

LESSON

GETTING ORGANIZED

A G E N D A

- Starter
- The Paper Flow
- What? When?
- Create a System
- Conclusion
- Questions for Assessment

Objectives

Students will examine ways to organize information and materials for their school subjects.

Students will identify the importance of planning and scheduling study time.

Students will create systems for organizing their work.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Organization Checklist” activity sheet (#1) for each student (Part III)
- One copy of the “My Study Week” activity sheet (#2) for each student (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Ask students to think about the order in which they do things in the morning. Ask questions such as the following:

- Would you fix your hair before getting into the shower? Why not?
- Would you put on your shoes before putting on your pants? Why not?
- Would you butter your bread before putting it in the toaster? Why not?

Point out that what have become our everyday habits are really ways in which we organize ourselves. Explain to students that they will learn in this lesson habits of organization that can help them study and learn more successfully.

Part I The Paper Flow (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students examine ways to organize information and materials for their school subjects.

1. STUDENTS EXAMINE THEIR PERSONAL ORGANIZATION HABITS.

Ask students to name the classes they are taking. List these classes on the board. Have students describe how they keep track of information, assignments, and materials for each class. Elicit their reasons. Ask students who keep notebooks or binders to explain why they are helpful organizational tools.

Point out whenever possible the various organizational tools that students already have in place. Emphasize that one important tool is to keep notebooks for each class or a binder with different sections for each class.

2. STUDENTS LEARN HOW TO ORGANIZE NOTEBOOKS AND BINDERS.

Ask volunteers to describe and to show how their notebooks/binders are organized.

Point out individual differences. For example, some students may find that keeping a notebook works best for some subjects. Others may find that keeping a three-ring binder works best because binders allow papers to be easily removed or inserted. Some students might even wish to use a combination of both notebooks and binders.

Help students understand that when work is completed, it's often a good idea to keep the work so it may be reviewed later. Other times, work needs to be cleaned out. Ask for suggestions on how students might clean out their notebooks or binders. (*Students might respond: Go through the notebooks and binders, and identify material that might be helpful when reviewing for tests or working on projects; find a place to keep these materials at home—on a bookshelf, for example. Loose papers could be filed in subject folders. After work is graded or evaluated, it may be cleaned out.*)

Summarize your discussion by writing the following points on the board:

- Students should have a notebook or a section in a binder for each subject.
- Students should have a place to write assignments and notes, and a place to keep completed homework, handouts, returned homework, and returned tests.

Part II What? When? (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students evaluate the importance of planning ahead and scheduling study time.

1. STUDENTS ASSESS THEIR PERSONAL TIME MANAGEMENT HABITS.

Review the list of classes written on the board. Continue your discussion about organizational methods. Ask questions such as the following:

- How do you keep track of assignment due dates or test dates for each of your classes?
- How do you plan your studying so that everything you need to do gets done on time?
- What are some ways you can improve your time management skills?

Acknowledge responses that offer suggestions on how to plan ahead. Tell students that planning ahead is another important part of getting organized. If students have not mentioned making a schedule or a to-do list, remind them of the techniques they learned a few sessions ago in “Lesson 4: Managing Your Time” of *Module 4: Managing Personal Resources*.

2. STUDENTS CONSIDER HOW TO PLAN THEIR STUDY TIME.

Share the following study tips with students:

- Decide on the best time of day to do homework.
- Study at that same time every day.
- Plan and schedule exactly what you need to accomplish.
- Write down your study schedule and stick to it!
- Work on the most difficult subjects first, before you get tired.

Part III Create a System (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify organizational systems that work best for them.

1. STUDENTS ORGANIZE THEIR NOTEBOOKS OR BINDERS.

Discuss how students might use their notebooks or binders to plan and organize their classwork. Through questions and comments, guide students

to point out that if their notebooks or binders are organized by classes, and if each class section includes daily assignments and notices of upcoming tests, then they can transfer this information to a daily or weekly schedule. This becomes their to-do list.

Distribute copies of the “Organization Checklist” activity sheet (#1). Focus attention on the first section of the activity sheet, titled “About Notebooks and Binders.”

Group students in pairs. Tell them to look through any notebooks or binders that they have with them to see how well they are organized. Tell students to fill out the first half of the checklist, and to reorganize their notebooks and binders if they need to. Remind them to list anything they need to do or materials they may need to help them organize, such as additional notebooks, a binder, paper, and pencils.

2. STUDENTS MAKE A SCHEDULE.

Focus students’ attention on the reminders at the bottom of their checklists. Tell students to read through them as you distribute copies of the “My Study Week” activity sheet (#2).

Suggest that at the beginning or end of each day, students go through their notes for each class, enter upcoming assignments and tests in their notebooks or binders, and write up a schedule of what needs to be done. Model suggestions on the board (e.g., “English—Monday: read pages 50–60, work on rough draft”).

Remind students to keep their schedules in their notebooks. Suggest that they use a schedule like this, adapt it, or make up one of their own that works better for them.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to name useful methods for organizing their notebooks and binders. Ask them to explain why their organizational systems may change occasionally. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- It is important to have a system for planning and organizing classwork.
- Organize your work; keep a notebook or binder with information and materials for each class.
- Plan ahead; make a schedule to organize your study time.

Questions for Assessment

1. Think of the space in which you usually do homework. With what you learned today in mind, how can you set up this space to keep yourself organized?
2. Why is it important to make and maintain a weekly schedule?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Extension: Using Quotations

Quote: “Getting your house in order and reducing the confusion gives you more control over your life. Personal organization somehow releases or frees you to operate more effectively.”
—Larry King

Activity: Discuss this quote as a class. Have students identify ways they can organize their homework/study time more effectively. Then, have them describe how such organization can free them to do other things.

Extension: Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Activity: Have students brainstorm a list of materials needed for studying at home. Have them look through an office supply catalog (such as a Staples catalog) for organizational ideas that can be made by using materials found at home.

Have students find or create containers for pencils, file folders, etc., that will keep their personal study areas organized. Have them decorate their containers.

Extension: Writing in Your Journal

Activity: Have students identify one area of their lives in need of organization. Have them write a plan for organizing this area in their journals.

Have students share their journal entries with a classmate and obtain feedback.

Extension: Using Technology

Activity: Have students take the “Study Environment Analysis” quiz at www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/studydis.html. Have students report their results in small groups.

Extension: Homework

Activity: Have students make two checklists, one for home and one for school, of items that they routinely need to carry between school and home (e.g., textbooks, pens). Have them also make a list of two “study buddies” in each of their classes whom they can call for clarification on an assignment.

Plan rewards for students who come prepared every day for a week. Give these rewards at various intervals.

Extension: Additional Resources

Activity: Obtain Free Spirit Publishing’s “Real Organized in a Jar,” which contains various organizational tips for students (available at www.freespirit.com). Have each student draw a few tips from the jar for him- or herself.

Have students put the tips they drew into practice, and then report the tips’ effectiveness to the class. Have them tell which tips were their favorites. Put some of their favorite tips on a class poster and display it in your classroom.

ORGANIZATION CHECKLIST

About Notebooks and Binders

Do I have...

- notebooks, folders, or a binder for my classes?
- a separate notebook or a separate section for each class?
- a place in front to write assignments?
- a place in front to keep homework that must be handed in?
- blank paper in each notebook for notes and classwork?
- a place in each notebook to keep handouts?
- a place in each notebook to keep returned homework and tests?

Things I need to get organized:

About Study Schedules

Be sure to...

- decide on a time to study each day.
- make a schedule for what you need to do.
- note specific assignments.
- follow through on your plans!

MY STUDY WEEK

SUBJECTS	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY