Special Entries will not allow the addition of learning standards and curriculum content, but they act as placeholders and areas to make notes. Lunch/tutorials and Specials/Rotation could be set as Special Entries **without text**. This is a great way to simplify and shorten a planner but still keep a placeholder. Because primary teachers typically work with only one group of students, they should try to use only one schedule.
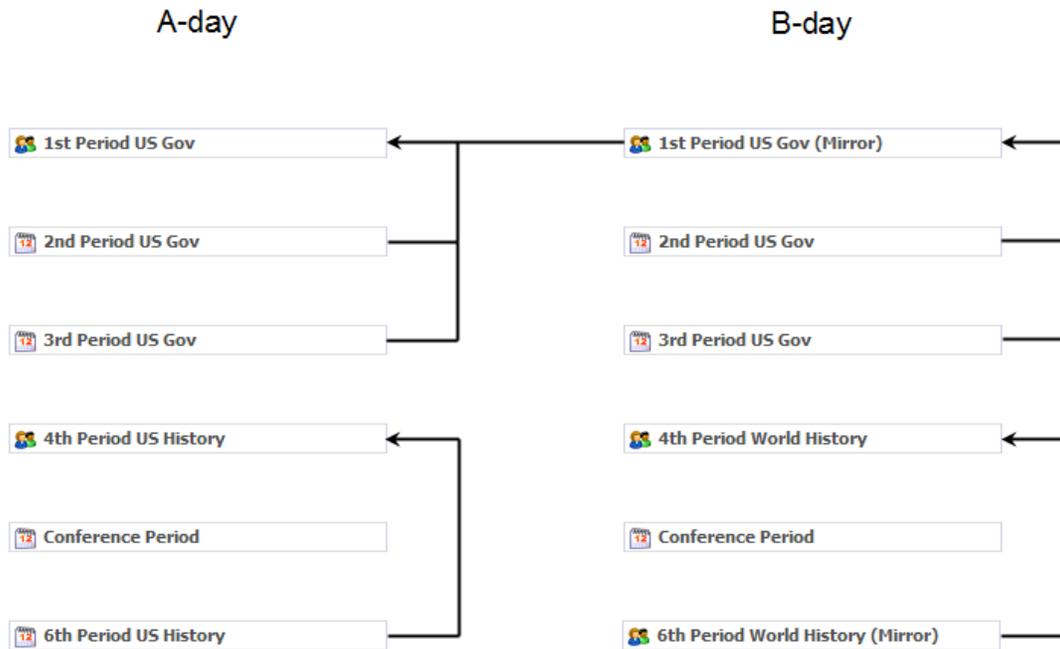
Secondary Teacher

👥 1st Period Algebra	← Course
👥 2nd Period Algebra (Mirror)	← Mirror
👥 3rd Period Algebra (Mirror)	← Mirror
👥 4th Period Algebra II	← Course
📅 Conference Period	← Special Entry
👥 6th Period Algebra II (Mirror)	← Mirror

The above example demonstrates how a secondary teacher might build their day using mirrors. A mirrored course will copy all learning standards, lesson text, and attachments from the original. Any changes made to the original will be automatically reflected in the mirror. However mirrors can be "broken" for a single day to allow changes to be made. The mirroring will then persist on following days. You can also see that time is not included in the entry titles, as secondary teachers typically have preset periods to structure their day. Always be careful when mirroring. If you delete the source of a mirror to change your schedule, you will need to delete any mirrors that point to it as well. Mirrors without a source will always be blank within your schedule.

Instead of mirroring, a secondary teacher could also use Special Entries to denote the periods using the same plans. This method is shown below in the block scheduling example.

Block Scheduling

A-day	B-day
👥 1st Period US Gov	👥 1st Period US Gov (Mirror)
📅 2nd Period US Gov	📅 2nd Period US Gov
📅 3rd Period US Gov	📅 3rd Period US Gov
👥 4th Period US History	👥 4th Period World History
📅 Conference Period	📅 Conference Period
📅 6th Period US History	👥 6th Period World History (Mirror)

The example above is constructed using a course entry followed by Special Entries. The 1st Period US Gov on the A-day would be the entry for actual planning. The B-day 1st Period would mirror that lesson, and the 2nd and 3rd Period Special Entries on both days would be used for notes, accommodations, etc. As shown above, not only can teachers mirror within a schedule but also across schedules. This can be very useful in a block scheduling situation. As always with mirrors, be careful when changing your schedule to prevent creating orphaned entries.

The Special Entries method shown on the A-day is a great model for a short and easy to use schedule. This is a recommended model for secondary teachers unless they will need to enter differing learning standards across periods. If that is the case, then mirroring is recommended.

Scheduling Worksheet

Use the worksheet shown below to draft your schedule before actually entering forethought. For each event that occurs in your day, which you want in your schedule, fill out the event title as you want it to appear in your planner. For now, ignore the boxes on the right side of the worksheet until all events are listed.   Use as many copies of the worksheet as necessary.

Once all events are listed, check which events are courses that will contain learning standards using the **Course** box on the right. For the remaining issues that are not courses, check which ones will require text and which will not. Keep in mind that an entry without text will take up much less space in your planner. Recess, lunch, morning duty, etc, are great examples of entries without text.

If you want Forethought to track times for you (which is not recommended), you will need to enter the start and end time for each entry. We recommend you enter the times in the title of your entries as that is easier to read. This question will be asked on the first screen of the Forethought schedule builder.

Scheduling Worksheet

Schedule Creation How-To

The process of creating a schedule is very straightforward when you understand the above concepts and examples. Once you have in mind how you want to build your schedule, enter Forethought and you will be presented with the setup wizard.
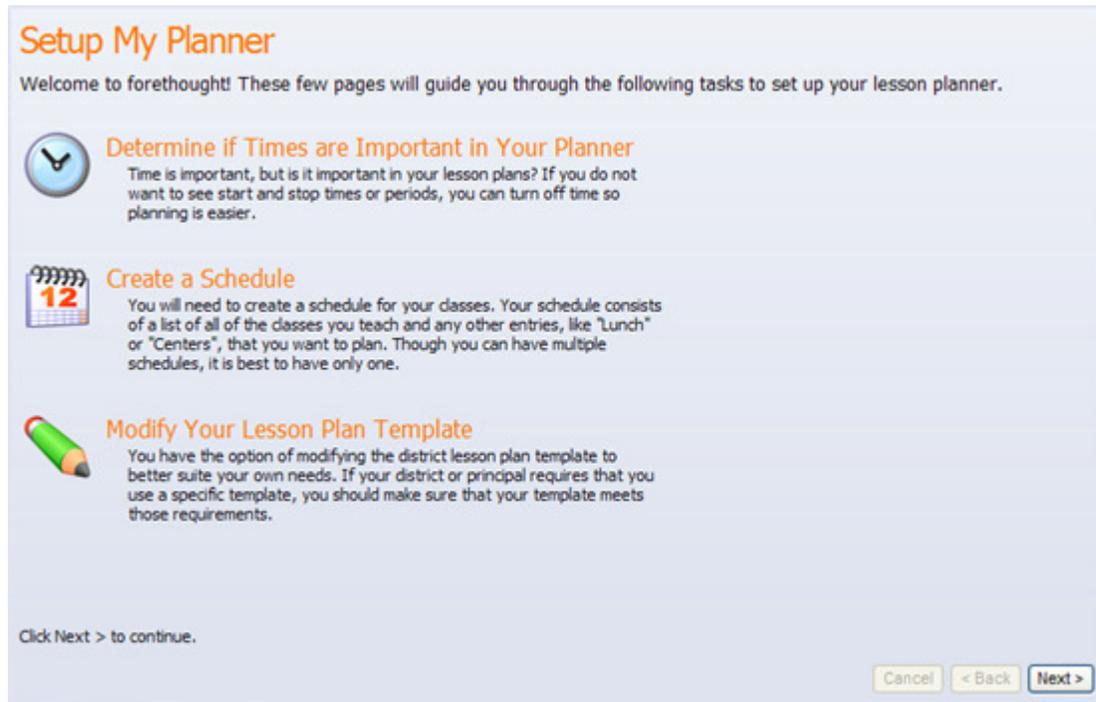

As shown above, the wizard will prompt you to do three things:

1. Configure time in your planner

2. Build a schedule

3. Setup a lesson plan template

Configuring Time

To start the wizard, click **next**. You will be prompted to decide whether or not time is important. **"No"** is recommended, as putting the times in the title of your entries makes it easier to see. The Primary Teacher example demonstrates the recommended method.
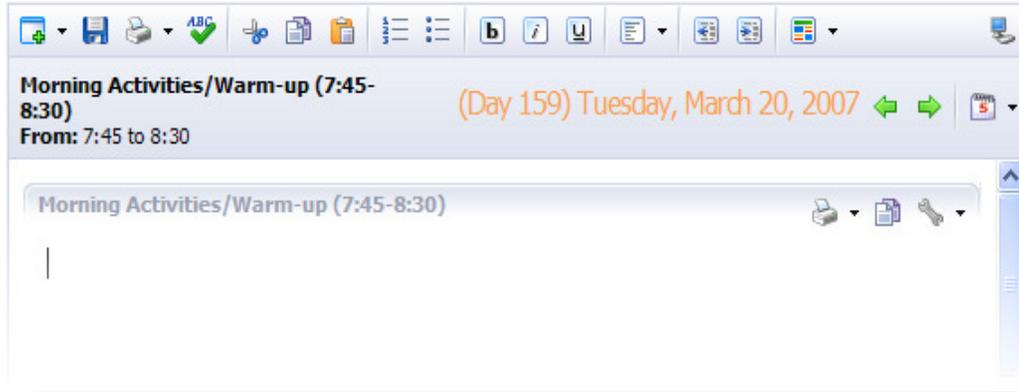
Selecting **"Yes"** will display the times in the main toolbar of the lesson planner. However that will only display one entry at a time, as shown above. It is much easier to view the timeline of an entire day by putting the times into the entry titles. Otherwise you will have to click on each entry to view it's time in the main toolbar.

Building a Schedule
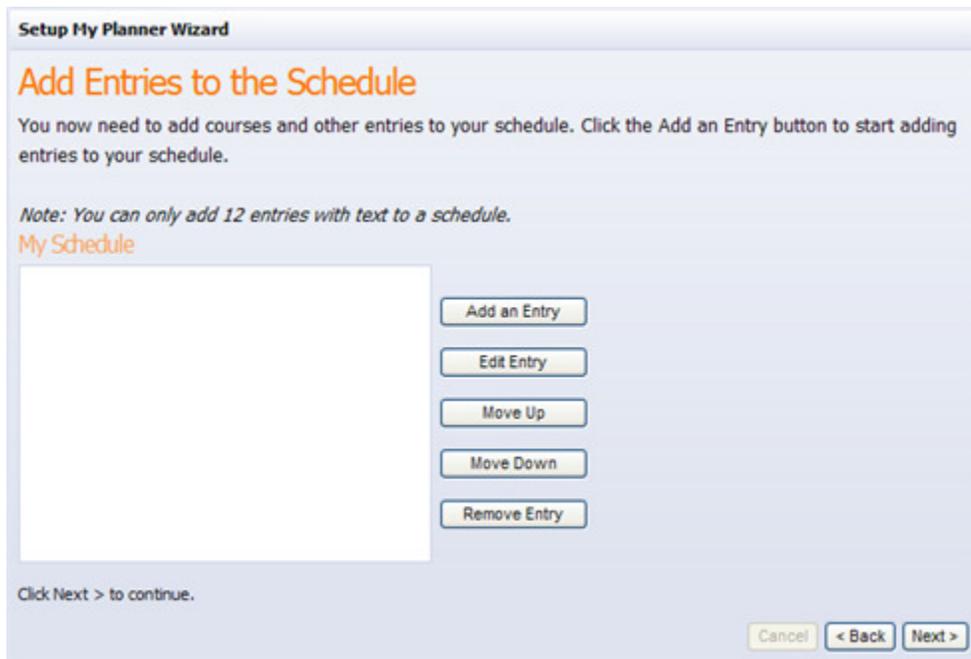
       Once you have configured time, you will then be prompted to build a schedule.
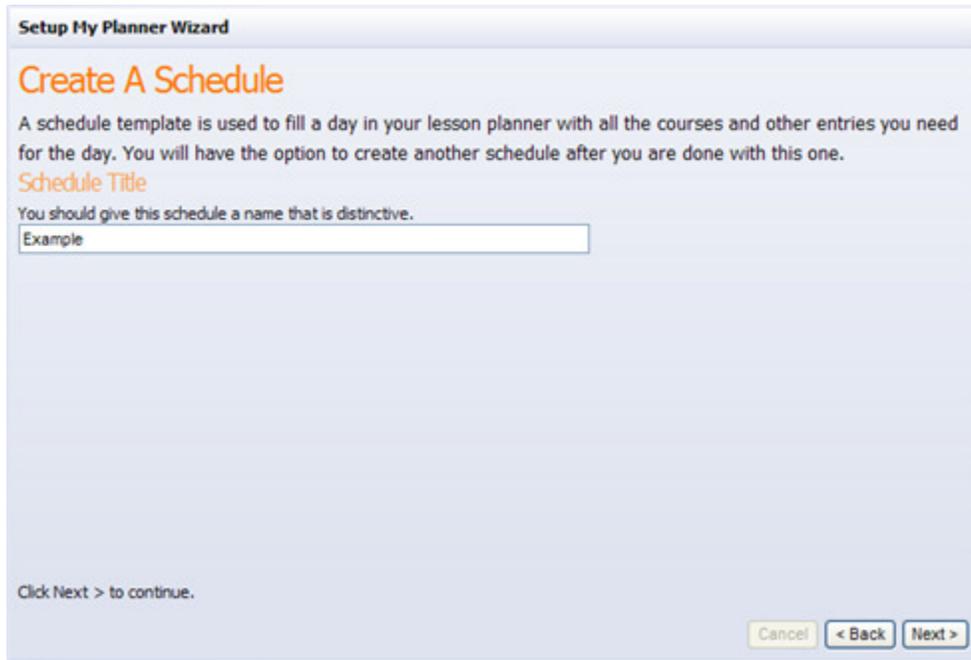
Setup My Planner Wizard

Create A Schedule

A schedule template is used to fill a day in your lesson planner with all the courses and other entries you need for the day. You will have the option to create another schedule after you are done with this one.

Schedule Title

You should give this schedule a name that is distinctive.

Example

Click Next > to continue.

Cancel   < Back   Next >

       To build a schedule, you will need to first choose a **title**. The title should be specific to that schedule in order to differentiate it from other schedules should you need more than one.

       Once given a title, you will need to **add entries** to your schedule.

Setup My Planner Wizard

Add Entries to the Schedule

You now need to add courses and other entries to your schedule. Click the Add an Entry button to start adding entries to your schedule.

Note: You can only add 12 entries with text to a schedule.

My Schedule

- Add an Entry
- Edit Entry
- Move Up
- Move Down
- Remove Entry

Click Next > to continue.

Cancel | < Back | Next >

Simply click **Add an Entry** and then select the type of entry you would like to add.

Setup My Planner Wizard

What Type of Entry Do You Want to Add?

Select the type of entry you want to add to your schedule.

◉ **A Course with Learning Standards** is a typical course in your schedule.

○ **A Course That Mirrors Another Course in My Schedule**. Mirrored courses will use the lesson plan from another course in your schedule.

○ **A Special Entry** is used to add aditional notes or blocks of time to your daily schedule like 'lunch' or 'tutorials'.

Click Next > to continue.

Cancel | < Back | Next >

As mentioned in the concepts section, there are three types of entries you can add: Course with Learning Standards, Mirrors, and Special Entries.

Once you have selected an entry and clicked **Next**, you will be prompted to enter the specific information for that entry. A course with standards will ask you to choose a title for that entry. A mirror will ask you to select a course that already exists in a schedule. Remember, it can mirror off of an entry in any schedule.
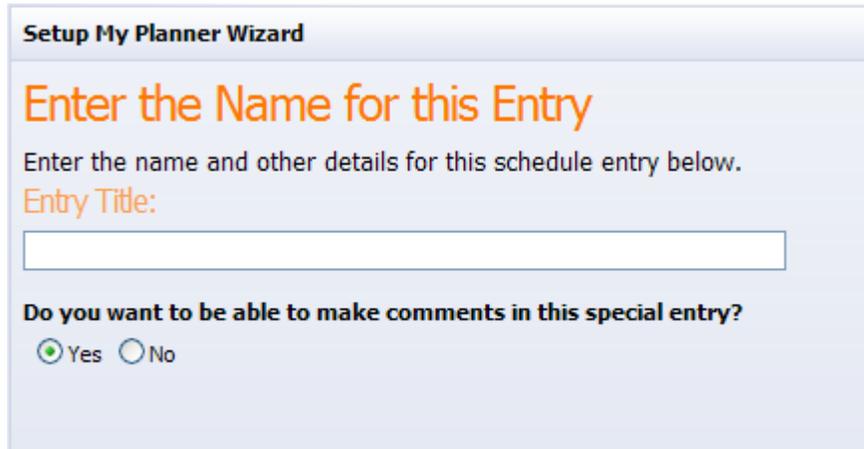
Setup My Planner Wizard

Enter the Name for this Entry

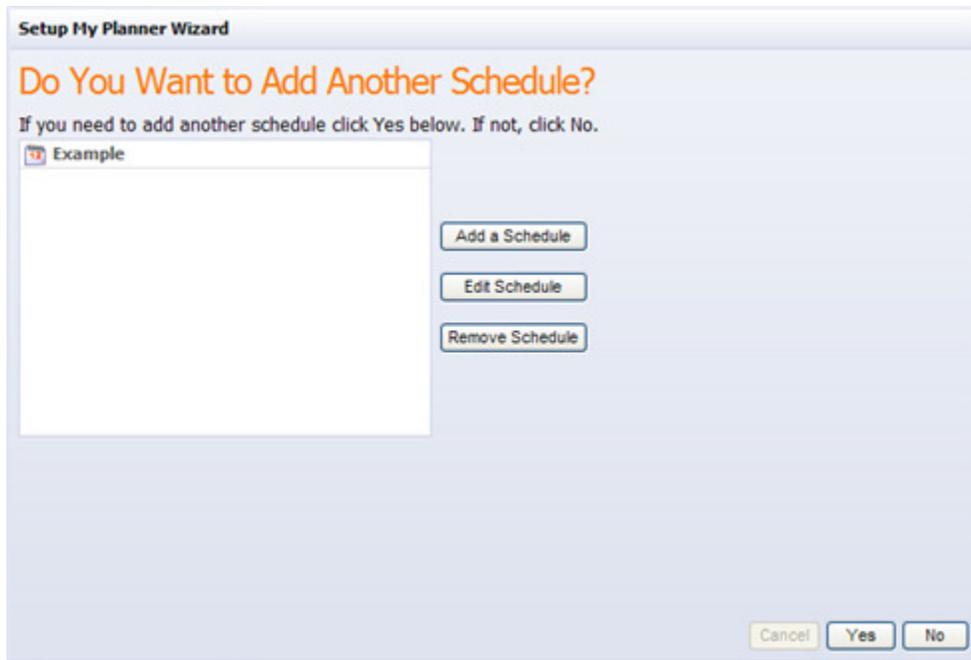Enter the name and other details for this schedule entry below.

Entry Title:

Do you want to be able to make comments in this special entry?

◉ Yes ○ No

Like courses, Special Entries require titles. However, a special entry can be shown without comments or text. Selecting **No** for that option will create a title bar or placeholder without a text box in the planner. This is a great option for entries like Lunch, Bathroom Break, Recess, etc. that do not need comments.

Once you add an entry, you will be taken back to the list of entries added. As you may have noticed, this screen also allows you to **Edit, Move Up, Move Down,** and **Remove** entries. You can click on entries in the list and use these options to make your schedule just how you want it. Once you have finished adding in all necessary entries, click **Next**.

Setup My Planner Wizard

Do You Want to Add Another Schedule?

If you need to add another schedule click Yes below. If not, click No.

Example

Add a Schedule

Edit Schedule

Remove Schedule

Cancel   Yes   No

You will then be prompted to add another schedule. If you need another schedule, for block scheduling perhaps, click on **Add a Schedule.** If you need to go back to change your first schedule, select it and click **Edit Schedule.** If you want to start over with a fresh schedule, select the one you just made and click **Remove Schedule.** You can then click **Add a Schedule** to start over. If you are pleased with the schedule you just created, click **No.**

Lesson Plan Template

After finalizing your schedule(s), you will need to setup your lesson plan template.
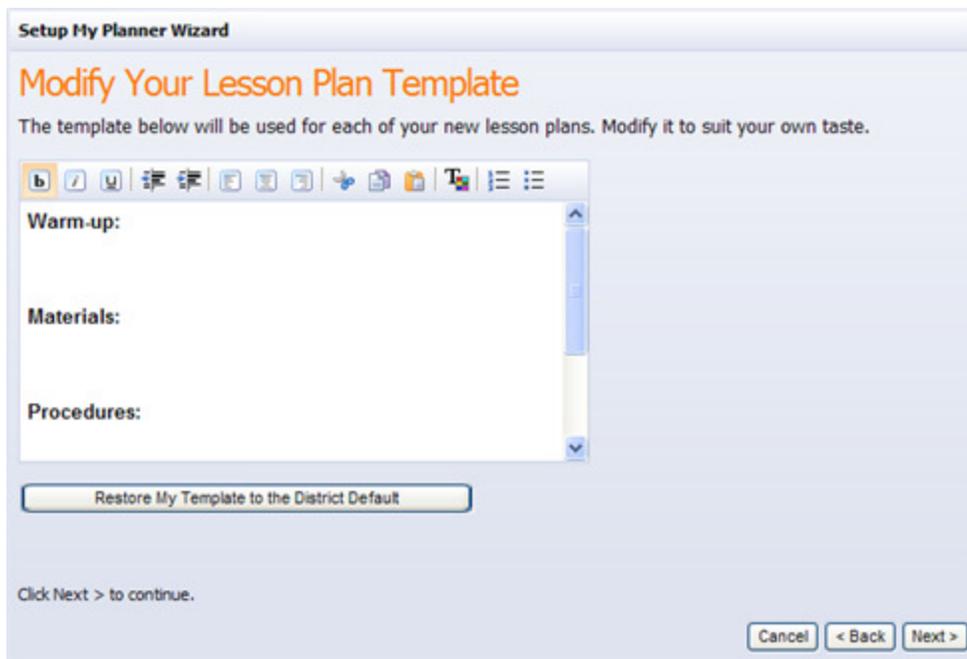
You will be presented with the district default lesson plan template. You can use the editing controls on the toolbar to modify the template to suit your needs. You can reset back to the district default by clicking on **Restore My Template to the District Default** just below the editing box.

Remember that the district default may or may not be required by your district. Each district may have various requirements for the template. It is recommended to check with your administrator about this section.

Once you have finalized your template, click **Next.** The wizard will let you know you are done. Click **Begin Using Forethought** to enter the lesson planner. For planning and other advanced planner options, see the training document on actual lesson planning.

Overview and Tips

To recap on scheduling, remember these key concepts:

- **Schedule**: A day of time for a teacher

- **Entry**: An event within a teacher's schedule

- **Template**: The layout of lesson plans within course entries

- **Course with Learning Standards**: A course entry that connects to curriculum content

- **Course that mirrors another course:** A course that copies it's content from another course that exists within any teacher's schedule.

- **Special Entry:** A simple entry that can contain text but no learning standards.

When building schedules, remember the following tips and best practices:

- **Plan Ahead:** It is important to think about what you need in your schedule before diving into the planner wizard. Think about what events in your day that you need to make notes about and what events you include in your current plans.

- **Keep it Short and Simple:** Try to avoid creating an entry for every event that may occur during your day. Are bathroom breaks and rotation necessary to write notes for? If you want to include them, try using a Special Entry without text.

- **Reflect Previous Planning:** If your current planning layout is working for you, DON'T CHANGE IT! Simply design your schedule to reflect the layout you are already using. However if you want to try something new, it is easy to go back and change your schedule in Forethought.

Common Questions

I teach Pre-K or AP courses, and I do not see my classes listed in the course tree. What do I do?

Those courses are not included in the tree by default as they contain guidelines or college board standards. Your curriculum department will need to create those courses for you.

I have students from multiple grade levels in my classes. How do I build my schedule to use standards from across multiple courses in one entry?

There are two ways to integrate grade levels or subject areas together. Either your curriculum department can put those standards together in a course, or you can create two schedules. The first schedule can be your actual planning schedule, and the second schedule can contain all those other courses that need to be integrated into your first schedule's courses. You can then use the curriculum pane in the planner to select "Other course standards…" when planning. This will let you choose another course in one of your schedules to pull standards from.

If I change my schedule after creating lesson plans, what will happen to my existing plans?

Absolutely nothing will change in your existing plans. Forethought will NEVER retroactively go back and change your plans because you have changed your schedule. However keep this in mind as changing your schedule will not automatically change a day you have entered. You will need to enter a new day or delete an existing day to use the new schedule.