

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

HOW TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL: Getting And Staying Organized

By: *M. Louise Walters, PhD ABD*

To a large extent, success in school is a matter of getting - and staying - organized. Whether you're taking one course or four, and regardless whether the course is delivered on-ground, on-line or in hybrid form, the trick is to separate each course in to its own 'world.' Here's how:

SUPPLIES

1. One 3-ring binder at least 2" thick for each course. Select a different cover color for each course.
2. One set of tabbed colored divider pages for each binder (the multi colored ones are easiest to read). Many courses have 15 units or less, so you can place the material for each unit behind the corresponding numbered tab. If the course covers more than 15 chapters, place a second set (set B) of dividers behind the first set (set A) or use a divider set that has more sections.
3. A letter-size writing tablet for the back pocket of the binder. If your binders don't have pockets, 3-hole punch 10 - 15 sheets of writing or copy paper and place the paper behind the very last tabbed divider.
4. A 3-hole paper punch.

ORGANIZATION

1. Place the course syllabus and any 'getting started' or 'introduction' or 'welcome' information in front of the first divider.
2. After the first divider, insert unit 1's instructor / unit information followed by any attachments or other unit materials.
3. As you complete and file an assignment, make a copy and place it in front of the unit's material.

MAKING / TAKING / FILING NOTES

Be methodical. Write notes in complete sentences. Banish poor handwriting - if it's difficult to read when you're writing, it will likely be impossible to read when you're preparing for an exam. For each unit, put the course name, date and unit number at the top of each page of notes. Number each successive page (for example, 13-4 would be the 4th page of your notes for unit 13). Place notes at the back of each unit.

RECYCLE

Congrats - you made it through the course. Now, remove all your material from the binder (leave the dividers). Ensure the syllabus is on top and put all those 'pearls of wisdom' in a file folder bearing the course code, course name and year. File in a 'bankers box' by year, or file by alpha course name or course number.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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