

The background features a stylized landscape with teal mountains, green trees, and white clouds against a teal sky. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

TOP 7 CLASSROOM TIDYING-UP TIPS!

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INSPIRED BY MARIE KONDO



Every day in the classroom is a busy day, and organizing is often the **last** thing on your list. When you've been teaching for years, it's easy to accumulate printed lesson plans, assessments, and assignments. So much so, that your drawers and cabinets might be overflowing with often unused or outdated resources! With so many tasks on your teaching plate, it's hard to sit down and sort through it all.

THIS BACK-TO-SCHOOL SEASON, LET US HELP YOU TACKLE CLASSROOM CLUTTER!

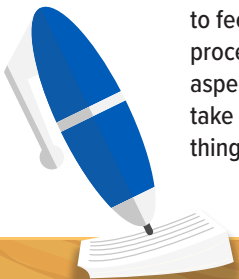
Try out these quick and easy tips for tidying up, inspired by Marie Kondo, author of *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* and founder of the KonMari method of organizing.



1

ENVISION YOUR SPACE

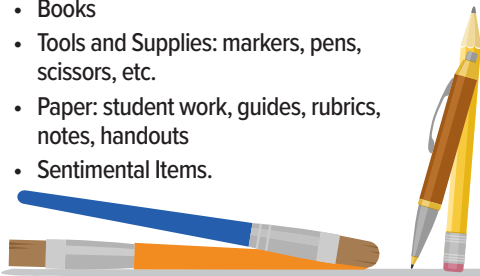
Start by envisioning the end result you'd like to see. When you walk into your class, how do you want it to feel? This vision will keep you motivated and help you make better decisions throughout the tidying-up process and beyond. Make your vision as clear and detailed as possible: take notes on the most important aspects, draw a blueprint of your vision, place labels around the room to mark where the items will live, and take any other steps you can to make your vision concrete. The labels will help you and your students keep things organized throughout the school year.



2 DECLUTTER BY CATEGORY

The KonMari method suggests sorting your resources by category, like books, papers, toys, tools, art supplies, miscellany, etc. Once that's done, examine all the items in each category as a group, and decide what should stay and what should go. If something is more than 5 years old, consider getting rid of it; educational resources are ever-evolving, so the rubric you used in 2008 may no longer be relevant. If you do decide to keep older items, make sure you'll be using them. We suggest breaking your categories down into the following categories. Remember to save sentimental items for last!

- Personal Belongings: bags, coffee mugs, chapstick, etc.
- Books
- Tools and Supplies: markers, pens, scissors, etc.
- Paper: student work, guides, rubrics, notes, handouts
- Sentimental Items.



3 DOCUMENT DIGITALLY

With so many tech tools at your fingertips, it's much easier now to ditch paper and go digital. Assign tests and other assignments via online programs like Raz-Plus and Raz-Kids, that allow you to store, assign, and track student progress digitally. You'll save paper, free up physical storage space, and get organized, all at once! Store resources with the Raz-Plus File Cabinet whenever you can, and share them with peers via the File Cabinet as well; you might even find that going digital opens new doors to you and exposes you to useful new information and ideas.



4 FILE DON'T PILE

Sure, there are some papers you do need to keep, like pacing guides or state standards. Just don't make the mistake of storing them vertically in piles. Kondo recommends organizing papers horizontally in filing cabinets or file boxes. This economical, visual form of organization means you won't need to dig through irrelevant documents searching for what you need. Help your students store horizontally too, with a classroom mailbox! When you use a mailbox, papers that need to go home aren't stacked on students' desks, but kept in a space that's all their own.



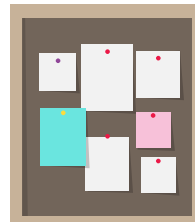
5 SIMPLE STORAGE

When you need to store miscellaneous things, like dry erase markers or math manipulatives, consider using clear plastic bins to organize. Clear bins make it easy to see what's stored inside, can be labeled for quick retrieval, and stacking them maximizes classroom space. Try filling empty wall space with cubbies for additional stackable storage; you can even have labelled bins for each student, each subject, each type of material, etc. The possibilities are endless.



6 LESS IS MORE

While it's important to create a warm and inviting space, you don't want to over-stimulate students with too many posters and charts. So when you start off the school year, keep some of the walls bare. Later on, use these walls to display student-created work and class-created anchor charts. The same is true for floor space and counter space. Keep areas of the floor open and clutter-free, so they can be used for a wide range of activities. When counters are clear, their space invites creativity, makes cleaning easier, and creates visual peace that encourages students to focus.



7 GET YOUR STUDENTS INVOLVED

Ask your students to organize their own classroom items too! Encourage them to have fun sorting through things and asking themselves what's most important. They can even help make decisions about classroom items, such as which titles should be featured in the classroom library: take a quick book interest survey by giving students sticky notes to stick on the books they'd like to read; then go through the unmarked books to decide which titles to remove, and consider replacing those books with new titles.



Try using these Marie Kondo-inspired organizational tips and tricks this year to create a space that will **spark joy** and a love of learning!