

My Essential Classroom Items

Here's an Essential Classroom Items list that teachers can tweak to their individual needs. (NOTE: Some word processors will allow you to follow the website links.)

- Highly desirable: a class website to efficiently, effectively communicate with students and parents (www.gradebookwizard.com has a nice one, and <http://teacher.scholastic.com/homepagebuilder/index.htm> and www.schoolrack.com have free ones).
- Highly, highly, highly desirable: **[Scholastic's Instant Desktop Organizer](#)** (click the product name to preview it at www.amazon.com). Of course, you could easily make this product.

This product contains the following folder labels:

- Do Today
- Do Tomorrow
- Read Later
- Take To Office
- Take To Meetings
- 5 other important labels
- Blank labels for the teacher to customize

NOTE: ***If you have this product, you may not need some of the other organizational tools below, such as the stackable In and Out trays, etc.***

- First-day script
- First-day PowerPoint to introduce yourself to the students
- Student Welcome Letter with supply list included
- Parent Welcome Letter or Class Handbook with a contact information /

signature sheet that you will file into the Huge Binder of Student Information as you receive them

- Gradebook plus gradebook software (the district usually provides the software)
- A physical backup of your electronic gradebook (**NOTE: A manila file folder with all grading slips stapled inside one on top of the other can function as a physical backup to your electronic gradebook.**)
- Lesson plan book (and optionally lesson plan software for storage and reuse)
- Substitute folder with information and assignments (including enough dittos for all of your students)
- Emergency lesson plan folder with information and assignments (including enough dittos for all of your students)
- **Transparency seating chart(s) with names from your roster(s) written in**
- **Behavior assignment folder with pre-made assignments within (NOTE: LouAnne Johnson has excellent procedures for this in her book Teaching Outside the Box.)**
- **Pre-filled out referral forms just lacking the student name (Again, see LouAnne Johnson's book Teaching Outside the Box.)**
- Blue assignment collector/protector from www.callowayhouse.com
- **Three (3)** binders that are 3.5-inch to 4-inch in width: **one Huge Binder of Student Information** to hold a sheet protector per student; **one SCHOOL DOCUMENTS binder** to collect every needed booklet, paper, etc. the district gives you; and **one binder to collect your lesson plans** and related documents so that life is easier each subsequent year that you teach
- 2 stackable trays for your teacher desk: an IN tray and an OUT tray that hold school-related but non-student-related papers
- Office supplies for your desk
- Large calendar beneath a clear mat
- Pocket calendar that travels with you everywhere (school to purse or car) or a time management gadget
- Drawer organizer for your desk (to hold paperclips, pens, etc.)

- Many letter-sized file folders
- A file cabinet OR a cube that holds hanging files to file the year's lesson materials by week (Wal-Mart has such cubes). Please see the Lesson Planning Procedure information below for details.

- 2 sheet protectors per student (1 of these will go into the Huge Binder of Student Information; the other is for creating makeshift whiteboards and is best if heavy duty, but doesn't have to be)
- 1 sheet of cardstock per student to go into the heavy duty sheet protector to form a "whiteboard" the students can own and *keep* (that you therefore don't have to manage—whew!)
- Classroom set of socks as "dry erasers" or small cloths as dry erasers or specially made tiny individual whiteboard erasers
- Classroom set of 35-40 dry erase markers *that you only use under special circumstances* (e.g. emergency lesson plan change); **NOTE: It is better at the beginning of the year to list a whiteboard marker on the student supply list than for the teacher to supply a classroom set for student use all year long. Supplying a classroom set all year can really get expensive.**

- Grading slips form (Word document available at <http://www.classwithsanderson.com>)
- Easy-access benchmark data holder, which is 1 legal-sized file folder per class (or per subject) plus tiny sticky tabs (1 per student)
- Two make-up work folders or large manila envelopes PER DIFFERENT PREP that you teach . . . one manila envelope for the CURRENT WEEK'S WORK and one envelope for the PREVIOUS WEEK'S WORK (please see my website for a video clip demonstration and for a modifiable agenda form to attach to the makeup work envelopes)
- A box to collect unused makeup work for the year
- Overhead timer (to view, search <http://www.callowayhouse.com>)
- Yacker Tracker (to view, search <http://www.callowayhouse.com>)

Wish List Items

Wish list item: Gradecam hardware and software that allows the teacher to grade student papers (and record the grades into a gradebook) by scanning the papers under a special camera

OR

Individual classroom scanner to be used with student scantron forms

Wish list item: Technology that turns *any* whiteboard into an interactive whiteboard

Details About Select Classroom Items

About the gradebook and lesson plan book: These are legal documents. Some schools require a physical back-up copy, whether you have a computerized version or not. Some schools require that you take your physical copy outside with you in case of a fire drill, evacuation, etc.

About the emergency lesson plans: These are backup plans for your use only, that have nothing to do with the substitute. These are the plans that give you peace of mind just in case a lesson is bombing, or you have an emergency and can't quite prepare for class, or the photocopy machines at school go out of service or become restricted, etc.

About the Huge Binder of Student Information: This is the binder that will save your life during parent-teacher conferences. Build this binder by placing a sheet protector per student into a large binder. Place a sheet with each student's name at the top into each sheet protector. As the parent-student signature sheets from your parent welcome letter or class or team handbook come in, file them behind the student name page so that you can see it from the back. As you collect documents for each student (health-related information, copies of referrals, pink slips signed in lieu of submitting work, behavior assignments the student had

to complete, etc.), place them in the student's sheet protector between the name page and the signature page. * **The front pocket of the binder can contain parent conference recoding forms and a manila folder of stapled in, recorded grading slips as a physical backup of your electronic gradebook. The back pocket can hold the legal-sized manila folder(s) of benchmark data on sticky tabs (please see related information below).**

About the File or Cube of Hanging Files for to use in a Lesson Planning Procedure:

Procedure: Getting Lesson Plans Written and Submitted on Time in a Way that Makes it Exponentially Easier for Next Year (if your school doesn't adopt a new curriculum the next year!—smile)

1. Use a file cabinet or purchase a portable filing cube that can hold hanging files, such as the one Wal-Mart sells.
2. Purchase 40 hanging files and 40 manila file folders.
3. Label the manila files, "Week 1 Lesson Materials" . . . "Week 2 Lesson Materials" etc. You might want to also label them by 1st 6 weeks, 2nd 6 weeks, or 1st Quarter, 2nd Quarter, etc.
4. Drop a copy of your intended assignments for that week into that week's folder. Include handouts, notes, worksheets, quizzes, tests, etc. Your textbook might guide you on assignments to select. Get a few weeks ahead if you can. You can always re-file assignments into a previous or subsequent week later on.
5. When it comes time to write your lesson plans, take out the week's folder and write your plans based on the documents there. Hopefully this will make it easier. **Backwards design the student learning activities from the quizzes and tests you've placed there.**
6. Try to type your lesson plans so that next year you are largely just tweaking and improving saved lesson plans. There is lesson planning software for this. Try to have a schedule for writing your weekly plans: For example, perhaps on Monday you'll write Monday's and Tuesday's plans, on Tuesday you'll write Wednesday's and Thursday's plans, on Thursday you'll write

Friday's plans and photocopy all dittos needed for the upcoming week (or the week after if you've gotten ahead!). Then on Friday you can elect to walk out the door, grade, etc.

7. Once your weekly lesson plan is written, make 3 copies: Drop one in the front of the manila file folder, file one in a binder you label something like, "Lesson Plan Binder Year _____," and submit the third copy to the principal, secretary, or to whomever accepts your lesson plans at your school.

About the per class legal-sized file folder with tiny sticky tabs (one per student): Software can handle this, but sometimes it's good to also process certain information by hand. If your school/district frequently benchmarks for state standardized tests, this will help you deal with the data in a simplified, easy-access way. For each class, take a legal-sized file folder. While it is closed, fold it into thirds. Open it up to see 6 boxes formed (3 sections on the top and 3 on the bottom.) Label the sections by intervals of test scores (for example, Level I at 100% - 93%, Level II at 92% - 83%, Level III at 82% - 75%, Level IV at 74% - 70%, Level V at 69% - 60%, and Level VI at 59% and below). Using the test result data your principal or department head eventually gives you, look up each student's benchmark score. Record the student's name and score on the tiny sticky tab, leaving plenty of room to record subsequent benchmark scores. Place the student's tiny sticky tab in the appropriate box on the legal-sized file folder. Complete this process for all students in that class. If you teach more than one subject, make a different file folder for that subject for the class. Also, make a different file folder for each additional period that you teach. After the next benchmark, open the file folders and record each student's latest benchmark score for that subject on their SAME sticky tab—just below the student's last benchmark score. Now there should 2 benchmark scores on each student's sticky tab. Now place the sticky tabs in the appropriate section according to the latest benchmark score.

About the make-shift whiteboards (which are more valuable in classrooms without interactive electronic technology, like Smartboards): Remember how in the olden days the teacher had the students demonstrate mastery of the lesson at the board right after the lesson? Know each student's

understanding of the lesson before the class period is up by using **makeshift whiteboards**. These individualized student whiteboards make this process more private and efficient.

You can have the students slide classroom sets of a worksheet into the make-shift whiteboard. You can have the students use the makeshift whiteboards in conjunction with a class game or subject-related bingo, etc.

I have commercial individualized whiteboards, but I like to give each student their own personal make-shift whiteboard so that I don't have to pass out and collect them every time we use them. It's also a good idea to have students buy and use their own whiteboard markers, otherwise, the expense of the markers for you as a teacher can skyrocket. The whiteboard marker can be added to the student supply list at the beginning of the year. Students who can't get one can buy one from you, and you can donate one to students who can't afford one.

Additionally, you can create a classroom set by purchasing an extra 40 heavy-duty sheet protectors and placing cardstock inside. This classroom set can be available in case of emergency, e.g. the photocopier is down, the school extends the period by 30 minutes, etc.