# Organizing for Remote Learning Success

## Introduction

Switching from a traditional classroom setting to taking online or remote learning courses requires some adjustment because you'll be missing the constant reminders from your instructor and classmates about important things like upcoming due dates for assignments.

Remember, you are responsible for staying on track, so the most important thing you can do to help be successful is to get organized.

## Organize your Environment

The first step is to organize your environment for optimum productivity. You will need to:

- Decide when you are the most productive
- Take control of your physical space
- Discover what kind of set-up works best for you

Everyone's preferences will be different, but once you've determined yours, you can create a place where your priority will be concentrating on schoolwork.

1. First, identify what time of day you are most productive. Are you most alert and fresh in the morning? Do you prefer to work at night after getting your daily task done? Or is there some other time that works best for your studies? It can really help to set up some kind of schedule, so you know when you will be sitting down to accomplish the requirements for your course.

2. Second, decide where to study. Some people prefer to work at home; others find that setting too distracting. Some prefer the quiet of a library while others appreciate the background activity they find at a café. Make sure you have a Plan B location in case your first location doesn't work out that day.

3. Third, what conditions will enable you to concentrate and learn most effectively within your study space? Your motivation can be negatively affected by the noise level, temperature, and light in the place you choose. So bring a sweater, pack some headphones, or do anything else that will make you comfortable so you can get to work!

### Tip #1

Know where you can plug in. Identify several places with free wireless internet, so that if one network is down, you will have an alternative location for getting assignments in on time. There are also free internet connection resources available to you during this COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. This doesn't only apply for wireless. Electrical outlets can become hot real estate if others have the same idea as you. If you're planning to be at a given location for a long time, be aware of the availability of electrical outlets—the last thing you want is for your device to die in the middle of a study session or while you are working on an assignment.

### Tip #2

Know your options. Is your employer okay with you studying at work during lunch and on breaks? Can you use your work computer for your classes? Can you borrow a computer from a friend or family member during allotted times you plan on doing schoolwork? Ask—don't assume. You don't want to step on your employer's toes or paint yourself into a corner with your schoolwork by presuming someone will let you use a computer.

## Organize your Course Materials

The second element you will have to organize is your course materials. You may prefer working with hard copies that you can print out and write on, or you may appreciate the ease and flexibility that comes with working digitally. Most students use a combination of both, depending on the course or a given assignment. But both require you to set up a reliable and convenient system so you can stay on top of your work.

If you like to work with hard (printed) copies, find a place where you can keep all of your school materials such as books, notes, assignments, binders, and a calendar. You'll also want to find a place to print out needed materials if you don't have a home printer. See your college's website for times and availability of resources for printing.

### Tip #3

Keep a stash of basic office supplies, including pens, highlighters, paper, a stapler, binders, folders, index cards or any other study aids you might need.

## Create an Organizational Style

Create an organizational style that works for you. The internet can be really helpful here—a quick Google search or a few minutes on a visual bookmark site like Pinterest might give you some helpful tips and ideas that could actually make a practical task like organizing exciting and (dare we say?) enjoyable.

If you prefer the ease and convenience that comes with an electronic (or digital) system, you have many options for how to organize your

materials. Again, you'll still want to have a "place" where you can store and find your materials. Which device will you keep your materials on? Where will you store your backups? If you're saving your files on different devices, you may find yourself wasting a lot of time trying to locate a particular document. Avoid this by creating an electronic organizational system that works well for you.

You may want to store files on your own personal computer, or you may want to take advantage of publicly-available computers and store your work on a removable hard drive. Any of these hardware options (or combinations of them) should work just fine.

Another option is to store your files online in the cloud. As a Maricopa Community College District student, you have access to all of the Google tools via your email account. This means you can store your documents, spreadsheets, etc. on your Google Drive. You can even add your new study schedule on the Google Calendar. When you save your files in the cloud, you will be able to access them from anywhere—as long as you have access to the internet.

### Tip #4
If you're using a different cloud-based service, you'll want to check how much storage space it gives you for free, what browsers it supports best and if it has an app. Also see if it offers features you'd find valuable for your schoolwork. We encourage you to use the free Google cloud-based services available to you, but it is certainly your choice.

### Tip #54
Decide how to organize your electronic course materials, including those you download and those you create. For example, you might create:

## One folder for each of your courses
One subfolder for each week of each course, using a naming convention that includes the dates of each week. For example, Wk1_Sept01-08

Another level of subfolders inside the weekly subfolders divided into "readings," "resources," "assignments," etc.

### Tip #6
Create descriptive file names, so you don't have to open files to know what is in it.  For example, the course title and assignment name.

### Tip #7
Develop a version control system for when you go back and revise a file you already saved. Some people use v1, v2, while others use the date: (show these examples onscreen "Intro to Shakespeare_Othello essay_v1," or "Intro to Shakespeare_Othello essay_0912)

### Tip #8
Keep at least one backup for each of your files and store them in a different place than where you usually access them. So, if you save your files on your laptop, save them also in the cloud or on an external hard drive. That way, if your computer crashes, you won't lose all of your work.

## Organizing your Time
It's also essential that you organize your time. The first thing you'll want to do as you're transitioning to your remote class is to read the syllabus (thoroughly!) and familiarize yourself with class requirements and assignment due dates. Your instructor will be providing you with details on any changes to the syllabus, assignments, due dates, etc. Make note of these as it will help you get an idea of what the rest of the term will look like and the pace of the course. Above all, it will make sure that you don't have any surprises before the end of the semester.

### Tip #9
Create a calendar that you can fill out as soon as you receive the syllabus and that you can update and consult periodically throughout the semester. You might want to use Google Calendar, iCalendar, or another cloud-based system that you can check from any device and set up with notifications for when assignments are due. You might find that the system that works best for you is an old-fashioned day planner or wall calendar.

### Tip #10
If you prefer to break an assignment into manageable pieces and schedule it accordingly, do so. This can be tremendously helpful because it will give you milestones that will allow you to monitor your progress incrementally.

### Tip # 11
Use a reminder or alert feature built into an online calendar or your phone to keep yourself on track.

Conclusion

Congratulations! Now that you have completed this page you should be well on your way for organizational success! Because remote learning is so flexible, you can tailor the experience to your own personal preferences. Simply find what works and stick to it.

Adapted from *https://apps.3cmediasolutions.org/oei*