LESSON 1

Week 1 “So It Begins” (August 29-September 2)

Important Dates/Notes: August 28 (Sunday): Last day to withdraw with 100% refund
August 29 (Monday): First Day of Classes
September 2 (Friday): Add/Drop Ends (without permission)
September 2 (Friday): Last day to withdraw at 90% refund

Topic A: Habits

To start off the semester, we’ll go easy on parents. While it may be a huge change to have your student away at school, rest assured he or she is most likely making friends, learning his or her way around campus and understanding what it means to be a “college student.” The biggest thing a parent can do during this period of time is to give their student some space, but encourage them to begin setting up good habits for the year.

Time management is often a tremendous issue for students who are leaving home for the first time. The next couple of weeks are a great time to ask student if they can track their time and formulate a plan—at least for the school week—of when they go to class, when they study, when they socialize, when they exercise and maybe even when they’ll wash themselves, their cloths…and even their sheets! It’s quite amazing to give freshmen students the task of accounting for a 24-hour day and find they’ve not included brushing their teeth or showering.

It takes at least six weeks to establish good habits; encourage them to start now! The semester is only 16 weeks long. Buying a planner and using it can make a big difference in their lives. (It might make a great gift to give them.) Remember, no one is telling students when to study, when to sleep or when to eat anymore. No one is knocking on their door and inviting them to attend their courses. Help them learn how to self-regulate their time.

(See Appendix for brochure, “Getting Organized” by Woodburn Press.)

Topic B: Email

Information is critical in navigating higher education. Every student—although they’d more likely favor Twitter and Facebook and texting—must check his or her Eastern email regularly.

Official communication is conducted by the University through email; and, although it may have been different before getting admitted, most important information will come to their inbox through email! It may be a good idea this week to talk to your student about paying attention to their official, Eastern email account and deciphering what’s important and what can be quickly discarded. We also suggest setting up an “advising” folder on their email, so nothing is ever lost, even if your student finds no importance in something right away.

A student being on top of and up-to-date with their official, University e-mail account is non-negotiable. This cannot be stressed enough.

Topic C: Syllabi

Each professor gives their students a syllabus outlining the course, requirements and grade guidelines. These syllabi have contact information, important dates about tests and clarify everything from rules in the classroom to what may happen if students skip a day of class. Encourage your student to organize themselves for each course and hold on to those syllabi! Having a three ringed binder (with pockets) for all important documents per class is a good rule of thumb.
Assignment(s):

- Encourage your student to create a weekly schedule for himself or herself, at least one for Monday through Friday at minimum. Search the internet for many variations of weekly calendars. If you wish, ask your student to fill one out with everything their week includes.

- **Encourage your student to go to every single class**, to sit in first few rows, and toward the middle of classrooms. (It lessens distractions and puts focus on the student from his or her professor.) When your student starts making contact with professors later, they’ll already be easy for professors to recall. This relationship is important and can have huge payoffs down the line.

- Require your student read each professor’s syllabus fully, understand what is expected of them and learn how grades will be calculated. It’s all supposed to be there.

- Require your student go to class...every class. Every time it meets. When students miss a class meeting, the general estimated cost of the absence from a three credit course is expensive. It adds up! We’ll address the specifics in later weeks of the course. (Don’t forget…missed courses also mean missed information which may not be retrievable in a classmate’s notes and may potentially impact exam or overall course grades.)

**Points:** Give yourself 1 point for accomplishing each of the above assignments. Give yourself 1 extra point if you actually get to see a week’s schedule from your student!  *(Total: 5 possible points)*
Getting Organized

- Do you waste time looking for things?
- Do you forget to bring what you need to class?
- Are there loose papers in your notebooks?
- Do you finish assignments at the last minute?

If you answered yes to any of the above, you may want to work on improving your organization skills.

Being organized isn’t hard, but it is a skill that needs to be developed and practiced.

Being organized makes your day run smoother and it saves you time. It also helps you feel like you are in control and on top of things.

Being organized will not only make you a better student, it will help you succeed in your career, and in life.
Use a Student Planner

Using a planner every day is a great way to stay organized. Use your planner to record the following information.

**Important Dates**
Write in the beginning and ending date of each term, exam dates, special events, and the days your school will be closed for holidays and vacations.

**Daily Assignments, Quizzes, and Tests**
- Write each assignment under the date it’s assigned.
- Beside each assignment, write the date it’s due.
- Check off each assignment when it’s completed.
- Write in all quiz and test dates.

**Projects and Papers**
Break large assignments down into smaller, more manageable parts. For example, if you have a paper due on Friday, you might give yourself these four assignments:

- Mon - Do research
- Tues - Make outline
- Wed - Write first draft
- Thurs - Revise and write final draft

Be sure to write these smaller assignments in your planner also.

**Activities and Appointments**
Write in practices, appointments, social activities, and anything else you need to remember.
Organization Tips

Study Area
Your study area should be comfortable, quiet, well-lit, and have a surface for writing. Equip your study area with everything you need (paper, pencils, pens, calculator, etc.).

Pocket Folders
Have a different colored pocket folder for each class. Use these folders for handouts, returned papers, and homework assignments. When a folder starts to get full, throw out anything you don’t need, and put any papers you want to keep (review sheets, returned tests, etc.) in a home file.

Notebooks
Use a three-ring notebook with tabs for different classes. Three-ring notebooks work well because you can easily insert handouts, and if you’re absent, you can copy a classmate’s notes and insert them in your notebook where they belong.

Keep a 3-hole punch in your notebook—you can then insert handouts as soon as you get them.

Have phone numbers for classmates
Have a phone number for at least one person in each class. If you miss a class or have a question about an assignment, you’ll then have someone to call.
Organization Tips

Develop routines
Have a morning routine that gets your day off to a good start. Get up early enough to eat a good breakfast and not be hurried.

Before you go to bed, get everything ready for the next day. Put your book bag and anything else you will need in the same place each night. If there's something you need to remember in the morning, leave yourself a note.

Eliminate clutter
Put away or get rid of the things you don’t need.

Use a monthly wall calendar
A monthly wall calendar can help you keep track of major events, project deadlines, vacations, etc.

Create a study plan
Know when you study best and create a study plan that works for you. Identify anything that could interrupt your study plan and figure out how you can eliminate or avoid it.

Organize and save computer work
Make sure that you save your work often. Regularly back up, clean up, and organize your computer files.
Make To Do Lists

Having a To Do list allows you to focus on what you need to do, instead of wasting time worrying about how you’re going to get everything done.

- Each night, make a To Do list for the next day.

  Put the most important tasks at the top of the list. If you have a lot to do, prioritize the items on your list to ensure that the most important things get done.

  Rate each item on your list as an A (must do today), B (should do today), or C (would like to do today, but it can wait).

  Take all of the As and rank them in order of importance (1,2,3...). Do the same with the Bs and Cs.

  Rewrite your list with the As at the top (in the order of importance), followed by the Bs and Cs.

- Focus on one task at a time.

- At the end of each day, put any unfinished tasks on the next day’s To Do list.

"Don’t agonize. Organize."
Florynce Kennedy