

Creating My Story: Lesson Six – Organized for Success

Guiding Question:

How will being organized help me as I write my life story and plan for my future goals?

Short Summary Of Lesson

In this lesson, students will discuss the concept of being organized and how important it is in life. They will be taught how to organize a notebook for school and keep it organized in order to better locate homework, study guides, vocabulary lists, etc.

Lesson Goals

Students will understand that keeping materials organized is a first step towards success in high school and college.

Skills Emphasized

- Analyzing organizational patterns
- Organizing materials

Materials Needed

- Photos of Indian villages
- 3-ring binders
- colored dividers
- folders
- notebook paper
- A Weekly Assignment Sheet
- Notebook Grading Rubric

Lesson Design

Display the historical photos of Indian villages from Alaska and Washington. Ask students to observe and analyze the photos by asking questions such as the following:

What do you notice in these pictures?

Why do you think these villages came to be where they are?

What is similar across the photos? What is unique?

Why do you think these people organized their villages the way they did?

The idea behind the discussion is that all things have an underlying organization and order, and that organization makes life easier and more efficient. People may create different systems to stay organized, but any system shares this same purpose. Make the connection to students' lives by discussing how their homes are organized, how the classroom is organized, how they organize their desks, etc.

Hand out the notebooks, dividers, paper, and folders. (Alternately, these may already be on student supply list, in which case the students would be asked to pull all these materials ahead of time.)

Explain that just like the villages in the photos, students will function better if their notebook is organized and ready to go each day. Then, model the following:

1. Label the divider tabs with their class titles, one for each class and put them in the binder in chronological order.
2. Behind each tab, place notebook paper and (optional) course outlines/grading procedures.
3. In front of the notebook, a folder will be placed and labeled “finished work” or “to be turned in”.
4. In front of the folder, will be placed the Weekly Assignment Sheet.
5. In the very front of the notebook, will be a pouch for pens, sharpened pencils, erasers, and other small class supplies.

After all notebooks are organized, ask students to quickly locate a few things in their binders. Example: “Everyone turn to language arts”, “As quickly as you can, pull out a sharpened pencil and hold it up for me to see,” etc.

Teacher Note:

Probably the most important parts of this notebook will be the Weekly Assignment Sheet and the Finished Work Folder. A common issue among middle school students is turning their work in after it has been completed. Reinforce the idea that ALL finished work regardless of the class will go in this folder. In this way, students can always locate their finished work quickly and won’t be able to do anything in their notebook without seeing that folder in the very front as a reminder.

Hand out Notebook Grading Rubrics and explain that students will be graded on a weekly basis (or other convenient schedule) on the neatness and completeness of the notebook.

Explain that periodically (and unannounced), they will be playing “Notebook Scramble”. This is a scavenger hunt game similar to what was played earlier, where students locate certain assignments in their binders. Rewards (whatever reward system is in place for the classroom) may be given for those who can find assignments the quickest.

Students can take ownership of their binders by decorating the covers at home in a way that represents them (insert appropriateness discussion here if needed ☺).