SCIENCE NOTEBOOKS:

The principles behind notebooks are important:
- To be well-organized or to strive to be
- To develop the mindset of “a place for everything”
- To be accountable for your papers (keeping every paper all year long!)
- To fix mistakes and learn from them
- To help others be organized

All good goals. I've had students come up to me years later and tell me they stayed organized in high school and college (and beyond) because of what I taught them. Made me certain I was doing a good thing!

Very few kids come by this naturally. But it’s a skill that can be taught.

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SETTING UP FOR NOTEBOOK DAY

Start the first week of school. Part of the homework for the first couple days was to bring a notebook and dividers to class. The notebook should be exclusive to science, not a “Trapper-Keeper” with other classes in it. It should be at least 2 1/2 - 3 inches thick. On about the third or fourth day, I would use part of the day to get organized.

The Sections are:
IN FRONT OF, STUDY GUIDE, WORKSHEETS, LABS, PROJECT

On NOTEBOOK DAY, I asked my students to have their notebook, dividers, and papers out on their desks. I would always have gobs of old dividers I collected from kids last year and hand those out to whoever came without dividers. Ditto old notebooks. Some kids are too poor to have them. I just acted like they could “borrow” these till they got theirs in class. Some did, some just used mine all year.

We would label their dividers first. I would put the labels on the board or overhead. You could use a WhiteBoard, too.

Labels:
IN FRONT OF (F on divider)
STUDY GUIDE (SG on divider)
WORKSHEETS (WS on divider)
LABS (L on divider)
PROJECT (P on divider)

TABLE OF CONTENTS:
Each Section has a Table of Contents. I would run the first page off in color. The rest of the pages would be the same page but just white paper. (See Notebook TOCs.pdf with all the pages with sample borders.)

Example Colors:
IN FRONT OF - HOT PINK
STUDY GUIDE - BLUE
WORKSHEETS - ORANGE
LABS - RED
PROJECT - GREEN

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The In Front Of Section:
After everyone had their dividers in their notebooks, I would hand out the first TOC, the hot pink Front Section. I would project a copy of this and walk them through each page. This is the only page with everything already written on the page. This went in the front of the notebook. It was the first thing they would see when they opened their notebook. And the first page inside the first section was F1 - Homework. I would tell parents, that’s what you look at every night if you want to know what the Science Homework is.

The In Front Of Section didn’t change much. They just added more pages at the F1, F2, and F3 places. When they used up their Late Coupons, they would not be part of it anymore and they couldn’t be penalized for it.

PAGE NUMBERS:
They would already have most of the Front pages by the end of the first week. I would ask them to write the page number for each paper on the upper right-hand corner (required so everyone could find pages in other notebooks when we did trade-and-grade notebook tests) and putting them in order.

Then I would hand out the next TOC, the blue Study Guide Section.

THE STUDY GUIDE SECTION:
The jist of every other section is this: I would make an overhead of the blank page and write on it in marker. They would copy it. You could do this as a projection on a WhiteBoard, too. The act of copying the table of contents for each section helped them have ownership. Made them stop and pay attention. After they had copied the Study Guide Section TOC, they would find each paper, put the page number on the upper right-hand corner, and put in the notebook.

I would walk around the room, helping those who really needed help. I always had five bins set up on a counter, labeled on the front, with manilla folders with extra copies of each notebook page. If they lost one, they got to go take one out of the bin. They had to copy from someone to make sure they had the material. Then they put it in the right place. This saved many a frantic student from melting down. People lose things. I had a backup system for them to get another paper.

Since I also handed out Notebook Orders every week or so, the best students would have already filled in their TOCs for each section and would already have added the page numbers and put them in the right place. So I would make them the “Experts” and move them around the room to help those who were in desperate need of help. Most were willing to do this. Especially if you gave them some sort of reward, like a free late coupon or candy...whatever...

THE REST OF THE SECTIONS:
I would continue to hand out each colored TOC and project what to copy and walk around the room and talk about being organized, etc.

OPEN NOTEBOOK FINAL EXAM:
This is the day I would tell them that their FINAL EXAM WAS OPEN NOTEBOOK! Not their Unit Tests, just their Final Exam. I talked about keeping a good notebook so you can find anything you needed. (I didn’t tell them that this type of exam tends to be harder. I might tell them that later in the semester. For now, it’s important to build up interest and motivation for keeping a good notebook!)
NOTEBOOK ORDER
Here’s what the very first week’s notebook might look like:

In Front Of Section
F1 - Homework
F2 - Bellwork
F3 - Objectives
F4 - Notebook Orders
F5 - Science News
F6 - Classroom Procedures
F7 - Classroom Rules & Procedures
F8 Late Coupons
F9 Grade Printouts
F10 - Notebook Tests

Study Guide Section
SG1 - Experimental Design Reference
SG2 - Safety Contract Review
SG3 - Safety Equipment Scavenger Hunt
SG4 - Find Someone Who Knows Safety
SG5 - Metric Conversion PPT FollowSheet
SG6 - King Henry Notes, or Slider, or Staircase
SG7 - Measurement Concept Cards Activity
SG8 - Measurement Booklet
SG9 - Quiz #1
BONUS Pages - ALWAYS at the end of this section!

Worksheet Section
WS1 - Science Equipment
WS2 - Lab Safety Cartoon Assignment
WS3 - Measuring Metric
WS4 - Metric Conversion #1
WS5 - Metric Conversion #2

Lab Section
L1 - Safety Contract
L2 - Lab Safety Checklist
L3 - Safety Poster Instructions
L4 - Safety Poster
L5 - Coin Lab

PROJECT Section
Usually nothing here till third or fourth week.
NOTEBOOK TESTS: I did a Notebook Test after each unit.

(1) TRADE-AND-GRADE NOTEBOOK TEST:
The first one was always a Trade-and-Grade for our first Unit which was Metric System, Lab Safety, and Experimental Design. It was always written up ahead of time but I would talk them through it. (See example below) The point was I asked a question or two from each section. I asked for a specific answer on a specific page. This was to encourage them to correct their papers when we went over them right after LINING UP FOR POINTS each day. This encouraged them to make sure their papers were correct even if they got full Effort Points. If I knew most had something wrong from glancing at their papers, I would stress fixing it that day during discussion, and hit it in the Trade-and-Grade to make a point.

I would ask 10-15 questions, such as, "What is their answer for WS1, Question #6?" or I actually have them check an entire section for the right pages in order with page numbers. They assigned points based on their answers. Usually it was “All or Nothing - no partial points. I usually did 50-point notebook tests in contrast to 100 point Unit Tests.

FIXING NOTEBOOKS TEST FOR A BETTER GRADE
I ALWAYS let kids fix their Notebook Tests and raise their notebook test grade! For each type of Notebook Test. The Point of doing Notebook Tests is to encourage organization and fixing a notebook for a higher grade is a strong motivator to get more organized! This kept parents happy because they felt I gave kids a second chance and was willing to let students improve their grades. along with their organizational habits.

(2) GRADE YOUR OWN NOTEBOOK TEST:
The second Notebook Test would always be a Grade-Your-Own for our second unit which was Mineral Identification. (See example below.) I would give these out to those done with their Minerals Identification Unit Test. I would always have 2 forms so they couldn’t cheat off each other. (Not that this mattered because they could take them home. They could also fix them.)

They could finish in class if they had time or take them home and finish. Because some kids take longer to take tests, this was one way I could give them the time they needed but also keep busy those who finished earlier. They would obviously use their own notebook. If their table partner wasn’t done with their test yet, I’d have them quietly move to sit next to someone also doing a notebook test or sit at the table in the back of the room or out in the hall at a table I always had set up out there for things such as this.

You may notice I have two different ring images on the Mineral Unit Notebook Checks. This is a subtle way to show any wandering eyes that they DON’T have the same Notebook Check as the one sitting on either side of them! Keep this in mind when you hand them out to students done with their tests. Also take note as to where they will be sitting for this part of the test. I do the same thing for every Friday Quiz: put different art work at the top of each page so they know they are different. (I did four different quizzes.)

I would alternate between these two Notebook Test types the rest of the course. They liked the Grade-Your-Own better, of course, but the Trade-and-Grade would keep them accountable, so we did those too.

BTW, I have known teachers to collect notebooks but I think this is WAY TOO MUCH WORK! I like kids looking at other notebooks because they learn from seeing someone more (or less!) organized then they are!
Trade-and-Grade Notebook Test #1

for ____________________________

Block_______

Date_____________

Graded by______________________

1. _________ (2 pts - F1 - Homework for Day 2)
2. _________ (3 pts - F2 - Answer for Bell #3)
3. _________ (2 pts - F3 - Objectives all have dates beside them)
4. _________ (3 pts - SG1 - Page 1 has 8 things highlighted)
5. _________ (2 pts - SG3 - Answer for location of Fire Extinguisher)
6. _________ (3 pts - SG5 - Answer for 6. Practice #6)
7. _________ (2 pts - WS1 - Correctly identified 1st science equipment)
8. _________ (3 pts - WS 2 - Answer for #10)
9. _________ (2 pts - WS 4 - Answer for #4)
10. _________ (3 pts - WS 5 - Answer for #8)
11. _________ (5 pts - L2 - First column should be labeled and checked in 3 places.)
12. _________ (5 pts - L5 - Answers for all 4 Qs on front page)
13. _________ (5 pts - Study Guide Section Order)
14. _________ (5 pts - Worksheet Order)
15. _________ (5 pts - Lab Order)

Total Points ______

/50
NOTEBOOK CHECK #2A

Name_____________________________ Block______

1. What is Bell #22? Copy your answer here:

2. What is the answer for Question #1 on Color Coding the Periodic Table (back)?

3. Define mineral.

   What page did you use to answer this question? _____

4. What was your answer for Question #4, on your Chemistry of Minerals Worksheet?

5. What’s one example of an element? __________
   a compound? ______________

   What page did you use to answer this question? _____

6. A mineral with a metallic luster shines like a: ____________________________

   What page did you use to answer this question? _____

7. List two of your minerals that show metallic luster: (1) ____________________________
   (2) ____________________________

   What page did you use to answer this question? _____

8. What is the definition of weathering?

   What page did you use to answer this question? _____

9. How do metamorphic rocks form?

   What page did you use to answer this question? _____

10. Why is the rock cycle called a cycle?

   What page did you use to answer this question? _____
1. What is Bell #25? Copy your answer here:

2. What is the answer for Question #6 on Color Coding the Periodic Table (back)?

3. Define mineral.

What page did you use to answer this question? _____

4. What did you put for an answer for Question #8, on your Chemistry and Minerals Worksheet?

5. What’s one example of an element?
   a. compound?

What page did you use to answer this question? _____

6. A mineral with a non-metallic luster shines like a:

What page did you use to answer this question? _____

7. List two of your minerals that show non-metallic luster: (1) (2)

What page did you use to answer this question? _____

8. What is the definition of weathering?

What page did you use to answer this question? _____

9. How do metamorphic rocks form?

What page did you use to answer this question? _____

10. Why is the rock cycle called a cycle?

What page did you use to answer this question? _____

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