



Lesson 1: GET ORGANISED

This lesson is about different areas of our lives where we sometimes need to be more organised. It contains information about problems some people face getting organised, as well as certain solutions for students to consider and/or discuss.

Level: Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B1 and above)

How to use this lesson

The lesson can be done at home or in class. If done at home, aim to allow time in class for discussion of the different aspects of the topic (see suggestions below).

Worksheet A

1. Which of these areas of your life need organising most?

At home: Students choose the three areas in their lives that need organising.

In class: Allow 2-3 minutes for students to choose three items. Those who finish quickly can discuss and compare their answers with a partner.

Encourage class discussion and prompt with questions such as:

- Q. *Do you often 'lose' things at home?*
- Q. *Do you make a revision plan before a test? When do you start revising?*
- Q. *Do you keep things 'just in case you need them'?*
- Q. *How organised are the things stored on your computer?*
- Q. *Do you sometimes have to say no to invitations because you haven't finished something?*
- Q. *How often do you run out of money?*
- Q. *Do you usually leave jobs until the last minute?*
- Q. *Are you good at planning meals when you go shopping for food?*

2. Suggestions for getting organised

At home: Students choose the suggestion(s) that they like best and try to add more.

In class: Allow 3-4 minutes for students to read the suggestions and mark the ones they like. They can discuss them in pairs if you prefer.

Start a class discussion by asking if students have any experience of making a list, as in the first suggestion. Do they find lists effective? Discuss what it would be like to 'start from scratch' and get rid of most of your things. Explain that some people prefer this method and keep very few possessions. Ask students what they think of some of these ideas:

- ▶ Giving away (or throwing away) clothes you haven't worn for the last year
- ▶ Keeping only the basic clothes (eg only one pair of shoes and just enough clothes to last you a week)
- ▶ Borrowing, rather than buying, books, music and DVDs

- ▶ Passing things on that you have finished with (such as a book you have read)
- ▶ Only buying enough food for the next week
- ▶ Saving only your favourite photos, songs, etc
- ▶ Limiting what you keep (such as only the books that will fit in your bookcase)
- ▶ Setting a time limit for jobs (eg, saying that you will study hard for one hour and then take a break)

3. Three approaches to revising.

At home: Students decide on the approach that is closest to their own.

In class: Students can work in pairs for this exercise. They should be able to do it in 2-3 minutes.

Conduct a discussion about the different strategies and plans students use when preparing for tests and exams. In some cases, students may not have three months' warning (as suggested in the table), so they may have to work on a different time scale. They may also find that they fall between two approaches (for example, a combination of A and B). Encourage them to talk about their own strategies.

4. Read Theodore's blog entry.

At home: Students read the blog entry and answer the True/False questions.

In class: Give students a few minutes in order to read the text and answer the questions. You may wish to tell early finishers to compare their answers with a partner. After checking the answers, invite students to tell you how effective (or ineffective) Theodore's plan is.

Answers:

1. T
2. F
3. F
4. T
5. F
6. T

Theodore's approach is closest to C.



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Worksheet B

5. Read the texts.

At home: Students should prepare this exercise at home so that they can read the texts and look for the answers in their own time.

In class: Students can compare their answers in pairs for 2-3 minutes. Check the answers and ask students to tell you the parts of the texts where the answers can be justified. Discuss any mistakes and point out how the correct answers can be arrived at.

Answers: Text A

1. clutter, mess
2. throw away / give away
3. tips
4. giving, or throwing away one item a day; organising a part of the house, a cupboard or a drawer that is untidy, before moving on to another area
5. they have too many things / they make a mess looking for what they want / they have too much stuff

Answers: Text B

6. B
7. A
8. C
9. A
10. C

6. Are you a hoarder?

At home: Ask students to write 3-4 sentences in answer to the questions.

In class: Use the questions to conduct a class discussion on the texts, covering the practical side of being organised (such as being able to find things easily). Expand the conversation to include how people benefit from being more organised in other areas of their lives. Conclude by asking students what changes they would consider making to their own lives following this lesson.



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Worksheet A

1. Which of these areas of your life need organising most? Tick your top three.

- your clothes / your wardrobe
- your studies / your books and papers
- your music or video collection
- your photos
- your social life
- your bills / your finances
- your housework
- your shopping / your food

2. Now look at the suggestions below for getting organised. Which one(s) would help you most? Can you add any other suggestions?

- ☆ Write lists of jobs to do. Cross items off the list when you have done them.
- ☆ Make your life easier to manage by owning fewer things.
- ☆ Have a place for everything and make sure you put things away.
- ☆ Have a 'one in, one out' policy (If you buy something new, throw away something old).
- ☆ Set a time limit for jobs you need to do, eg you must wash the dishes in ten minutes.
- ☆ _____
- ☆ _____

3. Look at the three approaches to revising, A, B and C. Which one is closest to your approach? Do you do anything differently?

	A	B	C
3 months before test or exam	Make a decision to revise your work regularly		
1 month before test or exam	Revise the main points you have studied	Make a revision plan and decide on times/days to revise	
1 week before test or exam	Make notes of the main points that could be in the test	Revise the main points you have studied	Start reading through your notes
3 days before test or exam	Revise the main points from your notes	Make notes of the main points that could be in the test	Test yourself on the main points
1 day before test or exam	Do something relaxing and get a good night's sleep	Revise the main points from your notes	Spend all day and night memorising the main points

4. Read Theodore's blog entry and mark the statements T (true) or F (false). Which approach from exercise 3 is closest to Theodore's, A, B or C?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Theodore recently posted something on his blog. | T / F |
| 2. He is feeling confident about his exam. | T / F |
| 3. He is planning to write a blog entry before Wednesday. | T / F |
| 4. He is just beginning to get organised. | T / F |
| 5. He started his revision plan a month ago. | T / F |
| 6. He will probably revise late at night. | T / F |

Theodore's blog

I think yesterday's post might be my last long one for a while. I've got a big exam on Wednesday and things don't look good! I've spent the last couple of days looking at my notes but I don't think I really understand them. One thing is certain; I won't be leaving the house until Wednesday – and I don't think I will have much sleep in the next few days. So if things go quiet on this blog, you'll understand why. Wish me luck – I hate exams!



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Worksheet B

5. Read the texts and answer the questions about each one.

Text A

For some people, life is about living, and they are not interested in owning things. In fact, they feel that too many belongings get in the way of living an active and organised life. This movement away from having clutter in your life has a lot of support. You can even hire a person who will come to your house and help you decide what you should keep and what you should get rid of.

There are many tips to help you de-clutter. These include giving, or throwing away one item a day so that, after a year, you have 365 fewer things. Some people might not have so many things, so they could just organise a part of their house, or a cupboard or drawer that is untidy, before moving on to another area.

Most people who have de-cluttered will tell you that they feel better for it. They say that being organised at home helps them to feel organised at work or college. As Fay Bryant, who writes on the subject told us, "People sometimes think they are just naturally disorganised. However, if you have too many things, you're going to make a mess looking for what you want. You're not disorganised at all – you just have too much stuff".

1. Which two words mean 'untidiness' and 'untidy'? (paragraphs 1 and 3)

2. What does 'get rid of' mean? (at the end of the first paragraph)

3. Which word in paragraph 2 is closest in meaning to 'suggestions'?

4. Which two suggestions does the writer make?

5. What does Fay Bryant say is the reason some people think they are disorganised?

Text B

Hoarding is the word we use to describe hiding or storing things. Some people, for example, hoard money in a secret place in their house. There is at least a certain amount of logic in doing that (although your money's probably safer in a bank), but can you imagine your house so full of magazines that you can't move? What about a house that has so many clothes that its owner sleeps in the kitchen? Cases of extreme hoarding are very serious because the person who is doing it is usually suffering. There are many reasons why a person becomes a hoarder, but changing years of habit can be very difficult. Sadly, the hoarder often finds it difficult to let go of the things that are blocking the path to a happier life. When, however, they do manage to tidy up their houses, not only do they have more space, but they usually say that they feel that they have tidied up their minds too, with most people saying they feel free and more organised.

6. The word that is closest in meaning to hoarding is

A using
B keeping
C suffering

7. The writer thinks that hoarding money at home is

A sometimes understandable.
B completely crazy.
C the best idea.

8. The owner of one house sleeps in the kitchen because

A it is warmer there.
B the bedroom is full of magazines.
C the house is full of clothes.

9. What is wrong with being a hoarder?

A It is a sign of being unhappy.
B It leads to other bad habits.
C It means you don't care about others.

10. According to the writer, what would be the result of a hoarder tidying up their house?

A saving a lot of money
B the increased value of their home
C the ability to think clearly

6. Are you a hoarder? Do you think you need to de-clutter? Do you think it is better to hold on to things or to live a simple life? Does having fewer things make you more organised in other areas of your life?