

Scaffold and fade planner

1 The thinking learners must still do themselves

Name the central reasoning. No scaffold should do this part for them.

2 My help ladder, lightest first

Level	What I will say or give	Used with
1 Prompt a question that points		
2 Clue a hint about the next step		
3 Partial model show part, they finish		
4 Full model show it all, then a fresh try		

Watch first, pause, then step up one level at a time.

3 Fade plan

When	Scaffold in place	Evidence they are ready to lose it	What I remove next
This lesson			
Next lesson			
In two weeks			

4 Time to work alone after help

After I help, learners work on their own for _____ **minutes** before I return.

In one large classroom study, well-matched help went hand in hand with longer spells of independent work, so plan time for both (van de Pol et al., 2015).

Check before you keep a scaffold

☐ Does the learner still do the central reasoning from section 1?

☐ Have I simplified the task so far that the thinking has gone?

☐ Do I have evidence the scaffold is still needed this week?

More adaptations do not automatically mean more learning (EEF, 2026).

Where this comes from: "Scaffolding" was introduced by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*). The help ladder and fade plan draw on van de Pol et al. (2015, *Instructional Science*), a classroom study of contingent support, and the Education Endowment Foundation's *Guide to Inclusive Teaching* (2026).