



Shopping for School Supplies

Shop Early

Large scale office supply stores (Staples, Office Depot, etc.) begin running low on school supplies during the last week of August. For this reason, we recommend shopping for school supplies no later than the *third week of August* so that your child has a wide selection of options, rather than only having the option to purchase what is available.

Choose a Paper Organization System Prior to Shopping

Help your child choose a paper organization system prior to going to the store. Most students consider a paper organization system to be one folder and one notebook per class. However, students have several options and should evaluate which system will work best for them. Options that we have found helpful to our students are:

- **Binder System:** This system entails using 1” binders for each class. Each binder contains the following sections: notes, handouts, homework, past quizzes and test, and miscellaneous. Students can also modify this system by purchasing 3” binders and putting two or three courses in each binder rather than one subject per binder.
- **Binder/Folder System:** Like the Binder System, the Binder/Folder System can be employed using 1” or 3” binders. The folders are 3-hole punched into the binder and act as dividers between subjects. The folders hold homework, handouts, and past quizzes and tests. Loose leaf is used for class and/or reading notes.
- **Spiral Notebook/Folder System:** This system is a typical “go to” method for students; however, we have found this method to be the least effective in terms of helping students stay organized; however, this system is still better than a backpack full of papers! The Spiral Notebook/Folder System requires purchasing one notebook for class notes and a folder for all other materials. The student should have one notebook and one folder per class.

Other Important Items to Purchase

- **Several packs of loose leaf.** It is common for students to reduce the length of written answers or not write all the steps for math problems because they are trying to “save paper.” Send the message that they can use as much paper as they need by having lots of loose leaf paper available.
- **Graph paper.** Students in Algebra I, II and Pre-Calculus who have graph paper on hand tend to develop stronger graphing skills.

- **Many, many pens and pencils w/erasers.** This piece of advice may go unsaid, but some students look for excuses to delay completing homework, and not being able to find a pen is one of them! Also, make sure students have erasers. Students often submit messy homework because they do not have an eraser.
- **Stapler.** Make sure your child has his or her own stapler. Staplers ensure that all pages of homework assignments are submitted.
- **Three-hole punch.** A three-hole punch is an essential item for the student aiming for stellar organization. Access to a three-hole punch allows them to organize papers into binders, rather than stuffing handouts, worksheets, etc. into spiral notebooks or an overstuffed folder.

A Word on Purchasing a Planner

We have found that the most successful students are those who use planners rather than relying solely on Moodle or a smartphone to keep track of assignments and other responsibilities. Prior to purchasing a planner for your child, discuss which type of format he or she would prefer or peruse the planner aisle and discuss the pros and cons of each type.

By way of recommendation, we have found that students find the *Day/Subject* format very useful. This format allows the student to see his or her responsibilities throughout the week, which reduces “surprise” tests and quizzes and encourages planning. An example of this format is:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat/Sun
History						
Math						
Science						
English						
Spanish						
Other						