

Supplies.....

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to and from school with the right backpack or tote bag.

• Before selecting one from the myriad of heavy-duty, novelty and fashionable designs, ask yourself what your average load will be and how you'll be traveling.

If you'll only carry a few books and assignments, but a lot of odds and ends such as makeup, pens and pencils, wallet and portable stereo, look for a boxy, roomy tote — maybe metallic, faux leather or reptile, with several compartments. A rugged backpack might serve you well if you ride your bike to school, juggling books, a slide rule and calculator.

• If you're tired of getting your lunch crunched, consider a separate container to hold your peanut butter and jelly. Aside from the traditional lunch box, there are containers that double as mini-refrigerators — a glycol brick is frozen and inserted into the lid. Another alternative: With fancy disposable bags, you could have a new look every week. Even a thermos and a few plastic containers could prevent your carrot sticks from smothering your potato chips and keep your soup hot.

GYM BAG

Organizing personal grooming supplies after gym class and for periodic touch-ups is easy with some of the new, sleek-styled travel accessories for men and women in a spectrum of bold colors, says Jim Oestreich, vice president of Duray. His suggestions:

• Organize your gym bag with 4-ounce bottles of your favorite shampoo and conditioner, a soap dish and dental organizer that can hold an angled toothbrush, toothpaste and dental floss.

• Girls also will want a cosmetic case and mirror compact; one that also holds purse-size tissues is extra handy.

• An ultra-lightweight hairbrush is great for easy styling, according to Irv Goronsky, director of advertising for Goody. There also are small mist brushes with hollow barrels that can hold hair spray, liquid gel or water for touch-ups.

Once everything is organized, it takes very little maintenance to keep it that way. Be warned, however, that taking these simple steps may lead to any and all of the following: higher grades, regular on-time arrival to class, improved appearance and peace of mind.



Class of 88:
Seniors should
make the most
of their last year

It's back to school as usual, but you find yourself feeling strangely sentimental as you make your way to the classes listed on your senior class schedule. After all, this is your "last" first day — at least so far as high school is concerned.

As fall progresses, you find yourself a bit misty-eyed at the homecoming dance and the last football game of the season. Yet, the idea of trading school lunches, tardy slips and your moped for college, a car and newfound freedom is thrilling, and commencement can't come soon enough.

You have "senioritis," a condition caused by a chain of roller-coaster emotions.

The best treatment? Find creative ways to make and preserve senior year memories, and put your heart into preparing for life after high school. Here is a checklist of ideas to consider.

A class ring: Be true to your school through your senior year and afterward with a class ring. Wearing one has been an important American tradition since West Point cadets started the trend in 1833, according to ArtCarved Class Rings Inc.

A class ring is many things to many people: a visible symbol of scholastic achievement; a piece of finely styled fashion jewelry; an earned status symbol; and a personal statement of individuality.

Students can choose from modern petite designs with definite fashion appeal, or traditional styles that can be customized to express any personality. There is even an alternative to gold — a lightweight jeweler's stainless metal made to resemble white gold — for budget-conscious students.

Senior trip: You and your friends have been planning an after-graduation trip since your sophomore year. Whether it's a shopping weekend to New York City, a week of rest and relaxation in St. Thomas or a month-long bike trip through Europe, now is the time to make your plans official.

First, do your homework, by

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Parents can really help

By Karen Caldwell
Copley News Service

Pity the poor student who haunts a backpack full of homework up to his room each night.

Many parents do. And, they want to help, maintaining that it's their responsibility to start developing their child's learning skills prior to school, and later, to reinforce what he learns there.

Their assignment? To figure out just what help a child needs in terms of his age and learning abilities. And since every child is unique there is no one "correct" answer.

There are some general things, though, that parents can do to bolster their child's education. One of the first — and best — is to encourage reading, even if the child is just a toddler, preschooler or kindergarten barely learning his ABC's.

It's never too early to start instilling in a child a love for books, says syndicated parenting columnist Pamela Redmond Satran.

She suggests making a book "grow" with a child, first by describing the pictures instead of actually reading the book to a child under 2, and then reading one or two sentences instead of an entire page for 2- to 3-year-olds. As the child's attention span lengthens, a parent can start reading every word.

She also suggests:

- Have books in the house. If children will read them. Search favorite bookstores, garage sales and used bookstores — the more varied and interesting the selection, the more kids will read. Use the library, too.

- Make reading a game. Don't reserve reading for bedtime, suggest reading to a younger child in place of watching a cartoon. The child — including those who can't actually read yet — can "read" a book to Mom or Dad. Even the youngest children can be participatory readers, turning the pages.

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