

Get Organized Without Losing It



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Is It Time to Get Organized?

Take this quick quiz to find out.

QUICK QUIZ

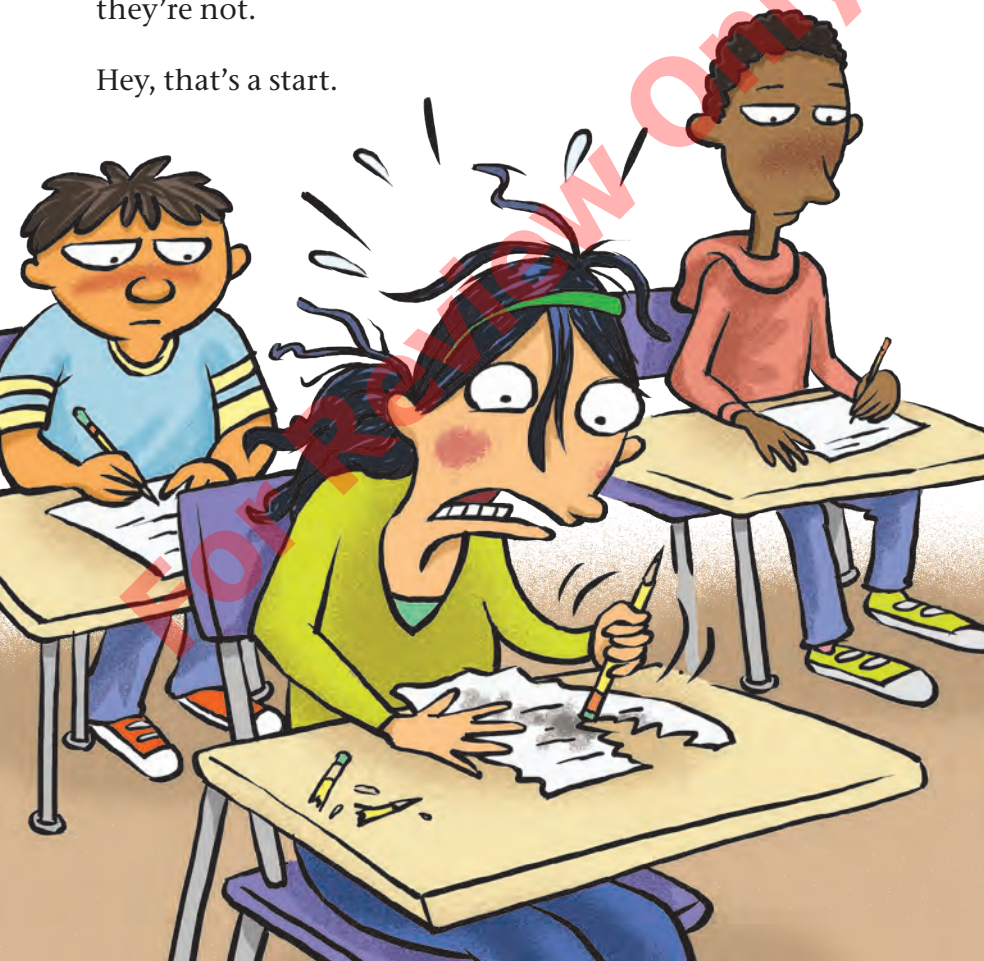
2. Do you spend tons of time looking for things you need in order to do your schoolwork or homework?
9. Do you feel like you're always running behind?
1. Is your desk at school a disaster?
6. Is your school locker a shocker?
7. Is your backpack a **black hole**?
4. Would your head fall off if it weren't fastened on?
10. Have you ever missed out on fun because your schoolwork didn't get done?
5. Are you forever losing the stuff you need in order to do your schoolwork or homework?
3. Do you wish you were more organized?
8. Are the questions on this quiz numbered in the right order?

*** Black hole:** A place in space where everything gets sucked in and disappears.

If you answered **YES** to one or more of the questions on the quiz, keep reading. Help is on the way.

If you answered **NO** to question #8, terrific! You can tell when things are organized—and when they're not.

Hey, that's a start.



Picture This

You plop down in your seat at school seconds before the bell rings. The teacher announces a pop quiz, and you search high and low for a pencil. When you finally find one, it needs sharpening, but there's no time.

During the quiz, you change your mind about the answer to question #3. But the eraser on your pencil is flat, and you rub a big black smudge on the paper. You waste time trying to fix it. When the teacher calls "Time's up!" you're still not finished with the quiz.





Then the teacher asks for yesterday's homework. You dig through your backpack, which is crammed with crumpled papers—everything but your homework.

Is it still on the kitchen table at home? Or maybe under your bed? You can't remember, and it's too late anyway. No homework means another zero.

When you get home after soccer, you watch TV for a while. Then you eat dinner, help with the dishes, and play with the dog.

About an hour before bedtime, you go into your room and dump the contents of your backpack on the floor. You realize you forgot your science book. Oh, no! There's a test tomorrow! At least you've got your class notes . . .

You reach for your binder, which is so overstuffed that it pops open and papers fly everywhere. Your science notes—when you finally find them—are illegible, and what you can read makes no sense.



You try to study for the test, but what's the use? You give up and mess around on your phone instead. When you finally go to bed, you are way too worried to sleep.

The bad news is—you probably won't do well on the test. The good news is—things don't have to be this way.

By the time the next test comes around, you can be a new person. Someone who's calm. Someone who's organized. Someone who's ready to do your best work.

TIP: Being organized does **not** mean being a total neat freak. It means spending **less** time going crazy and **more** time having fun.

Basic Tools for Getting Organized

To get organized, you don't need fancy furniture or a smartphone loaded with apps. You don't need special computer software or a tablet with built-in calendars.

You don't even need a parent who says, "Do your homework!" "What died in your backpack?" or "You're going to miss the bus AGAIN!"

What you **do** need are some basic tools. Let's start with things that will get you **to and from** school.





A sturdy backpack with proper straps, made of durable material, and having at least two compartments. Keep your everyday going-to-school stuff—house keys, wallet, calculator, folding umbrella—in the smaller compartment(s). Use the larger one(s) for your binder, folders, laptop or tablet, and books.





Some schools have rules about backpacks. Like: No solid backpacks—mesh or see-through only. No rolling backpacks—they can be a tripping hazard. (Rolling backpacks lighten the load for many kids, but some schools still won't allow them. Or they allow them but make kids carry them inside the school building . . . which kind of misses the whole point.) To make sure you don't get the wrong kind of backpack, ask your teacher or check on your school website before you buy.