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Executive Functioning
Organization

A 1-week unit to develop executive functioning skills focused on organization. Opportunities for differentiation and distributed practice so learners develop confidence while addressing their own organization needs.

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Pro tips for rocking this curriculum

Navigation

- The table of contents is a great place to start
- Clicking on items in the table of contents will take you right to that page
- Anywhere there is blue, underlined text it is a hyperlink that can take you right to that item
- Google icons take you to digital versions of each activity
- Click the YouTube icon for links to YouTube playlists and videos

- Blue arrows at the bottom of pages return you to the table of contents
- The week overview has all the helpful links you need for the week
- All the recommended videos are also linked from the weekly overview pages and table of contents.
- Check out the accompanying video playlist on our YouTube channel which includes all the recommended videos

Logistics

- This has been written with a week of 45 minute to 1 hour lessons in mind, however that's not the only way it could be used. These lessons could easily be chunked over a longer period of time to fit a homeroom or resource class. You could even place it into a content class as mini lessons over time.

- The extension lessons are an additional part of the unit meant to be used in addition to the one-week of lessons.
- Lessons were written with classes or one-on-one instruction in mind. They can be used one on one with students with specific needs in this area, small groups or entire classes.

Trusting yourself

- We developed the video content of this unit knowing that in some cases hands on demonstration items are not feasible. Choose the activity versions based on your own student's needs and preferences.
- Think of the lesson plans included as suggestions. The best way to deliver this content is the way you do it!

- Organization is really tough to learn. It is suggested that you include plenty of distributed practice time for students to hone this skill. Consider a weekly or bi-weekly time for students to practice this skill.
- Laminating the (re) organization checklist can help you by reducing copies that need to be made.

Week overview

Monday

Focus

- Student will be able to calculate and explain how much being unorganized costs them in time and energy.

Materials

- Video or demonstration materials
- Timer if using in-person demo
- What does being unorganized cost me? activity

Sequence

- Cost of being unorganized video or demo
- Partner or class brainstorm
- Cost of being unorganized activity

Tuesday

Focus

- Student will be able to identify several ways to organize their school supplies and explain which one may work best for them.

Materials

- Video or demonstration materials
- Computer or station instructions
- Judging the organization systems activity (4 copies per student)
- Review the systems activity

Sequence

- Anticipatory activity
- Video or in-person stations with judging activity
- Review the systems activity
- Partner discussion

Wednesday

Focus

- Student will be able to assess their own organization system and list the things they need to help them get and stay organized.

Materials

- Organized or not? Slides or cards
- Anatomy of an organized backpack handout
- Organization self-check activity
- Organization plan activity

Sequence

- Anticipatory activity
- Read / annotate organized backpack handout
- Organization self-check
- Organization plan

Thursday

Focus

- Student will be able to sort, clean and organize all of the materials they use in a school day.

Materials

- How to organize paper check sheet or google slides
- Any materials students identified they need to get organized

Sequence

- Organization demonstration
- Student discussion
- Student organization time

Friday

Focus

- Student will be able to appraise their organization system and execute changes or alterations to make it work better for them.

Materials

- Making time to stay organized activity
- My (re)organization checklist
- My organization SMART goal planning activities

Sequence

- Anticipatory activity
- Create SMART goals
- Read / complete making time to stay organized
- Do org. checklist
- Class discussion

Extension activities can be slotted in anywhere but work well as review or distributed practice some time after students complete the unit.

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🔥 Lesson plan 1 – the cost of being unorganized

🎯 Lesson objective

Date _____

Student will be able to calculate and explain how much being unorganized costs them in time and energy.

🎯 Unit outcome / standard

Student will be able to organize their materials and keep them organized.

🖊️ Materials / technology needed

- [Video](#) or demonstration materials
- Timer or phone timer program (for in-person version)
- [What does being unorganized cost me? Student activity sheet](#)

💬⭐ Anticipatory set

Video: what does being unorganized cost me?

💬 Anticipatory set differentiation

Hands-on organization demonstration (You may want to select 2 student volunteers to have finding the paper sort of a "race". You may also want to assign students as time keepers and recorders.)

👨‍🏫✅ I do (model)

Students use the numbers in the video to complete notes either after pausing the video or trying it before the video shows the numbers.

👨‍🏫🎨 I do differentiation

Group works together to complete the notes and calculations on the student activity sheet based on hands-on numbers.

Lesson plan 1 – the cost of being unorganized

We do (class / group task)

Students brainstorm together what harm can come from being unorganized as a group.
* Ideal for Kagan Structures

We do differentiation

Students brainstorm with a partner or teacher assistant on the harm of being unorganized.

You do (independent practice)

Students draw and label what they think a good organization system would look like.

You do differentiation

Students can just draw what they think a good organization system would look like.

Closure

On the way out of class, ask each student for one reason that being unorganized makes their life harder before they leave class.

Reflection

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⏰ Lesson plan 1 – instructions for hands-on demonstration

This demonstration is to show how much time you can save by having your things organized. For this demonstration you'll need a typical paper from your school environment.

Organized backpack:

Make sure this backpack has some sort of organization system. If you're creating the hands-on demonstrations for the next lesson, you can use any of those for this.

Place the paper that the students will be trying to find in a well-labeled place that makes sense for that item. (If it's a science paper, make sure it's somewhere clearly labeled "science, for example).

You can place a few other realistic papers throughout the system but make sure it's still organized.

Unorganized backpack:

This should be typical of student backpacks you've encountered. Nothing needs to be labeled.

Feel free to use papers from all over your learning environment. I asked teachers in the grade level I worked with for extra copies or papers they were going to recycle.

The paper you're going to have the students look for should be placed haphazardly and randomly in this pile.

For extra realism, put in loose items like headphones, stray pens, pencils and markers. You can even put a jacket or other items typically placed in backpacks.

The goal is to make it seem believable to learners.

You will need some way of timing how long it takes to find this one specific paper. A stopwatch app on a cell phone or a real stopwatch work fine.

This video can be used instead of creating these demonstrations and also shows you how these backpacks might look if you choose to create them.

▶️ **Video: what does being unorganized cost me?**

What does being unorganized cost me? – page 1

How long did it take to find the material in the UNORGANIZED backpack?

How long did it take to find the material in the ORGANIZED backpack?

_____ minutes / seconds

_____ minutes / seconds

Total time cost of being unorganized once

Unorganized total time   Organized total time   Time cost of being unorganized

_____ **–** _____ **=** _____

Total time cost of being unorganized daily

Time cost of being unorganized   Number of classes / subjects per day   DAILY time cost of being unorganized

_____ **X** _____ **=** _____

Total time cost of being unorganized weekly

DAILY time cost of being unorganized   Number of School Days per week   Weekly time cost of being unorganized

_____ **X** _____ **=** _____

Total time cost of being unorganized monthly

Weekly time cost of being unorganized   4 weeks per month   Monthly time cost of being unorganized

_____ **X** **4** **=** _____

What does being unorganized cost me? – page 2

Total time cost of being unorganized yearly

Monthly time cost of being unorganized

Months of school

Yearly time cost of being unorganized

_____ **X** _____ **=** _____

Total time cost of being unorganized for all of high school

Yearly time cost of being unorganized

Years of high school (4)

High School time cost of being unorganized

_____ **X** **4** **=** _____

Use the space and table to calculate the hours, days, weeks, months and years

60 seconds in 1 minute

60 minutes in 1 hour

24 hours in 1 day

7 days in 1 week

52 weeks in 1 year

What does being unorganized cost me? — page 3

Why do you think organized students do better in school?

How do you think starting a class organized can make you feel?

How would you rather be spending this lost time?

What could being organized help you do?

What does being unorganized cost me? – page 4

What does being organized look like to you? Draw (and label) that below

Lesson plan 2 – finding your organization style

◎ Lesson objective

Student will be able to identify several ways to organize their school supplies and explain which one may work for them best.

Date _____

◎ Unit outcome / standard

Student will be able to organize their materials and keep them organized

✏️ Materials / technology needed

- Videos or demonstration materials
- Computers for stations (if using computer stations)
- Judging the Systems: Student activity sheet (4 per student)
- Leave a review: student activity

💬 Anticipatory set

Students write 3 benefits of being organized. Educator writes their reasons on the board until everyone's reasons have been written out making a large list.

💬 Anticipatory set differentiation

On their own, students write out 3 ways they think being organized can help them.

👤 I do (model)

Teacher explains that there are MANY different ways to be organized and today students will be judging some systems they could consider. Teacher gives instructions and demonstrates what students will do when they get to each station.

👤 I do differentiation

Teacher explains that there are MANY different ways to be organized and today students will be judging some systems they could consider. Students read instructions for each video module as they begin them.

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Lesson plan 2 – finding your organization style

We do (class / group task)

Students in their group travel from station to station. They inspect the organization system and discuss them as they complete their activity sheet. (Can be done 1 per student or 1 per group).

We do differentiation

Students in partners (either with another student or with an educator) watch the videos, and complete their activity sheet. They discuss the systems as they watch them.

You do (independent practice)

Students complete the review activity by giving a star rating and a short review for each system for how the system fits their own needs.

You do differentiation

Students complete the stars on the review activity and either give verbally or film a short review of each system for their own needs.

Closure

Students tell each other (or an educator) what their top rated system was, and why.

Reflection

Lesson plan 2 – instructions for hands-on demonstration

Students will get to really interact with different ways to have organized school supplies. This helps them visualize and plan an organization system that will work best for them. You will need to assemble each of these the day before giving the lesson.

Station 1 – folders + notebooks

You will need:

- ☐ Colorful folders (6-8 recommended)
- ☐ Pencil box of some sort
- ☐ 1-subject notebooks – one for each class / subject
- ☐ A planner
- ☐ A backpack
- ☐ Divider tabs

Station 2 – big binder

You will need:

- ☐ A hardy, at least 4-inch binder
- ☐ Loose leaf lined paper
- ☐ Dividers, with pockets (8 recommended)
- ☐ Page protector with 1 month planner page
- ☐ A backpack
- ☐ 3-hole punched pencil pouch

Station 3 – accordion folder

You will need:

- ☐ A VERY well reinforced accordion folder with at least 8 pockets
- ☐ Labels or tabs for the pockets
- ☐ Loose leaf lined paper
- ☐ A pencil pouch
- ☐ A planner
- ☐ Binder rings

Station 4 – small binders

You will need:

- ☐ Very small binders (1-inch) – one for each class / subject
- ☐ Divider tabs
- ☐ Loose leaf lined paper
- ☐ A pencil box
- ☐ A planner
- ☐ A backpack

Lesson plan 2 – instructions for hands-on demonstration

This video can be used instead of creating these demonstrations and also shows you how to set up these systems if you choose to create them.

▶ **Video: 4 ways to be organized**

> 💡 **Pro-tip**
>
> If you're creating these as hands-on demo pieces, tailor them to your student's needs.
>
> If your school has 8 periods, make sure you've accounted for that. Likewise, if you're working with a student with subjects and not classes, take that into account.
>
> Feel free to be flexible and creative! The point of this activity is to show students that there are many ways to be organized and to help them to start thinking about what way suits them best.

Organization systems — hands-on station instructions
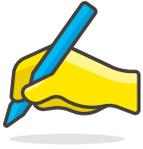
Write the type of organization system on your judging page.

As a team, go through the system. Take things out and see how they're set up.

Discuss **what this system does well.** Make sure everyone in the team gives their ideas.

Take time to record the ideas your team had that you liked the best on your judging page.

Discuss **what this system might not do as well.** Make sure everyone in the team gives their ideas.

Take time to record the ideas your team had that you liked the best on your judging page.
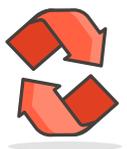
Put everything back the way that they were when you got to the station for the next team to experience.

Organization systems – video station instructions
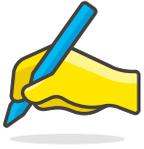
Write the type of this organization system on your judging page.

Watch the video of the system. Stop the video and go back if you want to see something again.

Discuss **what this system does well** with your partner or educator.

Take time to record the ideas that you liked the best on your judging page.

Discuss **what this system might not do as well** with your partner or educator.

Take time to record the ideas that you liked the best on your judging page.

Move on to the next video until you complete all 4.

Judging the organization systems

Type of system:

👍 What would this system do well?

👎 What would be hard with this system?

🙋 What kind of person would this system work well for?

🙅 What kind of person would this system not work well for?

💬 Leave a review – page 1

⭐ Below, write in the 4 types of organization systems for school materials you saw today. For each fill in a star rating, a title for the review and 2-3 sentences telling what you thought of the system.

Name of system being reviewed:

Review title:

Star rating ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Review

Name of system being reviewed:

Review title:

Star rating ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Review

⊙⊙⊙ Leave a review – page 2

⭐ Below, write in the 4 types of organization systems for school materials you saw today. For each fill in a star rating, a title for the review and 2-3 sentences telling what you thought of the system.

Name of system being reviewed:

Review title:

Star rating ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Review

Name of system being reviewed:

Review title:

Star rating ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Review

Lesson plan 3: organization self-check

Lesson objective

Date _____

Student will be able to assess their own organization system and list the things they need to help them get and stay organized.

Unit outcome / standard

Student will be able to organize their materials and keep them organized.

Materials / technology needed

- Organized or not cards or slides
- Anatomy of an organized backpack handout
- Organization self-check activity sheet
- Organization plan activity sheet

Anticipatory set

Organized or not: slides – class votes up or down (using thumbs up / down or red / green cards). Discussion question: what made some of these organized and some of them not?

Anticipatory set differentiation

Organized or not: picture cards – partners or groups sort them into 2 piles: organized or not organized. Discussion question: what made some of these organized and some of them not?

I do (model)

Teacher gives directions for how teams will annotate their handouts for anatomy of an organized backpack.

I do differentiation

Teacher will read through the anatomy of an organized backpack with the student or students and demonstrate how to annotate it.

Lesson plan 3: organization self-check

We do (class / group task)

As a team, students will read and annotate their handout. Students should feel free to make notes they have about their own system as they go through the handout.
* A Kagan structure, such as Rally Coach would work great for this task.

We do differentiation

Educator and student discuss the handout, and the student takes down notes that they have for their own organization system on the handout.

You do (independent practice)

Students complete the organization self-check activity sheet and organization plan activity sheet independently.

You do differentiation

Students complete the organization self-check activity sheet and organization plan activity sheet with input from a teacher or partner.

Closure

Students show their plans for their organization needs to the teacher. (If educator / school is providing supplies, collect these plans).

Reflection

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Organized or not? Cards
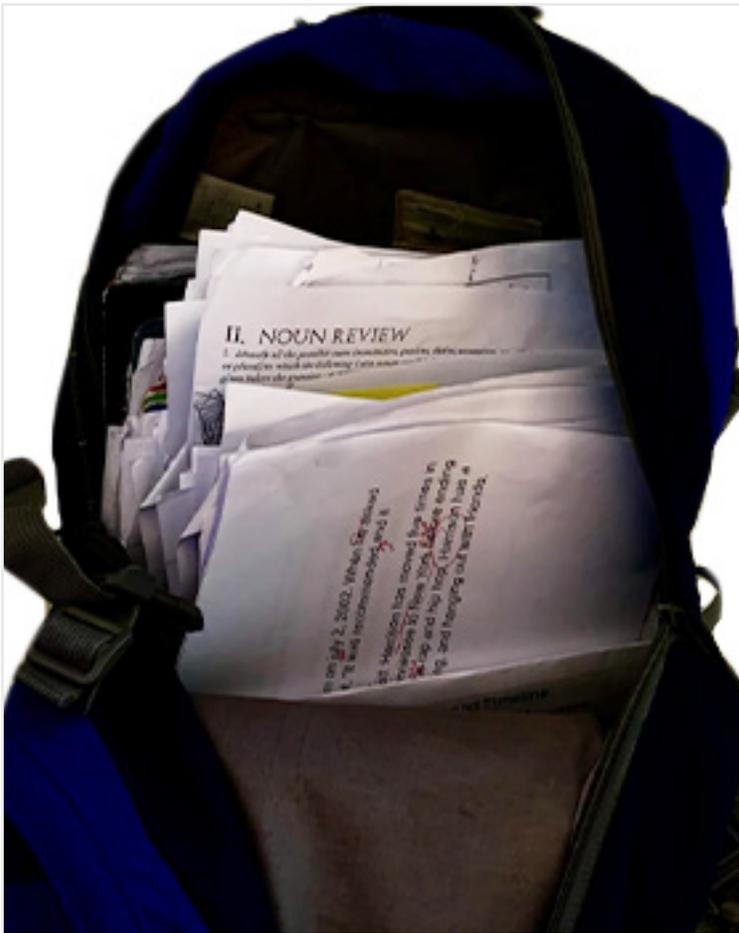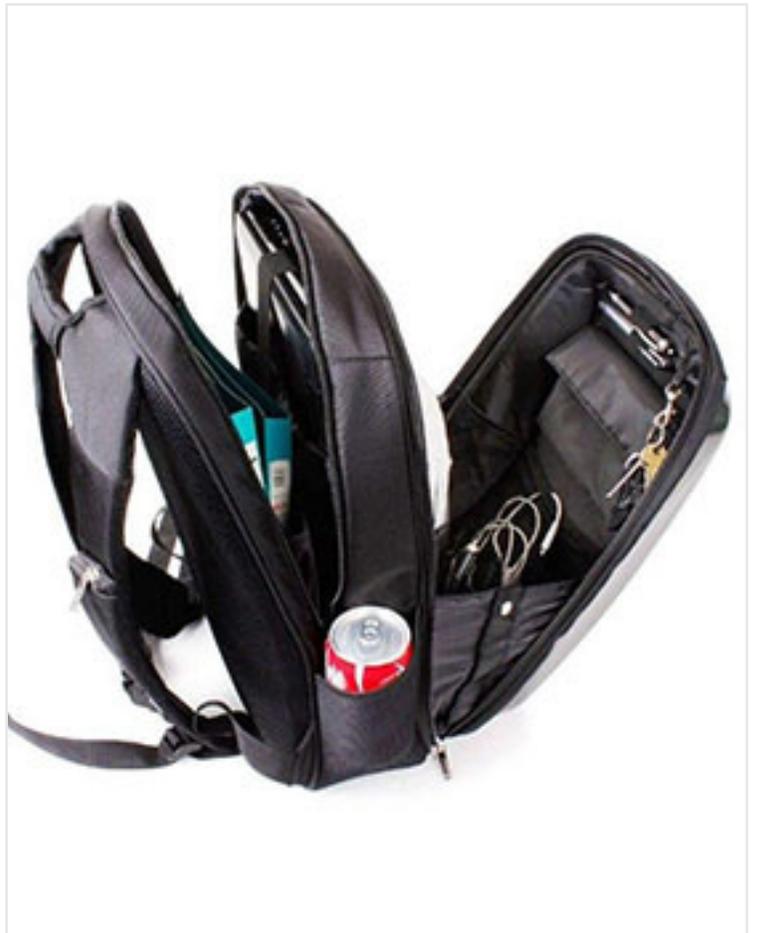
Anatomy of an organized backpack – page 1

A place for loose papers

A good system has a place to put all the loose papers you get.
You should have a different place for each class or subject.
Ideas:

- Folders
- 3-ring binders
- Divider tabs in one large binder
- Binder rings

Paper for notes and practices

Taking notes is part of learning. You will
need paper for that.
Ideas:

- Loose paper in a folder or binder
- Notebooks

Anatomy of an organized backpack – page 2

A place for your pens, pencils, and/or highlighters

All of your writing tools need a place too.
Ideas:

- Pencil pouch (3-hole punched or not)
- Pencil boxes
- Built-in pockets in your backpack

If you want you can even have separate spots for different kinds of tools.

A planner

To help you remember when things are due.

Your important "other" stuff

If you take anything else with you, make sure it has a place.
Some students keep a first aid / emergency kit.
Others have their headphones, keys and phone in a specific pocket.
If it's important to you, pick a spot for it!

My organization self-check activity – page 1

For each question check if you have a place or system, if you have one, write what it is. Then, circle if you are happy with this place or system.

Where do I put papers when I get them in class?

☐ I have a place / system for this. It is:

_____

☐ I don't have a place / system for this.

👍 This place / system is working for me.

👎 This place / system is NOT working for me.

How do I take notes?

☐ I have a place / system for this. It is:

_____

☐ I don't have a place / system for this.

👍 This place / system is working for me.

👎 This place / system is NOT working for me.

Where do I put notes once I've taken them?

☐ I have a place / system for this. It is:

_____

☐ I don't have a place / system for this.

👍 This place / system is working for me.

👎 This place / system is NOT working for me.

My organization self-check activity – page 2

For each question, check if you have a place or system, if you have one, write what it is. Then, circle if you are happy with this place or system.

Where do I put my pencils?

☐ I have a place / system for this. It is:

_____

☐ I don't have a place / system for this.

👍 This place / system is working for me.
👎 This place / system is NOT working for me.

Where do I put my pens, highlighters and other writing tools?

☐ I have a place / system for this. It is:

_____

☐ I don't have a place / system for this.

👍 This place / system is working for me.
👎 This place / system is NOT working for me.

Where do I put my homework that needs to be done and / or things I need to fix / finish?

☐ I have a place / system for this. It is:

_____

☐ I don't have a place / system for this.

👍 This place / system is working for me.
👎 This place / system is NOT working for me.

My organization self-check activity — page 3

✍️ For each question check if you have a place or system, if you have one, write what it is. Then, circle if you are happy with this place or system.

✅ Where do I put homework once I finish it?

☐ I have a place / system for this. It is:

_____

☐ I don't have a place / system for this.

👍 This place / system is working for me.
👎 This place / system is NOT working for me.

📓 Where do I keep track of my assignments?

☐ I have a place / system for this. It is:

_____

☐ I don't have a place / system for this.

👍 This place / system is working for me.
👎 This place / system is NOT working for me.

🎧 Where do I put other important things like my phone, headphones, or any other important personal items?

☐ I have a place / system for this. It is:

_____

☐ I don't have a place / system for this.

👍 This place / system is working for me.
👎 This place / system is NOT working for me.

My organization plan – page 1

In order to get organized I'm going to need (check all that apply)

- ☐ A backpack
- ☐ A big 3-ring binder
- ☐ Small 3-ring binders

  How many? _____

- ☐ An accordion folder
- ☐ Folders

  How many? _____

- ☐ A pencil box
- ☐ A pencil pouch
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Highlighters
- ☐ Colored pencils
- ☐ A portable 3-hole punch
- ☐ Lined paper

- ☐ A 5-subject notebook
- ☐ A 3-subject notebook
- ☐ Notebooks

  How many? _____

- ☐ Paper clips / binder clips
- ☐ A planner
- ☐ A pouch for other items
- ☐ Pencil sharpener
- ☐ Note cards
- ☐ Binder rings
- ☐ Stick on tabs
- ☐ A label maker / tape for it
- ☐ A permanent marker
- ☐ Dividers with folders

Anything else not listed?

💡 My organization plan – page 2

💭 Why did you want to add these things to your organization system?
How do you think they'll help you?

♻️ Can you repurpose anything you already have?

📦 How are you going to get the items you need?

🧠 Brainstorming for my organization plan

🗳️ Lesson plan 4: getting organized

🎯 Lesson objective

Date _____

Student will be able to sort, clean and organize all of the materials they use in a school day.

🎯 Unit outcome / standard

Student will be able to organize their materials and keep them organized.

🖊️ Materials / technology needed

- How to organize paper check sheet or google slides
- Any materials students need to get organized

💬⭐ Anticipatory set

There is no specific anticipatory set for this lesson – students will need most if not all of class time to complete this task.

💬 Anticipatory set differentiation

N/A

🧑‍✅ I do (model)

Educator uses the checklist to go through the messy demonstration backpack. Educator can select student volunteers to read the steps and assist with the organization.

🧑‍🎨 I do differentiation

Educator can play the video of the messy backpack being organized, using the steps from the checklist.

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📥 Lesson plan 4: getting organized

👥 We do (class / group task)

Hand up stand up pair up – chat about which step seems most challenging and how they plan to tackle their own organization system.

👥 We do differentiation

Partners (or student and their educator) chat about which step seems most challenging and how they plan to tackle their own organization system.

👤 You do (independent practice)

Students complete the how to get organized checklist independently.

👤 You do differentiation

Students complete the how to get organized checklist as student slides.

👤 Closure

Students write their favorite thing about their new organization system on a post-in and put it on the board or a poster-sized paper.

👤 Reflection

😎 How to organize a backpack

Phase 1: getting ready to organize

1 ☐ Get together the materials you have for your new organization system and place them off to the side.

2 ☐ Label anything that needs to be labeled, like writing the class names on notebooks, folders and tabs.

3 ☐ Take EVERYTHING that is in your backpack, out.

4 ☐ Anything that you already have organized how you want it, can be set with the materials for organizing (on the side).

5 ☐ Clean out folders, binders, pouches and anything else you plan on using to organize.

6 ☐ Make piles for everything that's left by what it is. You should have a pile for:

- ☐ School papers
- ☐ Unused lined paper
- ☐ Pencils , pens, and other writing tools
- ☐ Useful items like pencil sharpeners, scissors or glue
- ☐ Personal items
- ☐ Things that don't have a category

7 ☐ Throw out (or recycle!) Anything that is obvious trash, such as wrappers, empty bottles or anything broken that you can't repair.

How to organize a backpack

Phase 2: making choices

8 ☐ Check that all the writing tools still work on a piece of scratch paper. If a pen has no ink, or a pencil is too small or a highlighter has dried up, throw them out.

10 ☐ Check any other tools to make sure they work, and place them where they go in your new system.

9 ☐ Place the rest of the working writing tools in their new place(s) in your system.

11 ☐ Place any personal items where you plan on storing them. Remember that things you use often should be easy to grab.

How to organize a backpack

Phase 3: papers!

12 ☐ You should only have papers left now. Put all of the unused paper you will be using for notes and drawings where it goes in your organization system.

13 ☐ Go through the school papers. Put them in stacks by classes.

14 ☐ Pick one class. Sort it into stacks that make sense to you. Stacks you might want to make are:
- ☐ Papers that I need to turn in
- ☐ Notes
- ☐ Important documents from that class
- ☐ Work I need to do
- ☐ Things I don't need anymore
- ☐ Graded work to use as a model

15 ☐ Throw away (or recycle!) Any papers you are sure you no longer need from that class.
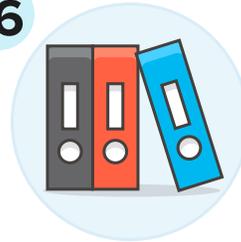
16 ☐ Once you have everything in stacks, sort notes by date or subject. Place everything into your system for that class in a way that makes sense to you.

17 ☐ Repeat steps 14 – 16 until you've done every class.

18 ☐ Any important papers that don't have a class (the student handbook for example) should be placed in a spot that makes sense in your new system.

How to organize a backpack

Phase 4: putting it all together

19 ☐ At this point you have everything neatly in it's folders, binders, pouches and other storage places. Put all of that in your backpack or bag in a way that makes sense or feels good to you. Place everything together by class or by type.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You are now organized!

🎒 Lesson plan 5: staying organized

◎ Lesson objective

Student will be able to appraise their organization system and execute changes or alterations to make it work better for them.

🎯 Unit outcome / standard

Student will be able to organize their materials and keep them organized.

🖍 Materials / technology needed

- Making time to stay organized activity
- Am I organized checklist (you may want to laminate these to be used repeatedly)
- My organization SMART goal activity
- Optional:
- Helping my friend organize: flow chart
- Helping my friend organize: activity
- Sticky notes

💬 Anticipatory set

Have students rate their organization system using a 5 star rating. Have them list the following:
- 4 things they're doing well
- 1 way they want to level up

Students discuss with their partner

💬 Anticipatory set differentiation

Add additional activity:
Have students put their responses on a sticky note and place them on the board or your desk. Discuss with the class similarities in their responses

👨‍🏫 I do (model)

The educator models writing their own organization SMART goal.

👨‍🎨 I do differentiation

Teacher models using the "Am I organized checklist" on one of the demonstration backpacks OR on their own desk or traveling teacher box.

Lesson Plan 5: staying organized

We do (class / group task)

Partner / small group reading of "making time to stay organized".

We do differentiation

You could have learners write encouragement notes to be given to other students.

You do (independent practice)

Students complete the following:
• Making time to stay organized reflection
• My organization checklist
• My organization SMART goal

You do differentiation

Students with additional time or additional needs can work on any of the extension activities that are meaningful to them.

Closure

When should we check in on our organization systems again? Class discussion – put on calendar for organization check-in

Reflection

Making time to stay organized – page 1

1   Staying organized can seem like a talent that some people have and other people don't. That's not true at all though. Organization is a skill just like dribbling a ball or painting a picture. You can learn and practice it.

2   Organizing your things once they've gotten very unorganized can be challenging. The trick is to not let them get that way in the first place. How do you do that? You make time to practice, that's how.

3   The best time to practice organizing is between tasks. If you are packing up at the end of class this is a good time to put everything you took out back where it belongs. Make sure everything has a home. Sometimes you have to leave class in a hurry though, and you may put everything away in a hurry. Don't worry! The time before your next class starts would be a great time to put everything back where it goes.

4   Another great time to organize is when you get home. At the beginning of your homework and study time, you can make it a routine to organize. It's easy for things to move around over the day. Your phone may be in a different pocket than usual or your papers have not been put in the right place. Taking a minute or two to place everything where it goes will save you so much time later.

5   Another great time to organize is the weekend. This is a good time for a deep clean. You can go through your things and re-order them in a way that works. It's also a great time to sort your things and throw away or recycle things you don't need anymore.

6   Think of your own time. When do you have a few minutes throughout your day? The best time to organize is when you have the time to do it consistently. It may be tough at first, but remember that skills take time to grow. If you keep at it, you'll be an organization star in no time!

Making time to stay organized – page 2

What classes do you have that give you time to pack up at the end of class?

What classes do you have that give you time to get ready at the beginning of class?

When might you have time to organize when you get home from school?

What times during the day and the week do you think you'll be able to organize your backpack?

How can you encourage yourself to practice organization?

Why do you want to improve your organization?

Am I organized? checklist

Papers

- ☐ All lined / unused paper is in its place
- ☐ All notes and information pages are in their places
- ☐ Assignments that are finished and NOT GRADED are somewhere I will remember to turn them in
- ☐ Assignments that are finished and graded are in their place(s)
- ☐ Assignments that are NOT finished are somewhere I will remember to finish them
- ☐ Any trash is thrown away or recycled

Dividers and folders

- ☐ All my folders and/or tabs are have the right names
- ☐ I repaired or replaced any broken folders or tabs
- ☐ I added any new tabs or folders I need to handle any new kinds of papers

Tools

- ☐ All my pencils are put in their place
- ☐ All my pens are in their place
- ☐ All my highlighters are in their place
- ☐ All colored pencils are in their place
- ☐ Any pencil shavings or stray lead has been cleaned out
- ☐ Any dead writing tools have been thrown out or recycled
- ☐ Planner is in its place

Other items

- ☐ My electronic devices are in their place(s)
- ☐ All first aid / personal care items are in their places
- ☐ Any garbage is thrown out or recycled
- ☐ Personal papers, like notes or pictures are in their places

Yay! You're all organized again!

azulita

My organization SMART goal

I most want to be organized because:

My organization goal for myself is:

S – Specific: What part of being organized am I working on first?

M – measurable: How will I know I've met my goal? (How will I measure it)?

A – Actionable: What supports and materials will I need to meet this goal?

R – Relevant: How does this goal help me to stay organized?

T – Time-bound: how long do I think it will take for me to achieve this goal?

When I meet my goal, I will feel:

Using my answers to the questions above, my even better SMART goal is:

⭐ My organization SMART goal menu – page 1

👆 Below are a variety of SMART goals to help you become a more organized person. **Pick one** or create your own!

🎒 Once a week I will spend 30 minutes reorganizing my things to keep them organized.

🎒 Once a week a friend and I will help each other to reorganize our backpacks together.

🎒 At the end of every class or activity, I will put everything back where I got it from.

🎒 When I get home from school every day, I will spend 5 minutes re-organizing my school things.

🎒 Every morning before school I will reorganize my school supplies.

🎒 I will use an organization checklist 2 times a week to make sure my things are still organized.

🎒 At lunch time every school day, I will reorganize my school supplies and personal items to make sure everything is in the correct place.

🎒 Every day I will work with my family at home to go through my things and make sure they are organized.

😁 Why did you pick this goal? How will it help you?

⭐ My organization SMART goal menu – page 2

💭 Make your own SMART goal
Answer the questions to help you think about your goal

🎯 What skill will you be practicing?	✅ How will you know you're doing it?	📦 Will you need anything for it?

💡 How does it help you become more organized overall?	⏰❗ When will you practice?

✍️ Write out your goal:

Extension activities

These activities were created to address other organizational needs student may have. They can be used at any time or substituted in for some of the backpack specific organization tasks.

Areas of organization addressed in these activities:

- **Home organization**
- **An open-ended organization plan**
- **How to help a friend organize**
- **Computer file organization**

📥 Anatomy of an organized home workspace

A surface

- A table, desk, or drafting table will do great!

- If you prefer, a bed tray on wheels would work

A clear space

Your workspace should always have a clear area to start work right away. You can use any surface, but make sure there's a clear place to work.

Spare paper

Lined and/or white paper is good to have on hand.

Tools

You may be doing some more advanced work and tidying here, so it's a good place for larger tools. Tools you may want to have on hand are:

- Label maker

- Permanent markers

- A stapler

- Paperclips

- Correction fluid or strips

- 3-hole punch

Writing tools

Have spare pens, pencils, lead for mechanical pencils, giant erasers, markers, and colored pencils.
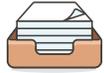
🗂️ Anatomy of an organized home workspace

Storage

Make sure every tool and material you choose has a place to be. It doesn't need to be fancy! Use whatever you have laying around

- Desk drawers work great!
- Writing tools can be placed in cups or pencil boxes
- Desktop storage like plastic drawers and boxes work for bigger tools and papers
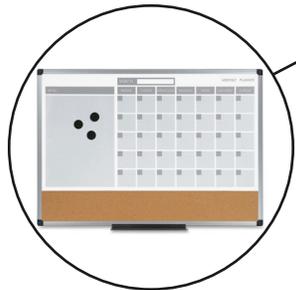
A planning place

It's important to know what's coming up ahead of time and to keep sight of important dates, events and goals. Your workspace should have some way to keep your eye on this stuff.

- A wall or desk calendar
- A whiteboard / dry erase / chalkboard
- A cork board for pinning important info / papers / reminders

Comfy!

Make sure this is a place you want to be! If you hate it you won't use it.

To make it comfortable for you consider the following:

- A chair you like sitting in
- Posters, stickers, and pictures on and around the space that motivate you
- Speakers or headphones for music
- Sensory items like spinners, weighted blankets or fidgets

🌳🏠 My home workspace organization plan – page 1

🎉 In order to get organized I'm going to need (check all that apply)

- ☐ Desk or table
- ☐ Paper storage bins
- ☐ Place to store writing supplies
- ☐ Place to store art supplies
- ☐ Pens / pencils
- ☐ Calendar
- ☐ Highlighters
- ☐ Colored pencils
- ☐ A 3-hole punch
- ☐ Lined paper
- ☐ White paper
- ☐ Grid / graph paper
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ Headphones / speaker
- ☐ Computer / tablet
- ☐ Chalkboard / chalk

- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Note cards
- ☐ Paper clips / binder clips
- ☐ A calendar
- ☐ Pencil sharpener
- ☐ Note card storage box
- ☐ Binder rings
- ☐ Stick on tabs
- ☐ A label maker / tape for it
- ☐ A permanent marker like a sharpie
- ☐ A comfortable chair
- ☐ Fidget
- ☐ Weighted blanket
- ☐ White-out
- ☐ A cork board and push pins
- ☐ A whiteboard / dry erase markers

🎨 Anything else not listed?

🏡 My home workspace organization plan – page 2

💭 Why did you want to add these things to your home workspace?
How do you think they'll help you?

♻️ Can you repurpose anything you already have?

📦 How are you going to get the items you need?

🧠 Brainstorming for my organization plan

🧱 How to organize ANYTHING – page 1

Being organized can help you do anything faster and with less stress. You know that, but there are so many things in your life to organize. You have your backpack, your work area, your bedroom, you may have a gym bag, or locker. You have drawers, a closet, and your bathroom items.

That's a lot! How do you organize so many different things?

These may be very different but you can use the same steps for them all.

✍️ **Step 1: make a need and want list.**

Make a list of what NEEDS to be in that place, and what you WANT to be in that place. It's ok to put things in there you just want.

📦 **Step 2: take anything in it already, out. (Except big things like your bed).**

If you're organizing a big thing like your bedroom, pick a small part, like a drawer to do, not the whole thing. Take everything out of the thing you are organizing so it is empty.

♻️ **Step 3: discard and find new homes for things you don't want in that place.**

If something is trash, throw it away or recycle it. If you want to keep it, but it doesn't go in this place, move it. If you don't know where it goes yet, put it in a box or pile to decide where to put it later.

How to organize ANYTHING – page 2

Step 4: think about your needs.

Decide if you need anything to help you be organized. You may want a bag or pouch for certain items. You may want a way to divide a drawer. You may need a box or other container.

Write down what you need. Repurpose things you have first before buying new items to organize with.
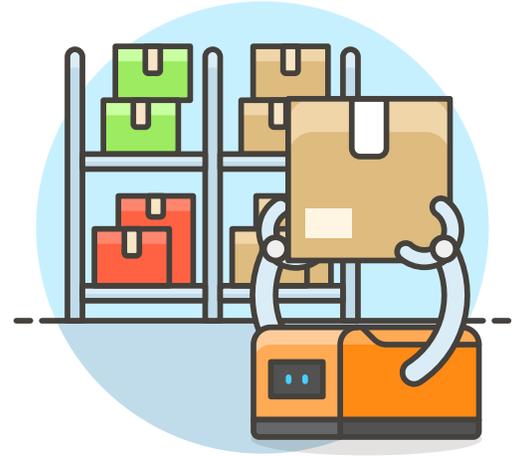
Step 5: put everything back in

Now that you know what should be in this place, and you have anything you need to store it, do it! Put all items in the places that you picked for them.

Step 6: check in and make changes

Make time to clean up and reorganize this place. Check in with yourself about how it's working. If you don't like it, make changes to how you organize that place.

There are lots of ways to organize. You can change how you do it. Maybe you like things color coded, or you like having clear containers so you can see inside them. There are many ways to be organized and you should do the ones that work best for you.

So, that's it! Go ahead and organize all the places that are slowing you down and frustrating you. You'll be glad you did!

Visualize how to organize ANYTHING

Visualize! Use this space to brainstorm how you'd use these steps for something you'd like to organize.

Name

Class   Date

💡 My plan to organize anything – page 1

In order to get organized I'm going to need

📦 Containers

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

🔧 Tools

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

📎 Materials

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

🤖 Other

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

💡📦 My plan to organize anything – page 2

Why did you want to add these things to help you organize?
How do you think they'll help you?

Can you repurpose anything you already have?

How are you going to get the items you need?

Brainstorming for my organization plan

🙌 How to help a friend organize

Do I have their permission to help? → **No**

Yes

No → Tell them you're happy to help, if they ever want your help. 👋

Ask them how they want you to help.

They want you to hang out with them while they do it themselves. → Do that :)

They want you to go through the steps with them.

OMG! They don't even know where to start! Let's do it all together! 😱

What are they organizing?

📁 **Computer files** — Use the "how to organize your digital stuff" page and plan.

🎒 **A backpack** — Use the "how to oragnize your back-pack" steps and plan.

🏡 **Home workspace** — Use the "anatomy of an organized workspace" page and plan.

❓ **Something else** — Use the "Organize anything" page and plan.

🙏 Work through the steps together. Check in with your friend about what they are comfortable with you doing and respect their boundaries! 🚧

🙌 How to help a friend organize: respecting boundaries

🙂 How do I like to be supported / helped?

👯 How does my friend like to be helped?

👽 What is different about my friend?

🤪 How do I know my friend likes to be helped that way?

💬 **Helpful questions I can ask that respect my friend's boundaries**

- How can I help you?
- Do you like it when I help you like this?
- What can I do better?
- How can I help you better?
- Is there something different you'd like me to do?

- Would you like me to keep you company while you organize?
- Would you like any advice?
- What helps you feel happy?
- How do you like to take on hard tasks?
- Is this the assistance you wanted?

💻 How to organize your digital stuff – page 1

You know that having your physical stuff organized saves you time and stress. Did you know that having your digital stuff organized is just as important?

It's true! In fact, since we're all doing more and more on our devices, it's even more important.

Here are some things you can do to make your digital stuff more organized and easier to find when you need it.

1. Have a system for your file names

This just means, "know how you name stuff".
Do you like to put the date and then the class and then the name of the project?
Do you like to do it the opposite way?
Do you put your name in every file name because you know your teachers want you to do that?

No matter how you choose to do it, keep it the same. That will make your files easy to put in the folders they belong in. It will also be easier for you to find what you need fast.

2. Find a way to group your files into folders

There are SO MANY ways to group files into folders. You can group them by year, by month, by class, by hour, by subject, by teacher, and even by kind of task. There are way too many ways to list them all here.

💻 How to organize your digital stuff – page 2

This is where what you like comes in. You should pick the way that feels right to you and your brain.

You can have them neatly nested or you can have a ton of files on your desktop and still be organized. All you have to do is think for yourself about what feels right and do that.

📅 3. Put the date on everything

This helps a lot especially when you're doing the same thing but on different days. Maybe you have math practice every week. Adding the date to that file is a good way to quickly know which one you're looking at without having to open the file.

🌈 4. Color code if it helps

Many programs now allow you to add color to your files. This can help them stand out from each other. It can help you see which is the math folder and English folder quickly.

If you color code other things you use like folders and your planner, you may want to do it with your computer files too.

🎯 5. Keep trying until you get it

You may not pick the right system on your first try, that's ok. You can always change it. They're only file and folder names, they can be renamed. You can add folders, you can delete folders. In many ways, digital organization is easier than physical organization. That's because you can always make what you need to change it.

How to organize your digital stuff – page 3

6. Take time to clean up your files

Like with your physical stuff, your digital stuff can get out of order. You might name something in a way you don't usually while you're in a hurry. You may leave a bunch of things in your downloads folder and not put them in their proper folders.

Stuff gets unorganized. The secret to being an organized person is taking time to put everything back where it goes on a regular basis.

If you follow these steps, you'll be well on your way to having an easy, organized, digital life.

How to organize your digital stuff – reading questions

Why is it important to name your files?
A. So you can find what you need quickly
B. Teachers like titles
C. Having your physical stuff organized saves time and stress
D. You need to have a system

How does putting the date on things help?
A. Some activities are only done once
B. The date is more important than the class name
C. You can find the correct item you're looking for
D. You always know what the date is

What does color coding mean?
A. Computer programming with different colors
B. You can find things fast
C. You make your files a rainbow
D. You use different colors to organize

What can you do if it doesn't work the first time?
A. Delete everything
B. Make small changes to see what works for you
C. Give up
D. Try more color coding

Why is it useful to make time to reorganize?
A. You're always in a hurry
B. Your stuff can get messy over time
C. Organization is important
D. You impress people when you're organized

Organize these files! – name the files

All the files here were made yesterday by a student. Help them get these all organized using what you know about digital organization. First, name the files using a system that will make them easy for the student to find.

The files:

- Math practice
- Romeo and Juliet essay
- Experiment conclusion
- Art reflection
- Cause and effects of WW1
- Math notes
- Lab notes light wavelengths
- WWI research
- Romeo and Juliet – PDF of book
- Photo reference for art project
- Photo reference for art project
- Spanish practice paragraph – mi comida favorita

Name the files

DOC		DOC	
DOC		PDF	
DOC		JPG	
DOC		JPG	
DOC		DOC	
DOC		DOC	

Organize these files! – name the folders

Now the files are all named, create folders for the student to put their work into. You can make as many or as few as make sense to you.

Create the folders

Organize these files! – organize the files and folders

Below cut and paste the files and folders you named into order.
To show something is inside something else, indent (move it slightly to the right).

Example:

Semester 1

    Math

        Notes-reducing_fractions-10-21-2022

Organize these files! – organize the files and folders

Below cut and paste the files and folders you named into order.
To show something is inside something else, indent (move it slightly to the right).

🖱️✏️ Instructions for digital organization practice

This practice is to allow students to make folders and subfolders as well as creating naming conventions that work for them. This will help them generalize the skill to their own digital organization system. It can be used in place of or in addition to the cut and paste activity.

Digital materials:

Download the following Google files. Put them into a folder to share with your students:

G WWI research
G Spanish practice
G Romeo and Juliet essay
G Math practice
G Math notes
G Experiment conclusion
G Causes and effects of WWI
G Art reflection

The students should create folders for the files with logical names and then rename the files using a system that makes sense to them. Feel free to add additional files to the folder with different file types like jpgs or pdfs to increase the challenge.

If applicable this would also be a good time to color code folders
and show them how to arrange items in a folder.

The students may want to see how someone organized the files before or after they complete this activity. If you have a smart board or projector, you can walk them through a demonstration.

My digital organization plan – page 1

How are you going to name your files?

What folders will you have on your desktop or home screen?

How are you grouping your files?

My digital organization plan – page 2

How are you grouping your folders?

How will you know you need a new folder?

When do you plan on re-organizing your files and folders on your computer?

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