The $50 Classroom Supply List

One dollar-store trip, one functioning classroom. Prices approximate — most items run $1.25.

Storage & Organization (~$18)		
6 plastic shoebox bins with lids	$1.25 ea	supply bins, one per table group
4 plastic book boxes (magazine-holder style)	$1.25 ea	silent-reading book boxes
2 tall dish bins (kitchen aisle)	$1.25 ea	chargers & headphones
1 plastic shower caddy	$1.25	art / math station
Labels & Paper Goods (~$10)		
3 packs neon sticky notes	$1.25 ea	exit tickets, quick responses
2 dry-erase pocket sleeves	$1.25 ea	reusable whiteboards
1 pack colorful cardstock	$1.25	hall passes, name tents
1 pack file folders	$1.25	portfolios, absent-work folders
1 roll masking or washi tape	$1.25	label everything in sight
Desk & Student Supplies (~$12)		
2 packs pencils (30-count)	$1.25 ea	community pencil bucket
1 pack eraser caps	$1.25	pencil-top erasers vanish by Oct
2 packs glue sticks	$1.25 ea	science notebooks, journals
1 pack highlighters	$1.25	annotation work all year
1 pack dry-erase markers (4-ct black)	$1.25	pairs with the pocket sleeves
The Room (~$8)		
2 strings paper lanterns or garland	$1.25 ea	windows, bulletin board edges
1 black plastic tablecloth	$1.25	bulletin board background that won't fade
1 pack binder clips	$1.25	hang student work without damage
1 spray bottle	$1.25	desk & whiteboard cleaning

Total: about $48 before tax — keep $2 of wiggle room for whatever's on clearance.

Buy vs. Skip

- ☐ **BUY: the boring organizers.** Bins, boxes, caddies — plastic is plastic, and the cheap ones hold up for years.
- ☐ **BUY: anything consumable.** Pencils, glue sticks, sticky notes, tape — they get used up wherever you buy them.

- ☐ **SKIP: themed décor kits.** Cute for a week, faded and falling apart by October.
- ☐ **SKIP: cheap scissors and staplers.** They jam and dull immediately — borrow or bring from home.
- ☐ **SKIP: anything scented.** Allergies, opinions, and your principal's policy. Keep the room neutral.

Worth Real Money (not the dollar store)

- ☐ A good **electric pencil sharpener** (~$25–30) — the best money you'll spend all year.
- ☐ **Quality dry-erase markers** for YOUR whiteboard — the one the whole class reads all day.
- ☐ A sturdy **three-hole punch** — the flimsy ones mangle paper and waste your time.

Tips: shop the second week of August (bins sell out first) · check the school supply closet before you buy · save your receipts — the IRS educator expense deduction covers up to $300.

From the post "Back-to-School on $50: My Dollar Store Classroom Setup" at theeverydayeducator.com.