

# Teacher's Edition

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Go through the **Table of Contents**. Discuss how getting good grades is about more than being smart or studying hard. It's also about having a good attitude, being organized, getting along with teachers, asking for help, etc.

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## Step 1

### Believe in Yourself

*To succeed, you must first believe that you can.*

In order for you to succeed, you have to believe in yourself and in your abilities. Here's a little story to show how important it is to believe in yourself.

Read this page aloud and discuss the importance of believing in yourself.

*Two students are getting ready to race against each other. They are the same size and they run about the same speed. Everyone thinks that it will be an exciting race.*



*The first student runs out to the starting line. He looks confident. The people nearby hear him say, "I'm ready. I can win this."*

Ask students to think of the people in their lives who help them believe in themselves.

*The second student appears. He slowly walks to the starting line. His head is down. He mumbles to himself, "I know I'm gonna lose."*

Who are they?

What do they do that's helpful?

*Two students - same size - same abilities. Even before the race starts, everyone knows who is going to win!*

Do students ever thank these people for their help?

Whether you are a runner preparing for a race or a student trying to understand a difficult subject, it's important to believe in yourself. *Believe in your talents and abilities - and believe that you can succeed!*

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## Step 2

### Be Organized

Before reading this section, ask students how they keep track of their assignments. How well do these methods work?

If your students use student planners, go over how to use a planner correctly.

Take a large assignment, and as a group, figure out how to break it down into several smaller assignments.

Check student planners at the end of the week. Give extra credit points if planners are completed correctly. Do this for several weeks to help students get in the habit of using their planners.

*Do you always know what homework you have? Do you waste time looking for things? To be a good student, you must be organized. This section will give you some great ideas on how you can be more organized.*

### Use a Student Planner or Assignment Notebook

A student planner or assignment notebook will help you keep track of your homework. When your teacher gives you an assignment, write it below the date it's given. Also write down the date it's due.



When you finish an assignment, check it off. *Be sure to bring your planner to school every day and take it home each night.*

Use your student planner to break large assignments down into smaller parts. For example, if you have an English paper due at the end of the week, you could break it down into these four parts.

- Mon. - Get books at library
- Tues. - Create an outline
- Wed. - Write first draft
- Thurs. - Write final copy

*“I look at my student planner at the end of each day. It reminds me which books I need to take home.” Maria*

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## Use Folders for Schoolwork

Use a different color pocket folder for each subject (math, science, etc.). Keep the handouts and the assignments you're working on in one side of the folder. Put all returned homework papers and tests in the other side.

When a folder starts to get full, take out the old handouts and the returned papers. Throw out the papers you don't need and put the rest in a safe place at home.

*"I write down all my homework and test grades in the front of my folders. That way I always know how I am doing in all of my classes." Kate*

Have samples of different color pocket folders. Show how these folders can be used to keep papers, tests, and assignments organized.

Discuss ways that students can keep track of the grades they receive in each class (e.g., record them on the inside front covers of their class folders).

## Keep Your Desk and Backpack Neat

Never put loose homework, worksheets, or handouts in your desk or backpack. Always put these papers in the correct folders.

Keep your desk and backpack neat and clean. Things will be much easier to find!



Set time aside at the end of each grading period to clean and organize desks and backpacks.

## Get Organized Before You Go to Bed

Before you go to bed, get everything organized for the next day. Put your backpack and anything else that you will need in the same place each night. If there is something you need to remember to do in the morning, leave yourself a note.

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## Step 3

### Manage Your Time Well

Ask students if they've ever had too much to do and not enough time. How did they get in that situation?

*If you manage your time wisely, you can finish everything you have to do - and still have time for the things you want to do.*

Ask students to think about when they study best.

### Use Class Time Wisely

Always use the time your teacher gives you in class to start on your homework, ask questions, or get help.

Have students make up a "schedule" for the week. *You can download a weekly schedule form at [www.woodburnpress.com/schedule.pdf](http://www.woodburnpress.com/schedule.pdf).*

### Create a Study Plan

Some students study best at night. Others like to study earlier in the day. Many students also have activities and sports that they need to work around.



At the end of each school day, look at how much homework you have. Then make a study plan.

For example:

- 3:00 – 5:00 Baseball practice
- 5:00 – 6:00 Do math homework
- 6:00 – 7:00 Dinner
- 7:00 – 8:00 Study for science test

Ask students to identify things that have interrupted their studying in the past. Write these on the board and brainstorm ways that students can prevent these kinds of interruptions in the future.

Think of anything that might interrupt your study plan. Then figure out how to avoid it.

*"I can't watch TV until I have all of my homework done. If I do, my homework probably won't get done." John*

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## Step 4

### Be Successful in Class

*If you follow the advice in this section, you'll enjoy school more. You will also get better grades.*

#### Be in School, on Time, Every Day

When you miss school, you miss assignments, class discussions, notes, class projects, quizzes, and tests. You can never make up all of what you miss. *To get good grades, you must be in school every day.*

Unless you have a long illness or a health problem, you should miss no more than a few days of school each year.

Tell students that the biggest factor in school success is attendance.

Make a list of reasons why students miss school. Decide which ones are valid and which are invalid.

#### Be Prepared for Each Subject

Have everything you need with you when class begins (textbook, paper, pencils). *Also have all of your homework completed.*

When you have your homework done, you get much more out of your classes. Class discussions make more sense, and you can ask and answer questions. If you haven't done your homework, you may not even understand the class discussion.

Of course, being prepared also means that you come to school well rested and ready to learn.



Ask students how not having their homework done affects their school day.

Do students feel that eating right, exercising, and getting enough sleep affects their school performance in any way?

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## Pay Attention in Class

It's important to pay attention and stay focused in your classes. When you don't pay attention, you miss out on important information. Not paying attention in class makes it difficult to do well in school - and more difficult to get good grades.

Have one or more students come up to the front of the room for awhile to find out just how easy it is to see what's going on in the classroom.

You may not realize it, but when teachers are up in front of a classroom, they can see everything. They know who is paying attention, who is doing their work, and who is listening to the class discussion. They also know who is writing personal notes, talking to their neighbor, or daydreaming. If you do any of these things, your teachers will know.

Ask students to keep track of how much time they spend doing homework for 2 or 3 days. Tell students to only count the time they are actually doing homework. (Break time and time spent talking on the phone or texting shouldn't be counted.)

Ask students to also keep track of how much time they spend doing a favorite leisure activity (watching TV, playing video games, "chatting" with friends online, etc.). At the end of the 2 or 3 days, compare these numbers.

It's not enough to say that you want to get good grades. Your attitude and actions have to show it also.

## Always Do Your Homework

Don't think of homework as something you should do. Think of homework as something you *must* do.



Much of your grade is based on how well you do your homework. *This means that your grade drops every time you don't turn in an assignment.* Your grade also drops when you hurry through your homework and don't do your best.

Doing your homework not only helps you get better grades, it makes you a better, smarter student.

*"If you don't do your homework, it kills your grade." Greg*

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## Participate in Class

When you participate in class, the class becomes more interesting and the time goes much faster. Asking and answering questions also helps you pay attention. Many teachers give participation points, so participating in class can also help you get a better grade.

## Be a Good Group Member

It is important to know how to work well in a group. Whenever you are involved in a group project or activity, be sure that you do the following.

- ▶ Do your share of the work, and do it well.
- ▶ Listen to other people's ideas.
- ▶ Have a positive attitude.
- ▶ Work together with the other group members.

Ask students how they feel about doing group projects. Have them think of reasons why teachers assign group projects.

## Treat Others With Respect

Treat your teachers and classmates the same way that you want to be treated. Be polite, look at your teachers when they're speaking, and listen when others are talking. Also, be aware of your tone of voice. The same words in a different tone of voice can give a different message.

Remember that teachers are people too. They like it when students show an interest in them. If your teacher has been out ill, a simple comment such as, "*I hope you're feeling better*" can brighten your teacher's day.

Discuss how courteous the students in your school are to teachers and to each other.