

The Three Ring Binder Concept

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Why Use A Three Ring Binder?

How can a three ring binder help with education?

Learning how to use a three ring binder to organize work is a life skill that helps in education as well as in the workplace. People need to know how to organize their work so that it can be retrieved later for revision or study. Having tabs to separate and name the different sections in a notebook improves the effectiveness of using a three ring binder. Just filling a three ring binder with paper doesn't do the trick. There has to be a place to put the completed homework, the tests, quizzes, and notes for future reference. Some people don't even know that studying a corrected test or quiz can improve their chances of getting a better grade in a class.

Reviewing tests and quizzes after they are graded helps the student learn what is most important to the teacher. This includes knowing how many points are deducted for certain mistakes, learning whether partial work gets partial credit, learning how messy writing and workspace can lower a grade and even what a teacher really likes to see. Reading comments left by a teacher on a test or quiz teaches a student about their teacher as well as their own weaknesses. Some students don't look at the graded tests or quizzes and mistakenly think they understand the concepts. If there is a section where the student thought he or she understood how to answer correctly and the question was marked incorrect, then the student should ask why the test or quiz was marked the way it was. This could result in added points to a grade or it could result in the student learning a crucial concept that will improve future test and quiz grades.

Some students don't turn in all of their homework. Students don't always know how important turning in their assignments is. Some students have a lack of organizational skills which results in lower grades for simple things such as doing the assignment and not turning it into the teacher. By having a section for homework and keeping track of the homework assignments as they are assigned, students can learn how to help themselves by having a record of what is due as well as a record of what has been returned from the teacher. Keeping track of this can help in any grade disputes if there is a mistake in the teacher's grade book or knowing why a student's grade has slipped by seeing homework grades on a cover page.

Some students see no need to ever go back to look at notes taken in class. Some students see no point in taking notes in class in the first place. By having a notes section in a notebook, the student is reminded to take notes and where they go when the note taking session is completed. When the student goes to do homework assignments, the note section of the binder also serves as a reminder of where to get help to complete the homework. Some students take notes, but see no relationship between the notes taken in class and the completion of homework assignments. Just breaking through this barrier can improve note taking skills as well as improve the overall grade for the class.

There are students who do not see a purpose to keeping handouts from the teacher. These are photocopied pieces of paper that represent gold in a student's grade. These handouts include special materials prepared by that teacher to supplement the textbook or they have been gathered from other sources over the year as best known practices for teaching individual concepts. Some of them are even useful in creating flash cards to study the most important concepts for that class. Some of them are opportunities for extra credit in a class. Some of them are the explanations of how to do major assignments which can make or break a student's grade for the overall class.

I have included some resources which can be used to help students stay on track with their homework, notes, and improve their overall grade in each of their classes. Please take the time to review what has been collected to see if it can improve grades and thus improve the level of education which is being presented. Some students don't see the point in education and see no use for it later in life. Teaching a student how to get organized and how to stay organized is one skill that will carry over into other things in his or her life and will be seen as something to take into the workplace in the future.

Supplies Needed For Notebook Organization

What should a notebook contain? How can a student use a notebook to excel in school?

What is a three ring binder without the stuff to include inside? Some people miss the concept of using a three ring binder by not using some of the organizational tools that are needed to actually make it effective. By not including some of the supplies listed below, the student may find time wasted by flipping through countless pieces of paper just to find their notes or homework assignments. This could result in missed instructions or homework not turned in when it is completed.

A hole punch for a three ring binder with the three holes aligned to fit the notebook can make all the difference in the world. If a student has handouts or tests/quizzes that are not pre punched with the three holes to fit into the three ring binder, then they have the risk of being lost or falling by the wayside just because the student is missing this essential tool. Having unpunched pieces of paper can make the student feel they are unorganized and result in less than a good attitude towards school and their subjects in general. Once all pages are assembled with the three holes, the student feels relieved and more organized and more ready to succeed in school.

A pocket for keeping loose handouts, tests and quizzes until they are three hole punched is also essential. If there isn't a place for the student to gather these important pieces of paper, then they might never get their three holes punched and might never be collected in the three ring binder at all. This results in a less than desired effect of the use of the three ring binder in the first place. One of the main reasons for having the three ring binder is so that valuable teaching resources are not lost. If there is no pocket in the binder itself, then there are pockets to be purchased at an office supply store which slip into the three rings and can easily be found when opening the binder.

Section dividers are also essential to a well organized notebook. The type of section dividers to be used depends on the use of the three ring binder. There might be times when an alphabetical division may be useful. Most school uses for the three ring binder fall into two different categories. There is the use of one binder for all courses, which might be useful for an elementary school student portfolio of work completed over the school year to be kept by the parent and brought to parent/teacher conferences. Or there is also the individual notebook for each course which is useful in a middle school, high school or college setting where each class has a different teacher and therefore a different set of expectations. For these two situations, it is helpful to purchase the section dividers that have tabs with replaceable titles. The titles would either be filled with the different subjects or they would be filled with titles such as homework, tests/quizzes, handouts, and notes.

A zippered pouch with three rings to fit into the front of the three ring binder is a really nice item to include in the notebook for use by the student in class. Having pencils, pens, highlighters, an eraser, a small ruler, 3 x 5 cards for flash card creation and perhaps a small calculator can make all the difference in the world when it comes to arriving to class prepared. Teachers do not like to wait for people to borrow these items from those around them when they should have brought them to class on their own in the first place. This is a difference from elementary school where these supplies are often provided by the teacher in class. Some teachers even give supply lists for use in their classes to ensure student readiness.

Creativity can also help a student achieve higher grades in class. Even the best prepared notebook can be of no use at all if the student doesn't bring it to class or feels embarrassed about carrying it around with them at school. It might even get left behind in the locker at school, rather than bringing it home to use for doing homework assignments. Encourage the student to decorate the cover and even the section dividers. Pasting pictures or drawing artwork (which could look like graffiti to some adults) can free up the student to show off their skills in the art arena which will help the notebook show up to class with the student as well as help the notebook show up at home where more artwork could be added to it. In either case, the notebook becomes part of the student life and therefore has a better chance of being used for its intended purpose. At least the tutor, teacher or parent could actually catch sight of the well organized notebook to encourage its use in the different educational settings at home and at school.

Binder paper is probably the most important item to be included in the three ring notebook. There needs to be sufficient blank binder paper in the back of the binder so that pages can be easily found to write notes in class and to complete homework at home or in class. For some classes, graph paper is also useful. Three ring binder paper and three ring graph paper are both available at office supply stores. Please encourage students to actually open up the rings in their binder to remove the paper. Turning in homework that does not have ripped edges makes the teacher happier to grade the assignments. It also makes it easier for the student to place the graded homework assignments and completed notes back into the binder for future reference.

An assignment list is also very useful in a three ring binder. Having a consistent place where homework assignments are written down with due dates and grades assigned to returned assignments can help the student stay organized and on top of assignments which are key to survival in today's classroom. Just encouraging the student to write down the assignments will actually increase the likelihood of the assignments getting completed and even turned in to the teacher. If there is a missing grade for a homework assignment, then this could be an opportunity for the student to make sure the teacher received and graded the assignment. It can also serve as a reminder to the student that missed homework assignments lowers his or her grade. With this level of organization and documentation, the student might also get the opportunity to turn in late assignments for credit which can make the difference between different letter grades in the overall class grade.

A person to check whether the binder is being properly used. Yes, this person could be the student, but this is also an easy opportunity for a tutor, teacher, or parent to step into the educational life and assist in the organizational process. Organizational skills are taught and learned. They do not happen at birth and may need some coaching to help the student grow his or her organizational skills into useful, lifelong skills to help in school and the workplace.

What is the cost of setting up a well organized notebook? Well, it could be as much as ten to fifteen dollars to set up a notebook for use in class. But the real question is: What is the cost of not spending the money to set up a well organized notebook? If students are consistently unprepared in class and consistently miss homework assignments or do not fully understand what the homework assignments are when they sit down to complete them, then the student grade is suffering and their level of education is being dropped with each day of disorganization and unpreparedness. It is hard to encourage organization when the organization tools are missing. Asking for too much to be spent on organization just results in no use of the tools at all. Keep the cost reasonable and the tools useful.

Tabs for Content Areas

Homework	Tests	Quizzes	Notes	Handouts
English	Math	Algebra	Geometry	Trigonometry
Statistics	Calculus	Spanish	French	German
Latin	Science	Earth Science	Biology	Phys Science
Chemistry	Physics	History	US History	World Hist
Geography	Economics	Government	PE	Music
Art	Health	Driver Ed		

