Organization Skills for Middle School Students

Transform this... into THIS!
Organization

• Let’s lay out the problem.
• Our lives on a daily basis are complicated.
• The individual tasks that we need to accomplish daily can also be complicated.
• So, how do we get our individual tasks and all the tasks that we have to do completed.
• Think of our lives, with going to work and all the things that we have do when there, taking care of the many needs of our kids, running a household, paying our bills, managing our social life (if we can manage to have one), and taking care of all the unplanned things that crop up, etc.
• And, we have already went through 12 years of school, most likely another 4-8 years of college and have a lifetime of experience and advise.
Our kids have 9 periods a day, 4-5 academic subjects that they have homework, projects, tests, quizzes, and presentations. That doesn’t even address their role in their family, outside commitments like sports and dancing, etc., and let’s not forget their most important area of concern (for them), their friends and socializing. Oh yeah – social media and technology!

How do we and our kids manage our complicated, task overloaded lives? And then be successful at what we do.

We need to manage all the tasks we have to do, each individual task and the time that we have to do them in.

We need to be able to organize our lives and the tasks we have to complete.

Some of us, by our nature, are organized or can be, but most of us need to learn how to be organized.

Being organized helps us and our kids get a hold on our lives and to make our lives feel manageable and successful.
Reasons Why Adolescents Struggle with Organization

• It’s developmental – Adolescents are impulsive and think in the moment they are in, the “Here and Now”. They know the concept of long term but just cannot apply this to their life.

• They do not want to look different even if it means doing poorly in school, etc. I don’t want to be un-cool.

• They tend to not want to listen to advice, they naturally know better than we do (of course they do).

• It is rare that we will ever see our adolescent child as being as organized and motivated as we would like to see them, but we do see glimpses of these skills.

• They do not have the experience, training and practice that we have, so we cannot expect them to be as organized as we are. (We tend to just expect them to be organized and on top of their life).

• We need to help and teach them to learn and acquire these skills.
- Organization - is having some kind of structure to work from
- It’s like having a foundation for a house
- Good organizational strategies are like good foundations
- On top of which, we can build our lives
- Some of those that we will discuss today are;
  - Planners
  - Time Management
  - Graphic Organizers
  - Lists
  - Colors and fancy things
  - Ways to organize homework
- Discuss how to help your child organize and how to sell them on organizing their tasks and life
Planners

• Help keep track of what we have to do

• We can use these to prioritize when we tackle tasks

• We can check off tasks to get a feeling of progress, being done and accomplishment

• They mainly help us get some order in our lives
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<th>Monday</th>
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<td>Read Text Friday</td>
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<td>Study! Sheet</td>
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<td>Energy: The strength to do things</td>
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<td>The more you move, the more energy you will have.</td>
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<td>“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”</td>
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<td>4 Math</td>
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• E-chalk can supplement, take place of or fill in missing pieces of the planner

• Calendars can also be used as planners

• Consistency is key here

• It takes 21 days to create or break a habit

• Encourage success before setting rules and consequences

• Rewards usually promote success
Time Management

• Long term

• Daily/Weekly

• Assignment by Assignment

• This is one of the more important organization tasks to tackle
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
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<tr>
<td>ELA: Literary Elements Unit Test</td>
<td>Science &amp; Social Studies</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>ELA: Book Club Meeting 1 (Letter 1 Due)</td>
<td>SS: Native American Geography Quiz</td>
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<td><strong>Field Trip to Mountain Lakes!</strong></td>
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<td>Math 7A: Quiz</td>
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<td><strong>Math 7A: Flashcards Quiz in Math AE</strong></td>
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<td>Math 7A: Test Unit 2</td>
<td>ELA: Book Club Meeting 2 (Letter 2 Due)</td>
<td>Math 7A: Test Unit 3</td>
<td>ELA: All Summer in a Day Final Essay Due</td>
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<td>Math 7A: Quiz</td>
<td>Math 7: Test Unit 2</td>
<td>SCi: Taxonomy Unit Assessment (Day 2)</td>
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<td><strong>Please check with teachers as dates approach to make sure they have not changed</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SCI: Taxonomy Unit Assessment (Day 1)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Halloween Activity...</strong></td>
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### November 2017

#### Long Term Project Planning

<table>
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<th>Sunday</th>
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<td>Daylight Savings Time</td>
<td>Election Day</td>
<td>Research done by</td>
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<td>10 Veteran’s Day</td>
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<td>Rough draft done by</td>
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<td>Final Project Due</td>
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</table>

- **Project assigned** 1
- **Research done by** 3
- **Outline done by** 4
- **Rough draft done by** 5
- **Final Project Due** 2
- **Thanksgiving Recess**

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*Reverse Engineer*
## Daily Schedule

### Monday Homework Time:
- 3:00 p.m.
- 4:00 p.m.
- 5:00 p.m.
- 6:00 p.m.

### Tuesday Homework Time:
- 3:00 p.m.
- 4:00 p.m.
- 5:00 p.m.
- 6:00 p.m.

### Wednesday Homework Time:
- 3:00 p.m.
- 4:00 p.m.
- 5:00 p.m.
- 6:00 p.m.

### Thursday Homework Time:
- 3:00 p.m.
- 4:00 p.m.
- 5:00 p.m.
- 6:00 p.m.

### Friday Homework Time:
- 3:00 p.m.
- 4:00 p.m.
- 5:00 p.m.
- 6:00 p.m.
• When kids struggle on assignments, it’s important to limit homework to 20 – 30 minutes per subject

• If they can’t finish, or do not totally understand their homework, have them email their teacher

• For kids who struggle with attention, a timer can be beneficial to help them work for a set time then take a needed break. We can’t force kids to focus
Graphic Organizers

- Organize material that we need to know and use
- Come in an endless variety
- Every graphic organizer can be adjusted to fit a particular task or situation
- They are not rubrics. Do not box a kid into having to use them in a set way
# Noting What I’ve Learned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Subtopics:</th>
<th>What I learned:</th>
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<tbody>
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## Column Note Taking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic/Main Ideas (Recall Column)</th>
<th>Supporting Details (Note Column)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION
General Statement
Specific Statements
Thesis Statement
(sympathy or theme)

BODY PARAGRAPH 1 (sympathy)
Topic Sentence: How does McCullers create sympathy for Sucker? 
• Evidence 1: 
  o Introduce (What is going on in the story at the time of the evidence?)
  o Cite (Quote)
  o Explain (How does this help create sympathy for Sucker?)
• Evidence 2:
  o Introduce (What is going on in the story at the time of the evidence?)
  o Cite (Quote)
  o Explain (How does this help create sympathy for Sucker?)
Concluding statement

BODY PARAGRAPH 2 (theme)
Topic Sentence: What theme is conveyed by the author? 
• Evidence 1: 
  o Introduce (What is going on in the story at the time of the evidence?)
  o Cite (Quote)
  o Explain (How does this help convey the theme?)
• Evidence 2:
  o Introduce (What is going on in the story at the time of the evidence?)
  o Cite (Quote)
  o Explain (How does this help convey the theme?)
Concluding statement

CONCLUSION
Restate Thesis Statement
Specific Statements
General Statement
Lists

- Puts tasks on paper making them look black and white and doable as opposed to feeling overwhelming
- Takes the spinning we do in our minds about all we have to do and helps us see this in a concrete and finite manner
- Checking off or crossing off gives us a powerful feeling of accomplishment
- Can be used in any manner and for almost anything we are doing
- I always have a list in my pocket. (Now if I remember to look at it!)
My Daily Planner

Things to do Today!

Date: ________________

I MUST Do: 

1. ____________________________ □
2. ____________________________ □
3. ____________________________ □
4. ____________________________ □
5. ____________________________ □
6. ____________________________ □
7. ____________________________ □
8. ____________________________ □

I Want to do:

1. ____________________________ □
2. ____________________________ □
3. ____________________________ □
4. ____________________________ □
5. ____________________________ □

* List things such as homework, studying for a test, chores, lessons, reading, practicing the piano
Reminder Checklists

At Home

☐ Pack all homework, texts, and notebooks in book bag or backpack.
☐ Bring lunch or lunch money.
☐ Place any signed papers in Travel Folder.
☐ Things that need to be done before school:

☐ Eat a good breakfast.

At School

☐ Before packing to leave, check homework assignment sheet.
☐ Bring home any texts, notebooks or other materials that you will need.
☐ Ask teacher about any upcoming texts or projects (when it is due, what it covers and so on).
☐ Place in Travel Folder any notices handed out to go home.

My Reminder Checklist

☐ 
☐ 
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☐
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yard</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Misc</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Install landscape lights and sprinklers.</td>
<td>Replace deck boards.</td>
<td>Call Cassina Historical Society (41-4001) (Cassina 1965K)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Mint up by Pool.</td>
<td>Replace Deck railing.</td>
<td>Go to Cassina.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fix Broken siding.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fix decorative fence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fix Broken siding.</td>
<td>Fix Study chair.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities at house. See 3/Ep 14-2015</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

February
- Get March Painted
- Get March stained
- Get 3rd Imp. painted
- Get Driveway re-capped.
- Get Electrical box replaced.
Monday 10/29/18

• Homework
• Study for Math test
• Walk dog
• Soccer practice
• Download 3 songs
• Red shirt for school tomorrow
• Watch “The Voice”
• Math extra help
• Text Bob about lunch thing today
• Check Instagram
Color & Fancy Things

• See Jeff
• He’ll show you these
• This is the hands-on portion
• Review this system and help them determine what is working well, working okay and not working. Help them figure out the next effective system for them
• Set a time frame to do this review – weekly, biweekly, monthly
• “Columbo” approach works best
Typical homework and study routine of successful students

• Get home from school

• Take a break
  (have a snack & drink, use your phone, listen to music, watch TV or use the computer)

• Turn off I-pod, TV, computer and put your phone in another room. (make the commitment that homework is more important – School is your job)

• DO ALL HOMEWORK

• Review what was covered in each class before starting homework
  (This review should take 3-5 minutes per class, a maximum of 15-25 minutes per day. This will cut the time it takes you to do HW in each class by approximately 5 minutes and prevent any lag in getting started in class the following day and is a superb studying method. This method should increase a student’s grade in each class.)

• Study for any test(s)

• The rest of the night is free time
Ways to Organize Homework

• Having a system is key

• Consistency then makes the system automatic

• Be flexible when setting up a system and when adjusting the system (Life is not static – It’s very fluid)
Organizing our Kids

• Start with a good HW system
• Ask them about upcoming tests, what the subject is, and what they need to know
• Decide, together, on the most effective way or couple of ways to study (7 ways to study isn’t helpful)
• Review the results of HW and studying systems and make appropriate adjustments
• Communicate with teachers when you have questions – Quick short emails are most effective
• Having kids communicate with teachers puts them in the drivers seat and gets them appropriately involved and builds independance
• Have them tell you or show you
• Play “Columbo”
• It’s more powerful to let your child see the benefits to organizing
• Although walking them through ways to organize can plant a seed
• Tweak, adjust, tweak, adjust!