

# Task Box Preparation Instructions

We have redesigned the Themes First! independent work collection with two main goals in mind:

1. **Streamline the preparation process to reduce teacher workload**  
We've made the independent work materials more user-friendly so educators can easily create and re-use activities, saving time and resources.
2. **Align all independent work tasks with Common Core standards and learning objectives**  
We've redesigned activities both to improve the quality of the tasks and to promote generalization of academic skills.

One of the outcomes of this effort was the design of several multi-use task boxes.

We've designed the task box activities in a rotation system so types of tasks vary from one theme unit to the next. This means that certain task boxes will only be used for specific months, rotating on a regular schedule so that all task boxes are used within one school year. We have developed a combination of physical boxes to be used for tasks as well as cards that will be printed and used either with clothespins to identify the correct answer or dry erase markers to practice early writing skills.

To help you prepare your classroom's independent work stations:

- Create the task box templates listed below. Note: if more than one student will be engaged in independent work tasks at the same time, **you will need one set of task boxes for each student.** Each type of task box requires a specific set of materials, not all of which require templates
- See the monthly task box supplements that are included with each theme unit for more information on materials and instructions

# General Guidance

## “To Do/Done” Task Boxes

Several task boxes included in each Themes First! unit don't require a specific type of container or box for setup. Some recommendations:

- Use a separate container to store each task's pieces, making sure that it's easy for students to manipulate
- Clarify how students are meant to move through the task before they begin working
- Use materials you have on hand and/or can easily source
- The containers you use in the task box setup serve as environmental supports to help students complete independent work tasks without adult assistance
- Refer to the examples on the next page as rough guides
- Print, laminate, and velcro to “To Do/Done” Labels if desired

## Clothespin Task Boxes

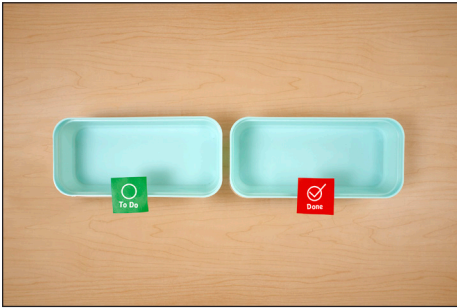
In each Themes First! unit, at least one task box requires students to use a clothespin to indicate the correct answer on a card. For students who need more guidance, place a visual marker (star, red dot, etc.) on both the clothespin and on the target location of each task card. Using a simple “To Do/Done” task box setup with two dedicated containers can also help students become more independent with this type of task.

## Foundational Skill Task Boxes

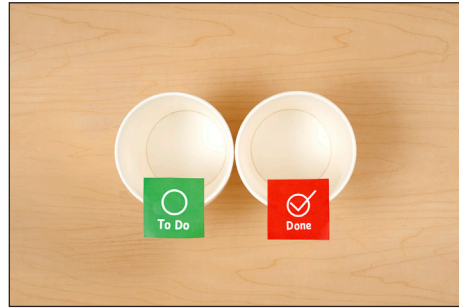
With a total of twelve monthly Themes First! ELA and math independent work tasks at each student learning level, it's likely that multiple tasks will be appropriate for all types of learners every month. However, some students may need more foundational practice with completing work independently, or with other skills such as fine motor. Consider the STAR foundational skills task boxes, file folders, and worksheets for those students who require additional practice. These tasks are not theme-based and are appropriate for supporting students in areas such as: scissor skills, improving pincer grasp, matching upper- and lower-case letters, and hand-eye coordination. Consider providing two familiar review tasks for every one task that is more challenging for the student. These task boxes can be found in Routine Essentials: Independent Work.

Examples of “To Do/Done” Task Boxes

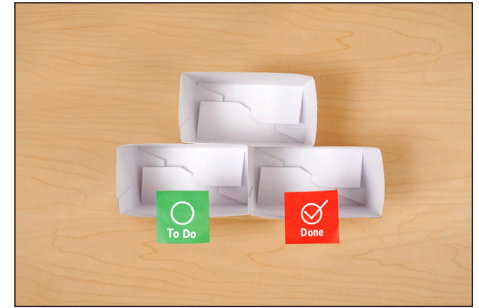
**Example 1:**



**Example 2:**



**Example 3:**



“To Do/Done” Labels:



# Task Box 1

**Setup:** This task box requires three wells for sorting and one well for storing the materials that the student sorts. A range of materials such as boxes, cups, and plastic bins can be used to create this type of task setup. Refer to the image below as a guide for setting up this task box.

**Container:** Box with 4 wells (3 wells in front and 1 in back)



# Task Box 2

**Setup:** This task box requires three rows of five wells or boxes and five jars or bottles. The jars or bottles must be sized to both hold up to ten beads and fit within the task box wells. The image below shows an option with a bead box and party favor jars that meet these requirements; Choose to use different jars, beads, and boxes that can function like the configuration below.

## Materials:

- **Container:** Box with 15 wells (5 rows of 3)
- **5 jars/small bottles:** Choose container that fit within the wells of the box
- **Primary color beads:** Choose beads that meet the fine motor needs of your students (5 of each color)



# Task Box 3

**Setup:** This task box requires a container with ten wells. It will be used for learning about the “base 10” concept. The image below shows an option with a bead box that meets these requirements; Choose to use a different container (ice cube tray, modified egg carton, etc.) that can function like the configuration below.

## Materials:

- **Container:** Box with 10 wells
- **5 jars/small bottles:** Choose container that fit within the wells of the box
- **Primary color beads:** Choose beads that meet the fine motor needs of your students (10-20 of each color)

