

Angela Watson's

# Stress-free system for END-OF-YEAR CLOSEOUT

### This system really works! Here's how it turned out for 2 members of the 40 Hour Teacher Workweek Club who tried it last school year.

THANK YOU, Angela! This is the first year Im not stressed about the last day of school. Everything is done and I can spend quality time with my students during our half day tomorrow!!

I was skeptical as heck about following your advice to keep the classroom looking the same until the day before or last day of school. Instead of taking things down, I focused my prep time on organizing and getting rid of junk-- still kept the room looking the same. I freaked out a bit because so much needed to be packed up, removed from the walls, and moved. Would you believe me if I told you my kids were still working hard? Still following directions? Still walking silently down the halls? And tomorrow is the last day?! I'm amazed!!! Students within my reading groups rotations were assigned jobs to do around the room. They finished faster than I thought and we got the entire room done in 2 hours! So happy!!



Okay - can I brag about just how much this club has changed my life? Our last day of school for students was last Wednesday (Friday for teachers) and my students and I finished packing up on Monday! Whaaat?! 4 days early! I am homeroom teacher to two classes (35 students) and everything had gone home by then - portfolios, notebooks, etc. Because I followed Angela's checklist, I started by packing up my personal resources and taking them home, one box a day, and then sorting and recycling papers. I spent Thursday and Friday finishing unit reflections and other administrative tasks.

This club is no joke. Tell your friends. I have. #likeaboss





## Want to listen to the 25 minute audio instead of read?

Click here to launch the audio player.

The down arrow button will allow you to save the MP3 and listen offline while you drive, cook, clean, exercise, etc.





# A STEP-BY-STEP SYSTEM FOR DECONSTRUCTING & CLOSING OUT YOUR CLASSROOM

With this resource, you'll choose actionable steps to help you:

- ☐ Keep kids on task when spring fever's in the air
- ☐ Delegate end-of-year tasks to students
- ☐ Prepare in advance for the summer classroom shutdown
- ☐ Purge your classroom of clutter at the end of the year
- ☐ Set yourself up now for success in the fall



Here's an all-too-familiar scenario I think we can each relate to:

You're feeling exhausted and overwhelmed one morning by the end-of-year tasks on your plate. You decide not to give regular Morning Work and let the class do a word search page instead, hoping that they'll be engaged enough to let you work on your end-of-year data submission tasks. The kids get excited about the change in routine, and all the expectations for quietly completing Morning Work go out the window. You get irritated and blame the problem on 'spring fever.'

After that, you figure there's no way the kids will be attentive during the regular vocabulary lesson, so you give a partner reading assignment instead. The kids become even more wound up and start chattering loudly because now their routine is really off.

You figure you might as well funnel that energy into something constructive, so you start having them deconstruct the classroom. The kids become even more distracted as they're constantly turning around to watch their friends pull down bulletin board paper and borders.

It seems impossible to get the kids settled down at this point, and eh, it's the end of the year, so you allow students to get noisier than you would normally and just focus on getting your paperwork done. The kids quickly realize you're pre-occupied and aren't addressing the noise level, so they stop pretending to work altogether.

Now they're calling out to each other, walking around the room, and being silly. This is when you get totally fed up, yell at the kids, and start mentally counting down to the last day of school for the millionth time.

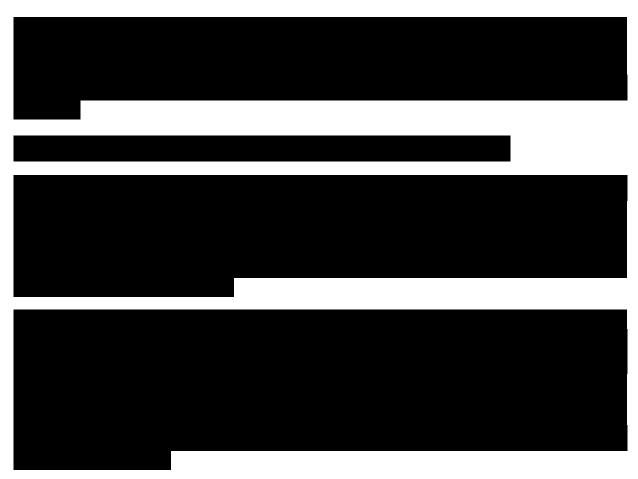
**This year, things are going to be different.** We're going to put systems in place now that will keep your class engaged, allow you to delegate many of your end-of year tasks to them in an orderly and systematic way, and help you prepare your classroom for summer well in advance so you're not stressed out.

#### How to keep kids on-task when spring fever's in the air

Stay on a predictable schedule and keep your routines in place



#### Use high-interest, engaging activities for the 2 weeks of school



#### How to delegate end-of-year tasks to students

#### Don't start deconstructing your room until the second-to-last day

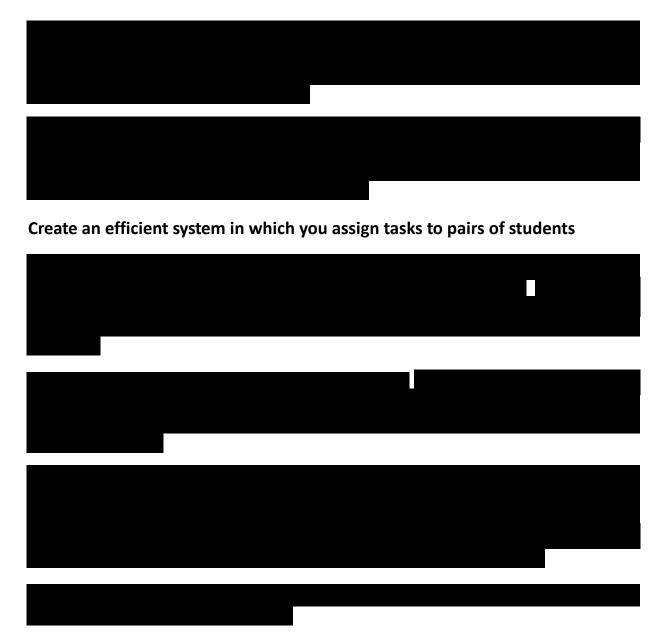
I've seen teachers close up their classroom libraries, centers, and so on a full month in advance so that they don't feel overwhelmed with cleaning, organizing, and packing up the room during the last week. However, this throws off all their daily routines, and ramps up kids' excitement levels and behavioral issues. It really doesn't take longer than a few hours to deconstruct a classroom with students when you have an organized plan, so you can choose to set aside those hours at the very end of the year.

I have experimented with many different approaches and can tell you without a doubt that it's best not to have kids help deconstruct the classroom until the second-to-last day of school. If you do it any sooner or try to spread the tasks out over a week or two, it will be very difficult for the kids to concentrate on academic work because the room screams, "We're done here!"



Many of your colleagues will look at your room during the last week of school and nervously ask when you're planning to start taking things down. Don't stress out! There are plenty of things you'll be doing in advance to make the end of the year go smoothly (I'll share more in the next section.) Just keep the classroom looking exactly same for as long as possible so you can keep your regular routines in place, and on the second-to-last day of school, turn your full attention to overseeing classroom deconstruction.

Keep the class engaged in meaningful tasks while a handful of students help deconstruct







#### Kid-friendly tasks for end-of-year

Here are some examples of jobs you can assign to your students—a <u>longer and completely</u> <u>editable list of jobs is included with this resource</u>. Simply cross out or delete the ones that don't apply to you and add additional tasks as needed.

- taking down bulletin board borders and paper
- packing books up
- recording textbook numbers and stacking texts on shelves
- labeling everything with masking tape marked with the teacher's name
- returning materials to the library, science lab, etc.
- re-organizing math manipulatives, science lab equipment, etc.
- checking centers for stations for missing or misplaced pieces
- straightening the class library so all books are categorized correctly and neatly
- testing out dry erase markers to see which ones need to be thrown away
- taking student name labels off of materials, cubbies, coat hooks, desk, etc.

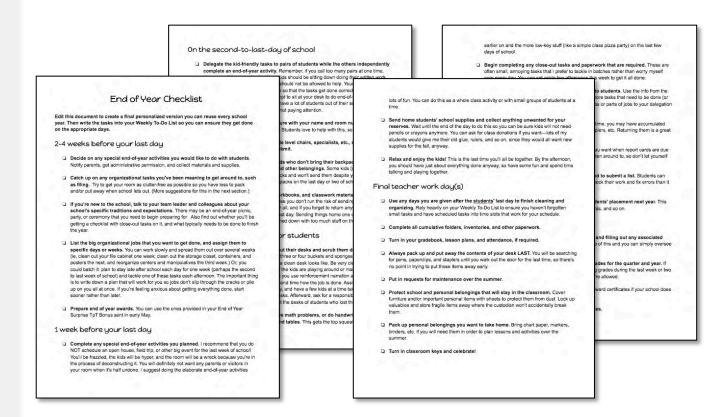


My third graders were usually able to complete every task on the editable list in less than two hours using the process explained above: we'd start around 10 a.m. and be done by noon, with a handful of miscellaneous tasks completed after lunch.

I know it's scary to wait until the second-to-last day of school to handle these tasks, but trust me (and the hundreds of 40 Hour Teacher Workweek Club members who have tried this.) It really does work!

#### How to prepare in advance for the summer classroom shutdown

While the actual room deconstruction and student involvement don't happen until the second-to-last day, there's lots of other work to be done that you can distribute throughout the weeks before school ends in order to work at a manageable pace.



Use the guidelines in the <u>editable end-of-year checklist</u> to help you plan out your Weekly To-Do List during your last few weeks of school.

The checklist is organized six time periods:

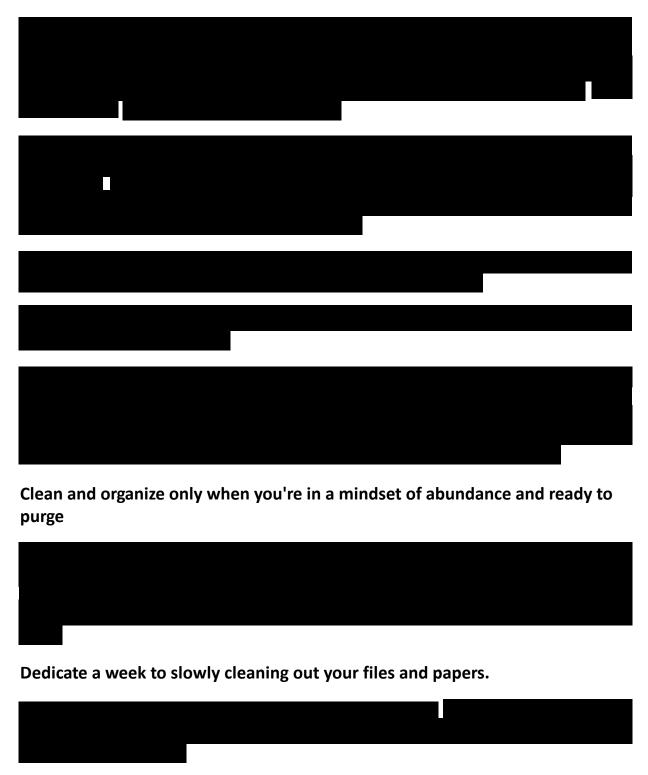
- 2-4 weeks before your last day
- 1 week before your last day
- During your last week
- Second-to-last day of school
- Last day of school for students
- Final teacher work day(s)

You can move, add, or delete tasks as they apply to your specific teaching context.

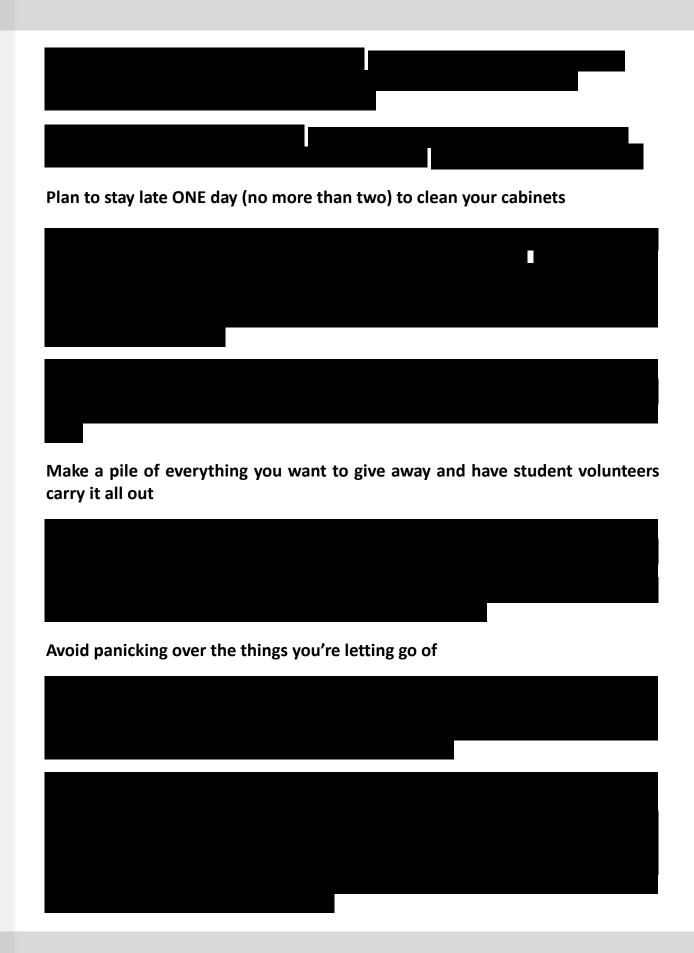


#### How to purge your classroom of clutter at the end of the year

Work from a mindset of abundance rather than scarcity



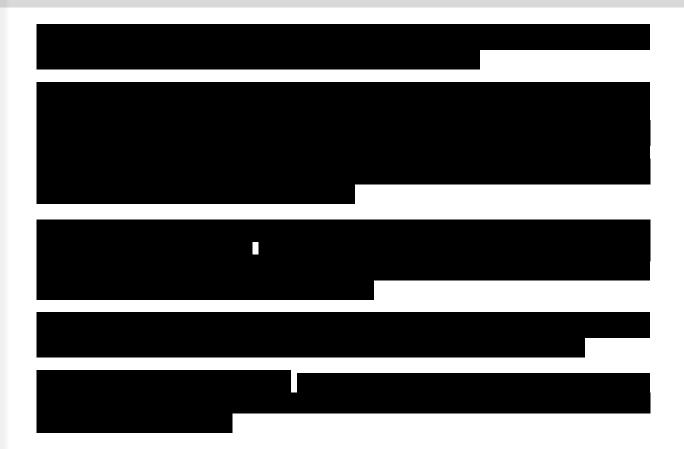






How to set yourself up now for success in the fall
Give yourself a head start on tasks that create anxiety
Make photocopies and laminate materials for the first 2 weeks of school
DON'T create double work by starting tasks you'll have to re-do

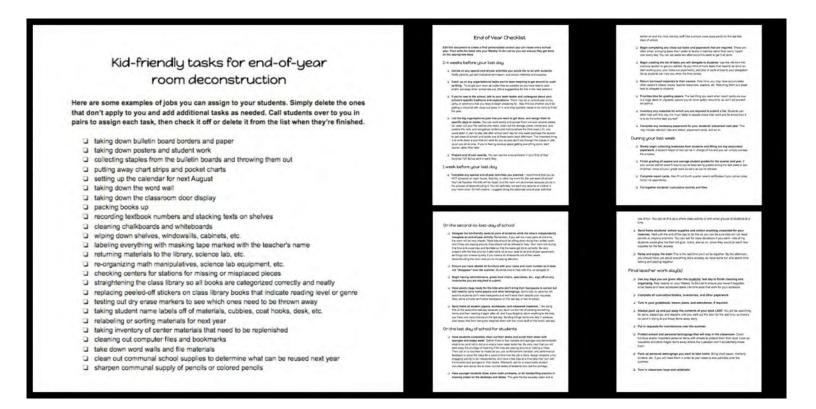




#### Take action!

Start prepping for the end of the year using the editable checklists and timelines provided this week. You want to try to pace yourself and plan in advance when you will do each task. Just assigning each task to a specific week is enough for right now, and you can break things down into daily tasks when each week arrives.

#### **EDITABLE FORMS & CHECKLISTS**



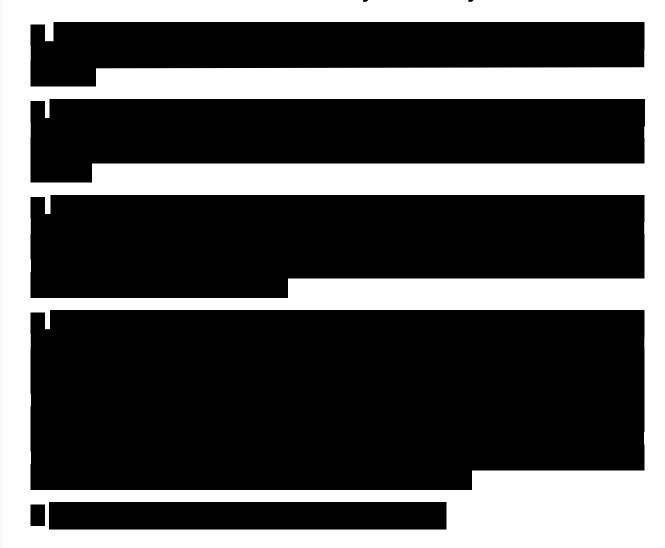
#### Click here to access the the checklists in Google Drive.

(Simply click the "make a copy" button to save a version you can edit in your own Google Drive.)

An editable Word doc version is included with your TpT download in the zip folder.



#### 2-4 weeks before your last day





#### 1 week before your last day







#### **During your last week**





#### On the second-to-last-day of school





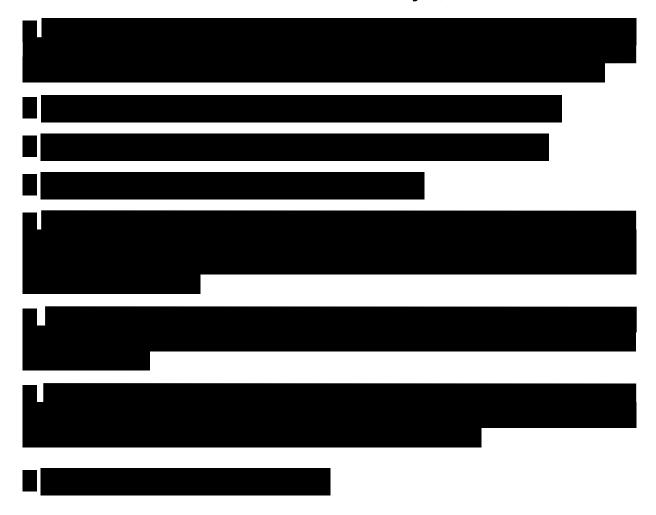
#### On the last day of school for students







#### Final teacher work day(s)





### Kid-friendly tasks for end-of-year room deconstruction

Here are some examples of jobs you can assign to your students. Simply cross out the ones that don't apply to you and add additional tasks as needed. Call students over to you in pairs to assign each task, then check it off or delete it from the list when they're finished.





#### **BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE...**

I'm Angela Watson, the creator of this resource. I'm a National Board Certified Teacher with a masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction, and have 11 years of classroom teaching experience and over a decade of experience as an instructional coach. I currently work as a Productivity and Mindset Specialist in the area of educational consulting. In practical terms, this means I author books, design curriculum, and provide professional development services. Everything I do is centered on sharing more effective, efficient, and enjoyable ways of teaching and learning!

I founded my website (<u>TruthforTeachers.com</u>) in 2003 to connect with other educators. You can now find thousands of adfree articles and resources there from me and our K-12 teacher-writer's collective.

Check out my other resources below:

**PODCAST** 

**COURSES** 

BOOKS

IN-PERSON PD

CURRICULUM

40 HOUR WORKWEEK

Stay in touch and get new resources sent to you automatically via email!

I send a personal, uplifting message every Sunday night to over 95,000 educators.

GET THE FREE WEEKLY EMAIL



