

Source #1

Neat Is Nice, But Clutter Is Cool?



**Too Much Stuff!**

- 1 Pictures from vacation, spelling tests, a plumber's business card, a postcard from a relative, a dentist appointment reminder. What do all these things have in common? You might find all of them on your refrigerator door. Your refrigerator door can tell you more about your family than you might think.
- 2 In 2012, scientists studied 32 families in Los Angeles. They found that most of these families had too much stuff. One easy way to tell if a family had too many things was to look at their refrigerator door. If there was a lot of clutter on the door, there was likely to be a lot of clutter in the house.
- 3 The scientists studied the families for four years. Here are a few more things they found out:
- Many families filled their garages with anything but a car. Furniture, boxes of clothes, toys, and appliances filled the space. Three out of four garages were too full to even hold cars.
  - The families collected games and sports equipment, but never played with them.
  - One picture from the study showed a book case with 24 shelves. On each shelf were dolls and stuffed animals. Each shelf had between 5 and 12 items on it. There were almost 200 toys on that one bookshelf.
- 4 Jeanne E. Arnold, a professor who did the study, said, "What we have is a time capsule of America. No other study has been done like this. Imagine how exciting it would be if we could go back to 1912 and see how people were living in their homes. That's the core of any society."
- 5 People collect things for a number of reasons. Maybe they will use them later. The things might be meaningful to them. They may have cost a lot of money to buy. But really, if you have not used something in the past year, you probably will not. It is just more clutter.

"Too Much Stuff!" written for the Utah State Office of Education.

Source #2

**Clutter Brings Out Creative Side**



- 6 Many people like a little mess. Some people say they think better in a mess. Some even claim they find things better in a mess. If you are one of those people, there is good news for you. Your mess may help your creative side.
- 7 Scientists around the world wanted to find out if people who were neater were better at things than people who had a lot of clutter. What they found out surprised them.
- 8 They found out that tidy places cause people to stick to what they know. That was not such a surprise. But they also discovered that messy spaces cause creative thinking.
- 9 In the studies people were given tasks in a room where things were neat and orderly. Others were given tasks in a room where papers and books were on the floor.
- 10 In a study in Denmark, college students filled out paperwork in each room. When they were done, they were asked to give money to a good cause. Most of the students from the neat room said yes. But, more than half of the students in the messy room said no.
- 11 When the students left the rooms they were offered either an apple or a piece of chocolate. The students leaving the neat room picked the apple three times more often than the students leaving the messy room.
- 12 In a second study, U.S. college students were told to invent new uses for ping-pong balls. Students in each room came up with about the same amount of ideas. However, this time, the students in the messy room came up with more creative ideas than the ones in the neat room.
- 13 In the final study, 188 American adults were placed into either a messy room, or a tidy room. Then they were given a choice between a smoothie that had "classic" ingredients, or one that had "new" ingredients. Participants from the neat room picked the "classic" smoothie more often than people from a cluttered room.
- 14 In each study, scientists found that what we have around us matters. When things are neat and clean we behave one way. When things are cluttered and messy we seem to behave another.

"Clutter Brings Out Creative Side" written for the Utah State Office of Education.

Source #3

### Dealing with Clutter

[www.clutterfree.org](http://www.clutterfree.org)  
(A website to help people who want to get rid of clutter)



15 Does this sound like you?

- I can never find anything after I put it away.
- My bedroom, closet, and backpack are full of junk.
- I want to be more organized.

16 If you said “yes” to any of these, then this site is for you!

17 Cleaning up can be hard to do. It’s even harder when you are cleaning up things that you don’t want or need anymore. It can be hard to decide what you want, what you need, and what you can let go.

**Get started!**

18 You will need 3 containers. They can be bags, boxes, or even a laundry basket! Label the boxes; one “keep,” one “give away,” and one “toss.” You might need a fourth box: “?” for things that you can’t decide what to do with.

19 Keep: In here go items that you use all the time. Keep things that you need every day. Keep things that you have used in the past year.

20 Give away: In here, place items that can be given to someone else. Maybe to a younger brother or sister, or a friend. Maybe even to someone who has less than you do. There are many places that take items that are good, but are not wanted by you anymore. They take these things and give them to others who need them.

21 Toss: In here, put things that need to be thrown away. Things that are broken or not fixable. Old papers, broken toys, etc.

**What if I can’t decide?**

22 That is what the “?” box is for. You can put things that you just aren’t sure you need, but you want to keep. There are things that we find hard to part with and that’s okay.

23 There are some questions you can ask yourself about items:

- Do I love this item?
- Have I got another one that is better?
- Does this item make me smile?

24 The “?” box should be closed up when you finish. Put a future date on it, like six months from now. If that date comes, and you have not opened the box, you should give it away. Why? Because you really didn’t need anything in there.

“Dealing with Clutter” written for the Utah State Office of Education.

**Participant Instructions:**

The readings talked about clutter and being tidy. Write an essay in which you give your opinion: Is clutter sometimes okay, or should you always try to be neat? Use the information from the passages in your essay.

- You have 15 minutes to complete the sample SAGE assessment item.
- (INCLUDING time spent reading, planning, revising and editing) – must be at least one paragraph in length.

[illegible]

## Student Writing Task

1



The readings talked about clutter and being tidy. Write an essay in which you give your opinion: Is clutter sometimes okay, or should you always try to be neat? Use the information from the passages in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

- Plan your essay
- Write your essay
- Revise and edit your essay

Spend about 30-40 minutes on this essay, including the time you spend reading, planning, writing, revising, and editing. Your essay should be at least one paragraph in length.

Type your answer in the space provided.



## SAGE 3-5 Opinion Scoring Rubric

Opinion Essay Writing Rubric Writing Rubric (Grades 3-5)		
Statement of Purpose/Focus and Organization Weight: 40%	Evidence/Elaboration Weight: 40%	Conventions/Editing Weight: 20%
<p>The response is fully sustained and consistently and purposefully focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opinion is clearly stated, focused, and strongly maintained</li> <li>• opinion is communicated clearly within the purpose, audience, and task</li> </ul> <p>The response has a clear and effective organizational structure creating unity and completeness :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a variety of transitional strategies is consistently used to effectively clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>• logical progression of ideas from beginning to end</li> <li>• effective introduction and conclusion for audience and purpose</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the writer's opinion that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use of evidence from sources is smoothly integrated, comprehensive, and relevant</li> <li>• effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques</li> </ul> <p>The response clearly and effectively expresses ideas, using precise language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use of academic and domain-specific vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> </ul>	<p>The response displays adequate command of all grade level and preceding level conventions of writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some errors in usage and sentence formation may be present, but no systematic pattern of errors is displayed</li> <li>• use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling is adequate</li> </ul>