



How to...



DID YOU KNOW?
Before 1910, many children in the US attended school only until 8th grade.

Mark the start of school

Follow this smart advice to get ready for your best year yet.

As much as most kids love summer, back to school is also a really fun and exciting time. You get to start new classes, meet new teachers and classmates, join sports teams or clubs, and see friends that you may not have spent time with while you were out of school. The beginning of a new grade also gives you an opportunity for a fresh start, and it's a great time to think about what you can do to help yourself have a successful year. Here are a few ways to get off on the right foot.

Settle into a routine

Whether you went to camp, had a job, or took a vacation, your summer schedule was probably very different than your school year schedule will be. If you can, start getting into your school routine before you actually head back to class. This means going to bed early enough to make sure you can get at least eight to nine hours of sleep and waking up early enough to get dressed and eat breakfast before you have to head out the door to school.

To make your mornings go smoothly, also think about doing things like setting out an outfit and packing your lunch the night before. And don't forget to plan time to get all your homework done. Some kids like to do this right after school, while others work better at a different time. Talk to your parents about when it might be best for you.

Create a homework station

In addition to making sure you have enough time to do your homework, having a dedicated place to do it can also help you feel more productive. Ask your parents to help you set up a quiet place, maybe in your room or in a shared family room, with a desk and a comfortable chair. Hang a calendar above the desk where you can keep track of important dates like tests and project deadlines. And keep a drawer or basket full of supplies you often need for your homework, such as pens,

pencils, and a calculator. This saves you time because you won't have to run around looking for things. An adjustable desk lamp is also a good idea, since good lighting helps with reading and writing.

Set new goals

The beginning of a new grade is a natural time to think about anything you'd like to accomplish before next summer. Writing down a list of three or four goals, and talking to your parents or a teacher about how to accomplish them, can help motivate you to make the most of your year. The goals could be social (make a new friend), academic (read three books every month), athletic (improve your mile run time), or even something really personal. You can post your goals above your desk or keep them somewhere just for you. Check in on them throughout the year to see how you're doing.



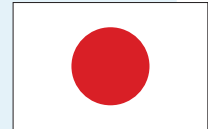
Pack up the night before.

First-day traditions around the world

Check out these interesting ways kids from other countries celebrate back to school.

Japan

For good luck, parents traditionally send their kids with a lunch of rice and quail eggs on the first day of school.



Kazakhstan

Each child brings a flower to their teacher on the first day of school. The teacher then puts them all together to make one large bouquet for the classroom.



Germany

Parents often give kids something called a *schultüte*, which is a large paper or cardboard cone that's decorated and filled with school supplies and other small gifts.



Indonesia

The focus of the first day of school is to help kids make new friends, rather than getting right into academic lessons. Schools use the day to organize kids into groups for activities.



India

In this country, the first day of school also falls at the beginning of monsoon (rainy) season. So parents often give their children new umbrellas, along with other fun goodies.

