

How To Get Organized for Homework & Schoolwork



It's 10 p.m. Do you know where your math book is? Or did you just discover that your book, which you need in order to finish your homework, is still at school?

If you seem to have trouble getting organized to do homework and schoolwork, you're not alone. Ask teachers why students don't earn the grades they could and you'll often hear the same descriptions:

"He's a bright student, but he doesn't turn in his homework."

"She pays attention in class, but her papers are always late."

Does it sound like these teachers are talking about you? Then read on. There are ways you can get organized for homework and schoolwork.

Find your study spot

Especially if you have trouble getting organized, you probably need to find one place where you study regularly. When you sit at this place, you'll know it's time to get serious about schoolwork. You can find your own best spot. But it should be:

- **Well lit.** Look for a good lamp so you can see what you're reading or writing.
- **Quiet.** While you're studying, you *must* ignore all distractions—turn off the TV, put away your cell phone and silence instant messages. The good news is you *can* hang a "Do Not Disturb" sign on your door and keep your little siblings *out* until study time is over.

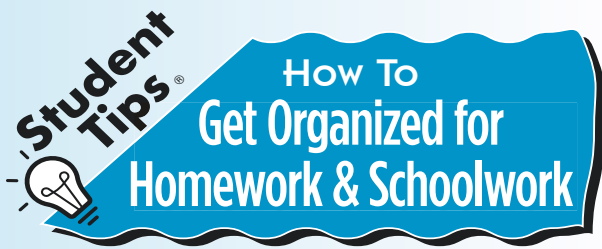
Keep your supplies handy at school, too

Be sure you have the pencils, pens, calculator and other supplies you'll need at school, too. Always keep them in the same place. A pencil box or zipper bag in your schoolbag or notebook can work. And keep it with you.

- **Comfortable.** Do you need to sit up to concentrate? Or are you more comfortable on the floor? Try different places to find one that works for you.
- **Neat.** If you are constantly searching for your pencil, your assignment notebook and your calculator, it'll take longer to do your homework. Try to keep things neat so you can find what you need.
- **Well supplied.** You don't need a lot of school supplies, but you do need paper, pens and pencils. If you're studying a foreign language, you may need a translation dictionary. For math, you'll need a calculator, and you might need graph paper, a ruler and a protractor. Remember to keep supplies where you study. If your Spanish dictionary is all the way downstairs, you probably won't use it much and your Spanish grade could go down.

Use self-stick notes

Self-stick notes are a great tool for making sure you go home with the books you need. Keep a notepad handy. After each class, **attach a self-stick note to a book** if you need it to complete an assignment. At the end of the day, it only takes a quick glance to see which books have to go home and which can stay at school.



Make a place for school stuff at home

The bus is pulling up to the bus stop, but you can't find your science report. You did your history homework, but you forgot to stick it in your backpack.

Teachers can't grade homework you don't turn in. **So create a place at home where you keep all your school stuff.** Some students have fun decorating cardboard boxes that are large enough to hold their schoolbags. Others use plastic crates. Whatever you use, put it in a place where you're sure to see it as soon as you get home from school—inside the front door or in your room are good choices.

Make sure you put your school stuff in the box right after school. When you do your homework, put every completed assignment back in the box. Last thing before bed, stick everything in your schoolbag. You'll be ready to head out the door in the morning.



Write down assignments

Ever start studying and not remember whether you were supposed to do *all* the math problems or only the odd-numbered ones? So you called your friend and you talked for an hour but then you *still* didn't know what your math assignment was.

The first secret to getting organized is to **write down your assignments as your teachers give them to you.**

If your school gives you a planner, *use it*. Or get yourself an assignment notebook. Take it to every class and write down the assignment. It helps to have all assignments written down in one place. You can also use your assignment book to make note of supplies you'll need.



It'll take some work to get organized, but you'll start to see results right away. And the skills you've learned for organizing your schoolwork and your homework will help you be successful throughout your life.

Have a regular study time

High-achieving students study every day. If they don't have an assignment, they spend time reviewing or even getting ready for a big assignment that's due in a few days. Here are some ways to make the most of your study time:

- **Study in your own "prime time."** You may want to study right after school. You may want to wait until after dinner. Or you may do your best work early in the morning. Figure out when you are most alert—and then study at that time every day.
- **Set goals.** Start every study session by making a "To Do" list, using the things you wrote down in your assignment notebook. Check off each item as you finish it and put it in your school box or schoolbag.
- **Take breaks.** Scientists know that you will remember more from multiple short study sessions than from one long session. So try to take short, regular breaks.
- **Plan your week.** What happens if soccer practice is scheduled for the time you usually study? Plan another time to study that day. Remember—school is your most important job, so if you can't get your schoolwork done, you may need to cut back on activities.

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