

7 Tips, 7 Tools for Packing Up Your Classroom Like a Pro

As the school year winds down, a few final challenges remain—including your classroom cleanup. Do it right, and your transition back in the fall will be smooth and stress-free.

Here are teachers' top tips:

1. Pre-Pack and Purge

Use prep periods and after-school time to declutter, organize your library, and pack away anything you won't need for the remainder of the year. But remember, avoid tearing down bulletin boards or changing your classroom in such a way that sends students the message that school is over. If there are items you haven't used for two years or more, consider donating or discarding them.

2. Take Pictures

This is a real time-saver so that you don't have to remember exactly where everything goes or how it all fits. It's also the easiest way for custodial staff to know how to put back your furniture after they've cleaned your room.

3. Pull What You Need For the First Week of School

Start with what you'll need on your desk the first day. This will be the first box you open when you return in the fall. Stock it with scissors, a stapler, paper clips, pens and paper, thumbtacks, and other essentials. Mark it "Desk" and tuck it away in a spot that's easy to access.

Many teachers have favorite back-to-school activities, books, and getting-to-know you games for the start of the year. Pull everything you'll use for those first few days and place it in a box or tub labeled "Week 1." Pack it last in your cupboard so that it's right up front when you need it.

4. Label

As you pack up your boxes, mark on the outside the contents of each box and specifically where those items go. This will make unpacking a breeze! Also include your name and room number on each box—in case they get moved.

5. Clean

Even though the custodian will wax the floors, you'll want to wipe down tables chairs, shelves, and manipulatives so that everything's spic and span for your return.

6. Take Inventory

Draw up a list of supplies to pick up over the summer so that you're ready for back-to-school sales. Don't forget the [great discounts available to CEA members](#) at stores such as BJ's, A.C. Moore, Michael's, and Joann Fabrics, as well as at Pencils.com.

7. Unplug It

Before you unplug for the summer—and you should definitely take that well-deserved time off—unplug any devices in your room.

Simplify your move with these 7 tools of the trade:

- **Plastic bins with lids.** More durable than cardboard boxes, these can be set up in the various zones of your classroom for quicker packing. Clear bins make it easy to see what's inside. Use large bins to pack items intact (such as stacking trays with papers) and shoe-box-size containers for smaller items.
- **Extra-large zipper bags.** These are great for storing charts, themed units, and components of your bulletin boards.
- **Sheets/towels.** These are perfect for covering electronics and keeping the dust off.
- **Flash drive.** Keep copies of your handouts safe on a USB drive.
- **Garbage bags.** Cut and staple them over bulletin boards to protect against damage and fading.
- **Painter's tape.** Because it peels off easily, it's perfect for labeling furniture. (Masking tape has a tendency to bake on during the summer.)
- **Paint scraper.** Add a little water, and this handy tool gets the gunk and glue off most surfaces.

With these 7 tips and 7 tools, getting back into the classroom will be hassle-free.