How to Be an Organized Teacher

Being a teacher is a hectic job, with lesson planning, grading, and actually working with students. Organized teachers find that getting all their work completed on time becomes much easier, eliminating wasted time hunting for handouts and allowing them to focus more time on student learning. Organization takes a little extra time at the beginning, which more than pays for itself in time saved down the road.

Instructions

1. Buy a binder to organize your paperwork. Find one that you really like since you'll carry it with your everywhere. Use dividers labeled "calendar," "gradebook," "lesson plans," "class info," "seating charts" and "miscellaneous." You can add other sections, if desired, but keep it manageable or your binder will become too bulky to carry. Make sure to create a nice cover or label--some way for you to quickly identify your notebook from any others laying around.

2. Add a pouch to your binder to hold essentials, such as pens and sticky notes. Use the sticky notes to jot quick notes to yourself or add things to your calendar or lesson plan quickly. Also add a plastic pocket to hold things that you need to file loose papers.

3. Use binders to organize curriculum materials for each unit or by grading period. Put a copy of the lesson plan first, then all reproducibles or resources behind the lesson plan. Next year, you'll be ready to go with minimal work.

4. Make a class binder in which you keep all information about each class and track parent communication. Add all class-related documents, such as a syllabus, parent letters, newsletters, and a log of parent contacts by both phone and email. Use this binder to document problems with student behavior, as well. When you attend conferences, bring the class binder with you for documentation.

5. Use 2 sets of desk trays. The first set is for your desk and should be labeled, "To File," "To Grade," "To Do" and "To Copy." The second set should be labeled with each class period or subject and used to store papers that need to be returned to students.

6. File extra copies of each reproducible or handout you use in class. Always keep at least one master copy in the file folder. Use larger dividers to separate units within your file cabinet and use one drawer per subject or grading period. As you begin a new unit, pull all the folders for that unit from the filing cabinet and place them in a file folder holder on your desk for easy reference. Each time you begin a new unit, switch out the folders.

7. Organize your desk. Keep lots of little baskets and trays around your desk to organize small items, such as pens, paperclips and notes. Have a file box with hanging file folders, one for each day of the week. Put all materials needed each day within the appropriate hanging folder. At the end of the week, clear out and re-file any remaining papers left in the folders.

8. Put individual theme materials in a large plastic tub, the kind with a lid that you stack to organize your garage. This is mainly for elementary teachers. You may need more than one tub for some themes. Include lesson plans and handouts stored in a binder and you won't need as much filing cabinet space.

(By an eHow contributor, name unknown)

If you find what has been shared with you helpful, have a look at more timesaving resources and ideas at www.TimesaversForTeachers.com and www.TeacherReportCardComments.com as well. Some of them are "interactive" allowing saving and typing of information directly onto the forms. For your convenience, direct links are listed below. Thank you! - Stevan Krajnjan, author, founder

Teacher's Binder: World's largest collection of often used, printable classroom forms and timesaving ideas.

Non-interactive version: www.timesaversforteachers.com/teachers-binder
Interactive version: www.timesaversforteachers.com/teachers-binder

Report Card and IEP Comments: Large collection of report card comments for classroom teachers that contains 1,830 comments organized according to subject, topic, length, positive or negative nature.

Direct link: www.teacherreportcardcomments.com

1000 Quick Writing Ideas: Motivate students to begin writing by giving them **1000** writing ideas and prompts!

Direct link: www.timesaversforteachers.com/1000-quick-writing-ideas (*language forms included*)

Substitute Teacher Instructions Kit: Organize substitute teacher instructions effectively and thoroughly!

None-Interactive: www.timesaversforteachers.com/substitute-teacher-kit
Interactive version: www.timesaversforteachers.com/substitute-teacher-kit

The Essay Writing Kit: Helps make common essay planning and writing tasks simpler and far less frustrating for students.

Printable: www.timesaversforteachers.com/essay-writing-kit
Interactive: www.timesaversforteachers.com/essay-writing-kit

Spelling Activities for Spelling Lists: printable, visually attractive spelling activities, ready for use.

Direct link: www.timesaversforteachers.com/spelling-activities-for-spelling-lists

Classroom Awards, Certificates and Passes:

Printable: http://www.timesaversforteachers.com/classroom-awards
Interactive: http://www.timesaversforteachers.com/classroom-awards

Math Timesavers: collection of difficult-to-find, often-used forms, masters and reproducible sheets for a K-8 class.

Direct link: www.timesaversforteachers.com/math-timesavers

Just Multiply It: Teach your students the multiplication facts in a fun, quick, organized, and visually appealing way!

Direct link: www.timesaversforteachers.com/just-multiply-it

Just Teach It: Fun end-of-the-year language unit - students research, prepare and teach classmates - very popular.

Direct Link: www.timesaversforteachers.com/just-teach-it