

## 1

## LESSON

# Organizing Your Study Space

## Set the Stage



**I**t takes a lot of work to put on a play. Before opening night, the stage must be set, with the right scenery and props in place. Then the action can begin! Knowing how to set the stage can help you with homework, too. To study efficiently, you need to prepare the setting and props that are right for you. Doing homework in the same place every day will help you improve your study skills—and make you a homework star!

*Set the stage for successful study by organizing your study space.*

## Where Do You Stand?

Begin the task of designing a setting for homework success. Think about your study space. What is it like? Put a check mark next to each statement that describes the place where you usually do homework.

- I study in the kitchen or dining room.
- I study in the living room or family room.
- I study in my bedroom.
- I study on the porch, the deck, or outside.
- I study at a desk.
- I study anywhere in the house.
- I study in the bus, the subway, or the car.
- I study at the library or at an after-school center.
- I study with the television, radio, or stereo on.
- I study with other people in the room.
- I study alone.

## Plan Your Ideal Study Space

An ideal study space is a place you can use regularly. It is a place where you can keep handy the things you need for studying. If you could have the ideal study space, what would you want? Write 1, 2, or 3 to show your preferences.

- 1—really important
- 2—nice, but not necessary
- 3—not important at all

- \_\_\_ Quiet with no distractions such as television or people talking
- \_\_\_ Good lighting that doesn't strain my eyes or cast dark shadows
- \_\_\_ An uncluttered space so I can spread out my books and papers
- \_\_\_ A sturdy chair the correct height for my desk or table, with a back for support
- \_\_\_ Bookshelves for keeping reference books such as a dictionary
- \_\_\_ Drawers, files, or boxes to keep notes, papers, and tests organized
- \_\_\_ A bulletin board or wall space where I can post homework assignments, schedules, and important reminders

## Put Your Plan Into Action

Most people can't have the ideal study space. But most people can improve the space they have. Complete the sentence to tell how you can improve your study space.

I can improve my study space by \_\_\_\_\_

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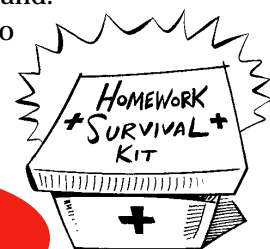
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## Plan a Homework Survival Kit

Imagine yourself working on a social studies project. It's taken a long time, and you're glad it's almost done. Then you realize you don't have the markers you need to draw a map. You'll have to stop working and find them. Will you ever finish this project?

When you can easily find what you need, you will study more efficiently. You can use the time you once spent looking for things to do other activities you enjoy.

With a partner, discuss the homework supplies listed below and circle the items you think are most useful to have on hand. Also discuss where you might go to borrow the items you need less often.



### HOMEWORK SUPPLIES

- pencils
- pens
- erasers
- colored pencils, crayons, or markers
- pencil sharpener
- tape
- scissors
- paper clips
- stapler and staples
- lined writing paper
- graph paper
- index cards
- correction fluid
- hole punch
- ruler
- dictionary
- highlighting pens
- self-stick notes
- calculator
- scrap paper

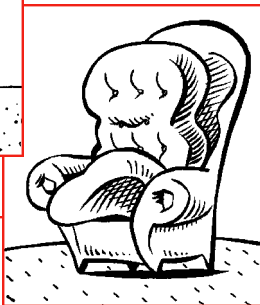
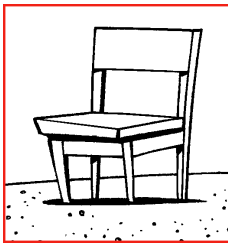
# Five Ways to Improve Your Study Space

1

## Sit on It

Just like Goldilocks, you need to find a chair that's just right for you—not too hard and not too soft. If your study chair is uncomfortable, you won't be able to concentrate. If it's too comfortable, you may daydream or fall asleep. Once you've found the perfect chair for you, use it every time you sit down to do your homework.

Then look for other ways to make your study space more comfortable. Avoid drafts or keep a sweater handy. Rearrange your position or a lamp so lack of light doesn't strain your eyes and make them tire quickly. Just make sure you don't get too comfortable!



2

## File It

Keeping a file folder for each class can help you get organized and stay organized. In each file, place the papers you save to study for tests, such as old tests and homework assignments. Keep stories and research papers you've written. You may also want to save interesting newspaper or magazine articles about topics you're studying in class. Store the file folders in a drawer, cabinet, or box.

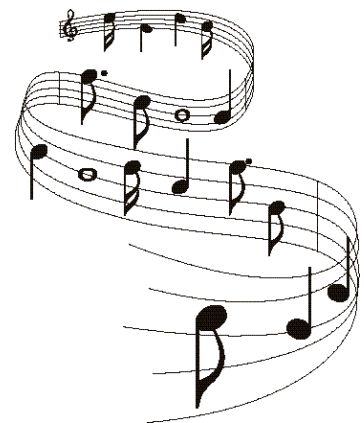


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## Turn It Off (Or On!)

Do you think you study better with music in the background? Or do you think music keeps you from concentrating? The effect of background music on learning may depend on your own personal learning style. Research shows that many people concentrate better with less noise. Other people find that music, especially classical music, helps them focus on their task. Background noises from television and people talking are likely to be distracting no matter what your learning style is.

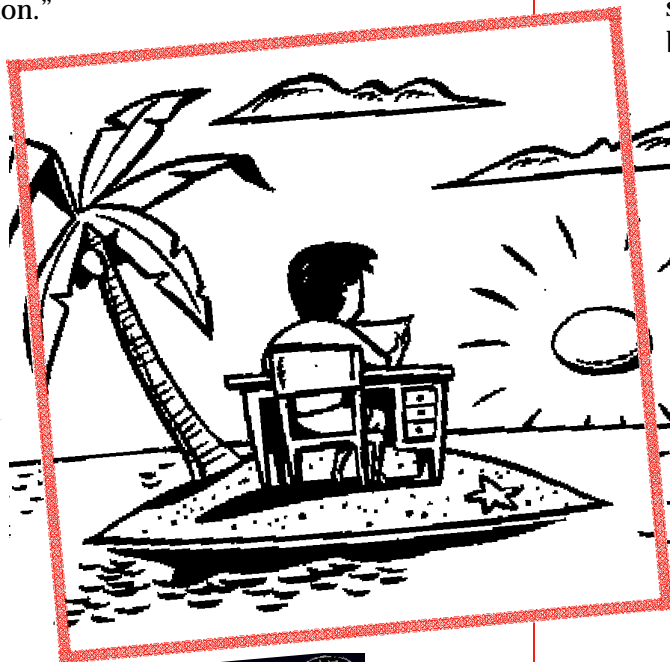
Experiment! If you usually study with music in the background, try studying in a quiet area for one week. If you usually study in a quiet space, add some background music, especially classical music. Find out whether or not background music makes a difference in how well you concentrate and study. Use what you learn about your own learning style to study more efficiently.



4

### Leave It All Behind

Use your imagination to turn your study space into your own private island. As you sit at your desk, you have everything you need: good light, homework supplies, your assignment sheet, and books. Your island is quiet, and you are alone. Tune out everything but your homework. As soon as you finish studying, you can “return to civilization.”



5

### Make It a Habit

Once you’ve set up a good study space at home, spend some time there every day, even if you don’t have any homework. You can review your notes, plan for a project you know is coming up, write in your journal, or read. Treat studying as a job with regular work hours and your study space as your office. Getting into the habit of studying every day will make you a better student.

### Where Are You Going?

Summarize what you learned in this lesson.

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Now use your summary to write a *Take Charge!* goal that will help you become a better student.

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