



## **New Teacher Survival Guide**

**Offers New Teacher Tips and Strategies, including:**

- Reproducibles
- Activities
- Sample Materials

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# Introduction

The first year of teaching is perhaps the most exciting and oftentimes the most stressful in one's career. As a new teacher, you spend countless hours researching lesson plans, creating materials, scouring libraries, and gleaning the textbook to plan what and how you are going to teach your content.

When teachers enter the classroom for the first time, however, many have failed to prepare for a key facet of teaching: classroom management. Classroom management encompasses the processes and procedures that keep your classroom operating efficiently and at full throttle. It allows you to focus on the thing that brought you to teaching in the first place: the teaching and learning of the subject matter.

The *New Teacher's Survival Guide* gives new teachers a collection of easy-to-use tips and reproducibles. These tips are merely suggestions for the issues that you should be thinking about and events that you need to plan for in the classroom. Like most things in life, there are many approaches to the same sets of problems. The key is to find what works best for you.

In time, each teacher develops his or her own individualized methods that work best in his or her classroom. These methods will allow you to have a smooth running classroom in which you and your students are unencumbered by daily housekeeping issues. Your final goal, naturally, is to create the optimal environment for learning.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Establishing Daily Procedures

### Why You Should Do It

One of the most significant things you can do to affect student conduct is to establish effective daily events in your classroom. Doing so will allow you to be organized and appear in control. It will also allow students to take responsibility for themselves because they will know what to do. Time is also used more effectively in classrooms with established daily procedures. The tips that follow offer suggestions that will help you establish effective daily procedures in your classroom.

### What You Should Do It

Set up procedures for the following classroom activities:

- ◆ Entering the classroom
- ◆ Taking roll
- ◆ Dealing with tardy students
- ◆ Making up work when absent
- ◆ Dealing with students who lack materials
- ◆ Passing out instructional materials
- ◆ Handling equipment
- ◆ Labeling student papers
- ◆ Collecting student work
- ◆ Preparing to leave at the end of class

## HOW TO DO IT

### **Entering the Classroom**

*Begin each class period with a brief warm-up activity, such as journal writing or solving a problem of the day.* Before students arrive, post the warm-up activity on the board and make a list of the materials needed for the main lesson. If there is a new homework assignment, post it on the board, too. If necessary, remind students to sit in their assigned seats. When the bell rings, check to see who is on-task. Give a signal to those who are off-task.

It may be helpful (and even necessary) to attribute a small portion of a daily grade to these warm-up exercises so that students treat them seriously. Consider asking students to turn them in weekly. You can then include it as a participation grade.

### **Taking Roll**

*Use a quick method of taking roll as students participate in the opening activity.* On the first day of school, set up a seating chart, which you can use to support the students in sitting in their assigned seats. Throughout the year, use the chart to take roll quickly. If students say someone is not absent, but the student is not in the room, simply state that to be considered present a person needs to be working when the bell rings.

### **Dealing with Tardy Students**

*Have a plan for dealing with tardy students.* You can avoid being interrupted by using a sign-in sheet for students who arrive late. Later use the sheet to update your roll book and, if necessary, the attendance office's records. An alternative would be to allow a small interruption, quickly update your attendance sheet and move on.

In either case, be sure to point out to the tardy student the consequence of habitual tardiness. You may be able to prevent a majority of late students by holding them accountable for lateness. For example, you might dock a student's participation grade by half a point for every three times tardy.

**Reproducible:** [Sign-In Sheet for Late Students](#)

**Making Up Work When Absent**

*Prepare make-up packets for students who are absent.* First label several large envelopes as make-up work. Then organize and label a file for each period you teach. Later, when you pass out work to a class, create enough packets with the extra papers for each absent student to receive one. Include a list of any other assignments the student needs to do. Place the make-up work envelopes in the file for the appropriate period.

**Reproducible:** [Make-Up Work Form](#)

**Dealing with Students Who Lack Materials**

*Set up procedures for students who do not have all of the required materials.* Begin by asking the class at-large if anyone has an extra (pen, sheet of paper, etc.) the student can use. High school students tend to be more accountable to one another with returnable items. If this doesn't work, allow students to sign up for borrowed materials to be returned at the end of class or, if consumable, replaced during the next class. If you are unable to get extra copies of your books, have students who arrive without their book share with classmates whom you designate. (See Classroom Rules for information on consequences for not having required materials.) Permitting students get by without the required materials might send the signal that it is okay to leave materials at home.

**Reproducible:** [Borrowed Materials Sign-Up Sheet](#)

**Passing Out Instructional Materials**

*Set up procedures for passing out and collecting instructional materials.* Store the instructional materials, such as textbooks, manipulatives, tools, and equipment in easily accessible areas. Train several materials monitors to pass out and collect the materials. When you need the materials passed out, simply ask the materials monitors to do so. Be sure to re-evaluate your selection of monitors often. Some may use the job as an opportunity to socialize. Consider giving such a job to low achievers to help them feel more connected to the class.

**Reproducible:** [Contracts for Materials Monitors](#)

**Handling Equipment**

*Make students be responsible for taking care of the equipment in your room.* During the first week, be sure to show everyone where equipment is stored and how to take care of it. Allow individuals to access equipment they might wish to use that the rest of the class might not need as long as they take responsibility for caring for it. Post conditions for using equipment near the storage area.

**Reproducible:** [How to Handle Equipment Poster](#)

### **Labeling Student Papers**

*Post procedures for labeling student papers.* Ask students to write their name, the date, your name, the period number, and the assignment on every paper they turn in to you. You will probably need to remind students of this often. When you receive unlabeled papers, first check the handwriting to see if you can attribute it to a particular student. Confirm with the student that it is his or her paper, if you are not certain. Then, set up a basket where you place papers that do not have the required information on them. Explain that if you cannot determine to whom a paper belongs or which assignment it might be, you cannot give credit for the work. Allow students to look in the basket for missing work. Treat formerly unlabeled papers as if they were late.

**Reproducible:** [How to Label Your Papers Poster](#)

### **Collecting Student Work**

*Set up procedures for collecting student work.* First, label a collection basket for each period you teach. Show students where the basket for their period is. Place a stapler and a container of paper clips near the baskets for students to fasten together all the pages of an assignment. Any work that is completed by the end of a class period can be collected by one or two students and placed in the basket.

You can allow students to complete unfinished work as homework; however, do not give students the "finish it at home" option until the very end of the period (to keep them working during class). When you have intended an assignment to be completed in class over several days or it is obvious most students need more time, you can tell students to keep the work in their notebooks and finish it during the next class.

**Reproducible:** [Turning In Your Work Poster](#)

### **Preparing to Leave at the End of Class**

*Have a signal for when students may prepare to leave the class.* For most students, the bell means it is time to drop everything, stuff it all in their backpacks, and leave for their next class, lunch, or home. You can ask students not to leave until you have signaled that class is over. Request that they not pick up their backpacks or other bags until they are dismissed. Allow time for closure, clean-up, and clarification of assignments. Then give your dismissal signal.

Try to be considerate of the fact that your students may need to stop by their lockers to pick up materials before their next class. Plan closure and clean-up time into your own class period to avoid causing students to be late for their next class.



**REPRODUCIBLES**



**Make-Up Work Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Due: One week after you return to school  
complete all of the enclosed papers.

Do the following additional assignments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Make-Up Work Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Due: One week after you return to school  
complete all of the enclosed papers.

Do the following additional assignments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Make-Up Work Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Due: One week after you return to school  
complete all of the enclosed papers.

Do the following additional assignments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Make-Up Work Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Due: One week after you return to school  
complete all of the enclosed papers.

Do the following additional assignments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Contract for Materials Monitors**

I agree to accept responsibility for passing out and collecting instructional materials that are stored in the classroom. When asked by the teacher, I will do the following:

1. I will get my group's share of the materials from the storage area.
2. I will carefully handle the materials, according to the directions I have received from the teacher.
3. I will promptly pass out the materials to my group.
4. I will return all the materials I collected back to their proper place in the storage area.
5. I will report any damages to the teacher as soon as I notice them.
6. I will give a list of any materials still being used by anyone in my group.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Student Copy

**Contract for Materials Monitors**

I agree to accept responsibility for passing out and collecting instructional materials that are stored in the classroom. When asked by the teacher, I will do the following:

1. I will get my group's share of the materials from the storage area.
2. I will carefully handle the materials, according to the directions I have received from the teacher.
3. I will promptly pass out the materials to my group.
4. I will return all the materials I collected back to their proper place in the storage area.
5. I will report any damages to the teacher as soon as I notice them.
6. I will give a list of any materials still being used by anyone in my group.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Student Copy

# **How to Handle Equipment**

- 1. Handle all equipment with care. Report any damage as soon as it occurs.**
- 2. Clean whatever you use.**
- 3. Return what you use to its proper storage space.**
- 4. Failure to follow these procedures may result in loss of privileges.**

## **How to Label Your Papers**

1. Be sure to write the following on every paper you turn in.
2. If an assignment is longer than one sheet of paper, make sure every sheet has this information on it.

Your Name  
Date Assignment Was Given  
Teacher's Name  
Period Number  
The Assignment

## Turning In Your Work

1. Check to see that you have labeled your papers correctly.
2. Staple your papers together with one staple. If stapling would harm any part of your work, paper clip it together.
3. If you do not finish an assignment during class, ask me what to do next.
4. Sometimes I will give you more time to finish an assignment during a future class. When this happens, place the unfinished work in your notebook. Be sure to bring it to the next class session so you can complete it in class and get credit for your work.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Establishing Rules and a Respectful Environment

### Why You Should Do It

Rules communicate the kind of atmosphere you wish to establish in the classroom. They set limits for students' conduct, which allows students to learn effectively. Clearly stated rules posted in the classroom allow you to establish your expectations for how students will conduct themselves. The tips in this section will help you establish and maintain good behavior among students as you teach.

### What You Should Do

We suggest you consider the following in order to keep an orderly classroom:

- ◆ Adhere to school rules
- ◆ Establish classroom rules
- ◆ Determine consequences for breaking the rules
- ◆ Communicate rules, consequences, and rewards
- ◆ Inform families of the rules
- ◆ Record infractions of the rules
- ◆ Predetermine your reaction when rules are broken
- ◆ Determine an action plan for serious situations
- ◆ Draw up a respect agreement

## HOW TO DO IT

### **Adhere to School Rules**

*Familiarize yourself with the school rules.* Check with a site administrator to find out what the school rules are and the consequences for breaking them. Also, check to see when the administrator wishes to be involved in conflicts that take place in the classroom or with parents. Find out the kinds of support the school offers for students who habitually break rules. Finally, make sure your own classroom rules do not conflict with the school rules.

### **Establish Classroom Rules**

*Before the first day of school, prepare a brief list of general rules to tell students what you expect from them.* Before you create your rules, consider the kind of environment you wish to establish in your classroom. Brainstorm a list of your expectations for student conduct. Review the list for some general ideas of how you want students to conduct themselves. Then write five or six general rules for student conduct. Make sure your rules are consistent with the school rules.

**Reproducible:** [Example of Classroom Rules](#)

### **Determine Consequences for Breaking the Rules**

*Determine appropriate consequences for infractions of the rules.* Before the first day of school, brainstorm a list of what will happen when a student does not follow a rule. Keep in mind that rules will probably be broken daily. You need to be prepared in advance, so you are not trying to decide what to do in the middle of an issue with a student. Additionally, students need to know in advance what will happen if they break a rule. Post the consequences prominently near the rules.

**Reproducible:** [Example of Consequences for Breaking Rules](#)

### **Communicate Rules, Consequences, and Rewards**

*Explain the rules to your students.* Before the first day of school, post your classroom rules, consequences, and rewards prominently in the front of the classroom. On the first day of school, review the rules with your students. Be sure to explain the consequences that will occur when a rule is broken. Perhaps most important to the success of your program is the consistent use of praise and other rewards during the first weeks of school.

**Inform Families of the Rules**

*Inform your students' families of the rules, consequences, and rewards.* Send home two copies of the rules, consequences, and rewards. Ask parents and students to sign one copy and keep the other for reference.

Be sure to request contact information (phone number, email address, best time to call, and so on). Also, be sure to include a line for relationship to student since many students do not share the same last name with the adult(s) they live with. Don't assume the main office has the most up-to-date contact information. Also, try to identify a "student-free" contact method (parent e-mail, parent pager, and so on)—some way to communicate with a parent that cannot be sabotaged.

**Reproducible:** [Sample Rules Information Sheet for Families](#)

**Record Infractions of the Rules**

*Keep a record of when students break rules.* The record will help you determine consequences and will serve you when communicating with parents. You may want to limit this to major infractions, since recording every incident, no matter how small is time-consuming and may become overly burdensome. Be sure to treat all students equally when recording infractions to ensure fairness. Keep your records simple so that they are easy to understand and do not take too much time.

**Reproducible:** [Record of Infractions of Rules](#)

**Predetermine Your Reaction When Rules Are Broken**

*Control your reaction when rules are broken.* A common reaction is for a student to ask, "What did I do?" Simply and calmly note the infraction but move on with a minimum of fuss. Don't give the student undue attention and power for their behavior. Wait until after class to discuss the incident and notify the student of the consequences of breaking the rule. This approach spares limited class time, avoids rewarding misbehavior with more attention, and yet follows up with consequences.

**Determine an Action Plan for Serious Situations**

*Have the student write an action plan before calling a parent or guardian.* The action plan will demonstrate that you are trying to work with the student. It will also show that the student is taking some responsibility for what happened. Help the student identify the rule or rules that have been broken. Then work with him or her to list the reasons for the problem. Finally, help the student see that by changing what causes the problem, he or she can solve it.

**Reproducible:** [Action Plan Form](#)

### ***Draw Up a Respect Agreement***

*Have students agree to treat each other respectfully in your class. On the first day of school, tell students that you want to make sure that everyone feels respected in your classroom. Guide your classes in preparing a list of six to eight general ideas for how the class can have a respectful and safe learning environment. Make sure each item is stated positively. Create a poster with the compiled list. Post the agreement in the classroom.*

**Reproducible:** [Example of a Respect Agreement](#)



**REPRODUCIBLES**

## Example of Classroom Rules

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### Teacher Instructions

1. *Create a general list of classroom rules.* List your expectations, then look for ways that you can combine ideas into a general rule. Check each rule for clarity. Delete any unnecessary words.
2. *Make sure your list of rules reflects your philosophy of education.* For example, research on student learning supports the benefits of students explaining their work to peers, so you might decide that you want students to be allowed to talk to one another under specific conditions. On the other hand, you determine that you want full attention when speaking to the class. You also want students to be quiet and in their seats during class discussions. You might decide on the following general rule: *Listen and stay seated when someone is speaking.*
3. *Phrase rules in the positive.* For example:  
YES – This is a beverage-free classroom.  
NO – Do not bring beverages to class.
4. *Prepare your rules before the first day of school.* Make a poster-sized list of the rules, numbering each rule for easy reference. Post the rules prominently in the front of the classroom.
5. *Give a copy of the rules to each student.* Have students place the rules in their notebooks for easy reference.
6. *Communicate rules to families.* Send a list of the rules to families either before or on the first day of school.

## **Classroom Rules Sample and Suggestion**

# **Classroom Rules**

- 1. Be in your assigned seat and ready to work when the bell rings.**
- 2. Bring required books and materials to every class, unless told otherwise by the teacher.**
- 3. Listen and stay seated when someone is speaking.**
- 4. Follow directions the first time they are given.**
- 5. Turn assignments in on time.**
- 6. Treat everyone and their property respectfully.**

## Example of Consequences for Breaking Rules

---

### Teacher Instructions

1. *Make sure the consequences increase in severity for each infraction.* In the example of Consequences for Breaking Rules, receiving a demerit is not as dramatic as having to write a list of solutions for a problem, which is not as severe as having detention.
2. *For the rules that help students be prepared to learn, set up specific procedures to follow if the rule is broken so students are not rewarded for inappropriate choices.*
  - **Rule:** Bring required books and materials to every class. **Procedure:** Check out these materials from the teacher.
3. *Decide the time frame for the consequence system.* Determine whether you want the system to be weekly, biweekly, monthly, or by grading period. Middle school students or a class with multiple issues might require a weekly system. For example, a student who arrives late on Monday would receive a warning. If the same student does not bring a required book on Wednesday, he or she would have to write a list of solutions for not arriving in class prepared. If the same student then breaks a rule later in the week, he or she would be put on detention.
4. *If you decide to include rule-specific consequences, make sure each consequence suits the broken rule.* In the following example, the class time is made up, so students are not rewarded for not being ready to work. The purpose of the consequence is to encourage students to be in their seats and ready to work when the bell rings.
  - **Rule:** Be in your assigned seat and ready to work when the bell rings.  
**Consequence:** Make up missed class time when late or needing to take class time to organize materials.
5. *Check for consequences that might reward misconduct.* For example, suppose a student comes to class without books and materials. An inappropriate consequence might be to have the student do without these materials for the class period because that might be just what the student wants. How can he or she work without the materials? By having a procedure for dealing with missing materials, such as checking out missing items, the student is not rewarded for misconduct.

## **Consequences for Breaking Rules**

**First Offense:**            **Receive a warning.**

**Second Offense:**       **Write a list of solutions for the problem.**

**Third Offense:**         **Receive detention.**

**Fourth Offense:**       **Write an action plan and make a phone call to parents.**

**Fifth Offense:**         **Conference with parents and teacher at school.**

### Sample Rules Information Sheet for Families

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The following are the rules and consequences applied during any class taken with me. Please review these with your child. Then sign the document and ask him or her to do the same. Return one copy and keep the other for future reference. Thank you.

Sincerely,

#### Classroom Rules

1. Be in your assigned seat and ready to work when the bell rings.
2. Bring required books and materials to every class, unless told otherwise by the teacher.
3. Listen and stay seated when someone is speaking.
4. Follow directions the first time they are given.
5. Turn assignments in on time.
6. Treat everyone and their property respectfully.

#### Consequences for Breaking Rules

- First Offense: Receive a warning.  
 Second Offense: Write a list of solutions for the problem.  
 Third Offense: Receive detention.  
 Fourth Offense: Write an action plan and make a phone call to parents.  
 Fifth Offense: Conference with parents and teacher at school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

**Parent/Guardian:**  
**Please fill out the following contact information:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Best time to call

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Pager Number



**Action Plan Form**

What rule or rules have been broken?

List the reasons for the problem. (What is causing you to break the rules?)

What can you do to solve the problem?

---

Signature of Student

---

Date

## **Example of a Respect Agreement**

---

### **Teacher Instructions**

1. *Have students discuss how they wish to be treated by other students in your classroom.* Explain that you want the students to tell you what they wish to be able to expect from everyone in the class. Encourage students to brainstorm their ideas as you write them down on a large sheet of paper.
2. *Prepare an agreement with a few general ways that everyone in the class can be respectful.* Use the students' brainstormed list of ideas to prepare six to eight general items that will help create a respectful and safe learning environment. Make sure each item is stated positively.
3. *Create a poster with the agreement.* Hang it prominently in your classroom.
4. *Post the agreement for easy reference.*
5. *Review the agreement periodically.* As issues arise, refer students to the agreement. For example, you might turn to the poster and say, "I thought we agreed that we would listen to everyone's ideas. I think that means that we do not make fun of anyone's answers."

## **RESPECT AGREEMENT**

**We agree to do the following to create a respectful environment:**

- 1. Listen to everyone's ideas.**
- 2. Take turns when speaking.**
- 3. Be tolerant of ideas that are different from our own.**
- 4. Consider the feelings of everyone.**
- 5. Be supportive and kind.**
- 6. Share ideas.**
- 7. Be non-judgmental.**
- 8. Work as a team.**

## CHAPTER THREE

# Setting Up Your Classroom

### Why You Should Do It

How you set up the furniture in your classroom will affect the atmosphere of your class. The subject you teach and your teaching style will impact the arrangement of student desks or tables. Teacher-centered classrooms often have desks arranged in traditional rows. Student-centered classrooms generally have desks arranged in groupings. The following tips will help you decide how to set up your classroom. As you consider these ideas, make sure that you will be comfortable and that you will have enough room to move easily among the students.

### What You Should Do

Review and decide what organizing principle you will use in your classroom:

- ◆ Table groups
- ◆ Table rows
- ◆ Table clusters
- ◆ Desk groups
- ◆ Desk rows
- ◆ Desk clusters
- ◆ What kind of furniture to choose
- ◆ Instructional materials storage
- ◆ Teaching material storage
- ◆ Special education classroom
- ◆ Check to see if it works
- ◆ Seating charts

## HOW TO DO IT

### **Table Groups**

*Arrange tables in groups if you want to encourage group work and cooperation.* If your classroom has tables, you can arrange clusters of tables that allow students to work in groups or independently without moving furniture. The tables can be arranged so that everyone can see the front of the room without moving any chairs or tables.

**Reproducible:** [Table Groups Diagram](#)

### **Table Rows**

*Arrange tables in rows if you prefer a more traditional classroom.* If your classroom has tables, you can arrange them in rows conducive to lecturing and teacher demonstrations. Some teachers arrange the tables in rows and have students move the tables in clusters for group work. The Table Rows Diagram reproducible shows gaps between the tables, which makes moving among the students easier for you.

**Reproducible:** [Table Rows Diagram](#)

### **Table Clusters**

*Arrange tables in clusters if you want the versatility of having either rows or groups with minimal movement.* If your classroom has tables, you can arrange them so that they readily allow group work. Then by having students move only a few desks, the classroom can be transformed for lecturing or teacher demonstrations or during tests.

**Reproducible:** [Table Clusters Diagram](#)

### **Desk Groups**

*When doing group work, have students temporarily rearrange their desks in small groupings.* If your classroom has desks, you can have students move their desks in groups on an as-needed basis. Group work in desks can be a challenge because there is no shared flat surface and desk groupings take up more space. Nonetheless, students benefit by the opportunity to gather together in small groups.

**Reproducible:** [Different Types of Desk Groups](#)

**Desk Rows**

*Arrange desks in rows if you prefer a more traditional classroom.* If your classroom has desks, you can arrange them in rows conducive to lecturing. Some teachers arrange the desks in rows and have students move the desks when doing group work.

**Reproducible:** [Desk Rows Diagram](#)

**Desk Clusters**

*Arrange desks in clusters with everyone facing the center to encourage whole group discussions.* If your classroom has desks, you can arrange clusters of desks to make each student only a few rows away from you. Such an arrangement makes class discussions easier and makes it harder for students to hide in the back.

**Reproducible:** [Desk Clusters Diagram](#)

**What Kind of Furniture to Choose**

*If you are lucky enough to get to choose what kind of furniture you will have, tables are more versatile than desks.* Tables take up less space than desks. The large, flat surface of a table offers more workspace for projects, including large graphic organizers, experiments, and art projects. Perhaps of greatest importance, tables make group work much easier. The small, slanted workspace on a desk is seldom found outside of schools. In fact, many schools are now selecting tables, rather than desks for their students.

**Instructional Materials Storage**

*Make instructional materials and equipment accessible.* Determine which materials and equipment you will use most often. Place these in the most accessible storage areas. Check to see that accessing the items will be easy when the class is full of students and several students will be going to the storage areas at the same time. In other words, make sure students will be able to flow into and out of the storage area. Set up procedures for accessing equipment.

**Teaching Materials Storage**

*Determine a simple system for storing your teaching materials.* One easy system for storing teaching materials is sequentially. In other words, set up your cabinets by month so that the special materials that you use during a certain period of the year will be easily accessible within the same box or shelf in the cabinet. You could have a shelf marked for each month of the school year. The materials that you use throughout the year should be placed in a separate highly accessible storage area. Those that you use less often would be stored in the sequentially organized cabinets.

### **Special Education Classroom**

*Determine a floor plan that allows easy access to your students and materials.* Be sure to allow space and accessibility for a wheelchair. Include an area for group work and places for individuals in a small group to work separately. You may also need to be able to work with a small group of students while having one or two students work on their own, separate from everyone else.

**Reproducible:** [Special Education Classroom Diagram](#)

### **Check To See How It Works**

*Sit in every student seat to determine if the plan is working.* Make sure nothing in the room obstructs your view of the board and projection screen in front of the room. Imagine the seats filled with students to see if any student's view might be blocked by another student. Also check the spacing between the chairs when they are pulled out far enough to allow someone to sit in them. Will you be able to walk between the chairs when the class is full? Where will students put their backpacks? Will there be room for people to walk around?

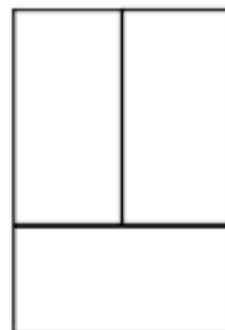
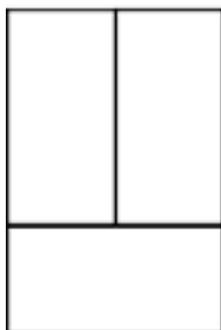
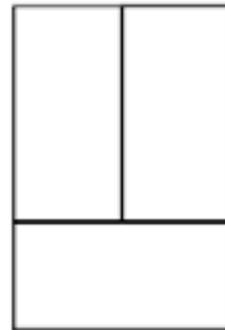
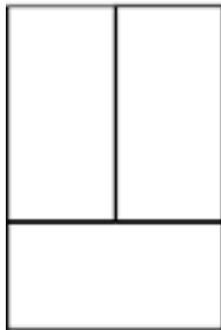
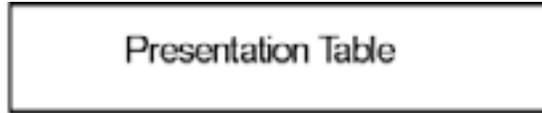
### **Seating Charts**

*Make a seating chart based on the classroom set-up that you create.* If you set up your class like any of the maps in the reproducibles presented here, you can use the map itself as a seating chart. Simply photocopy it and write the students' names on the desks or tables where they sit. You can use the seating charts to take roll.

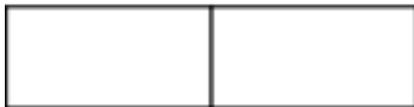
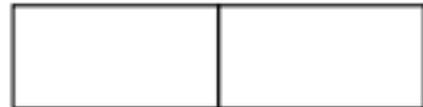
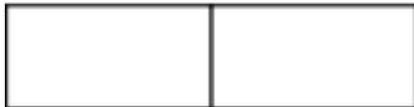
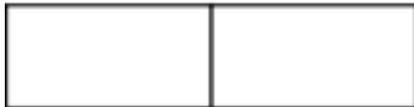
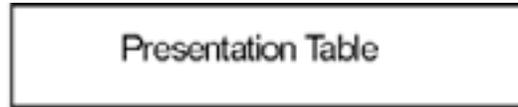


**REPRODUCIBLES**

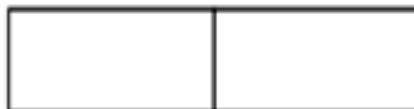
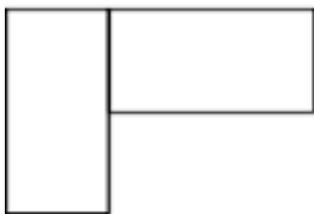
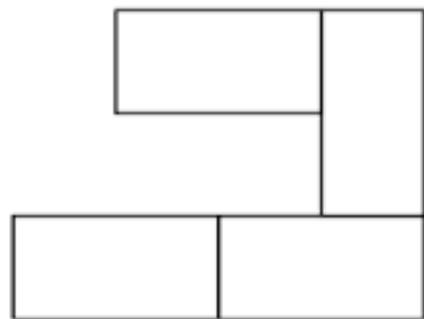
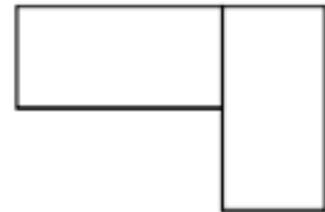
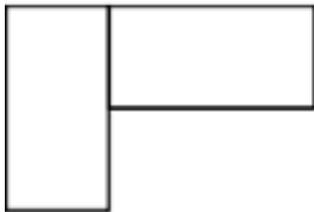
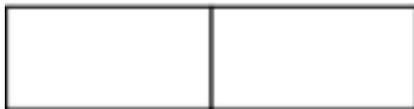
### Table Groups Diagram



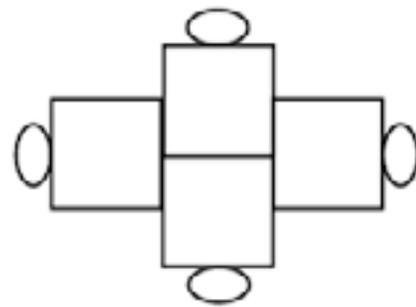
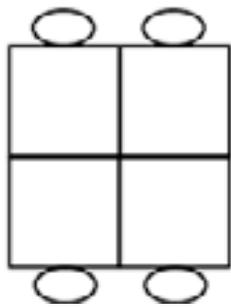
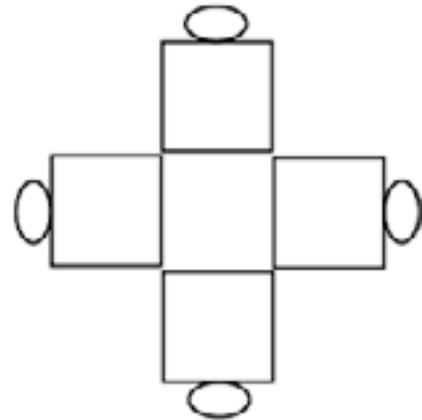
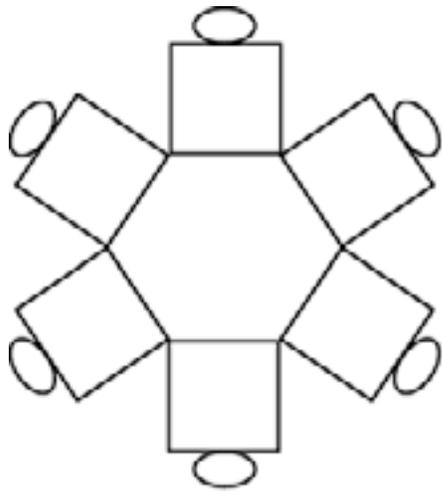
### Table Rows Diagram



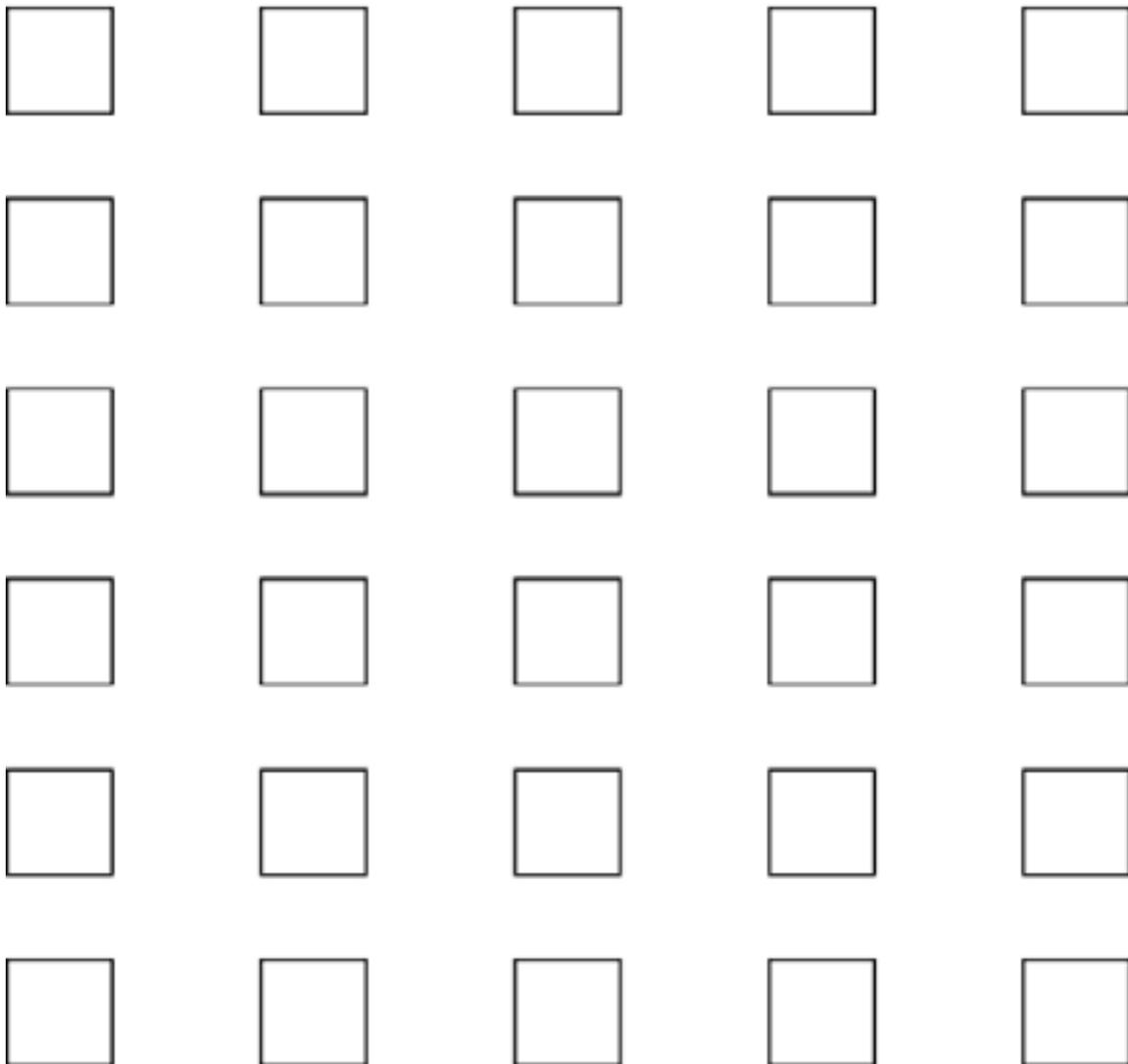
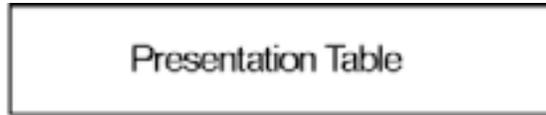
### Table Clusters Diagram



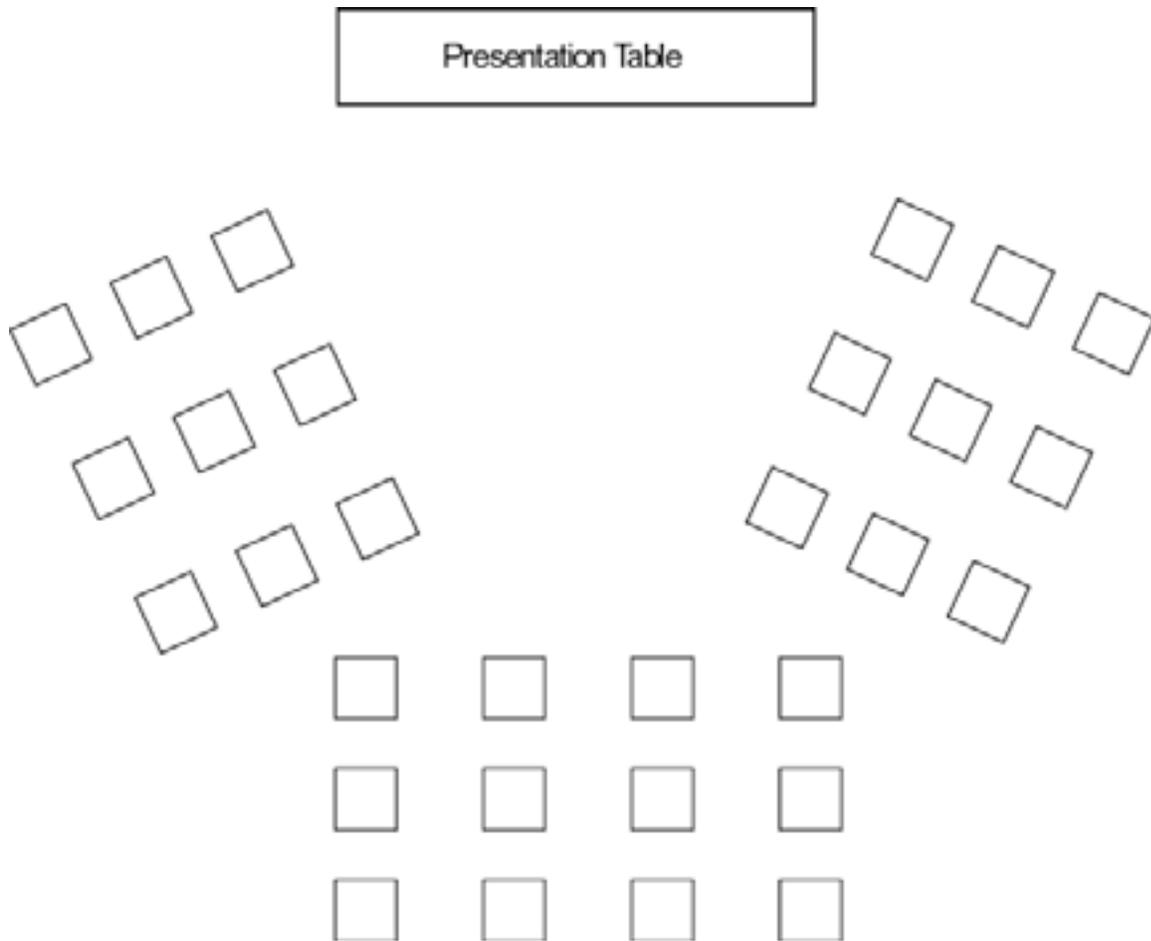
### Different Types of Desk Groups



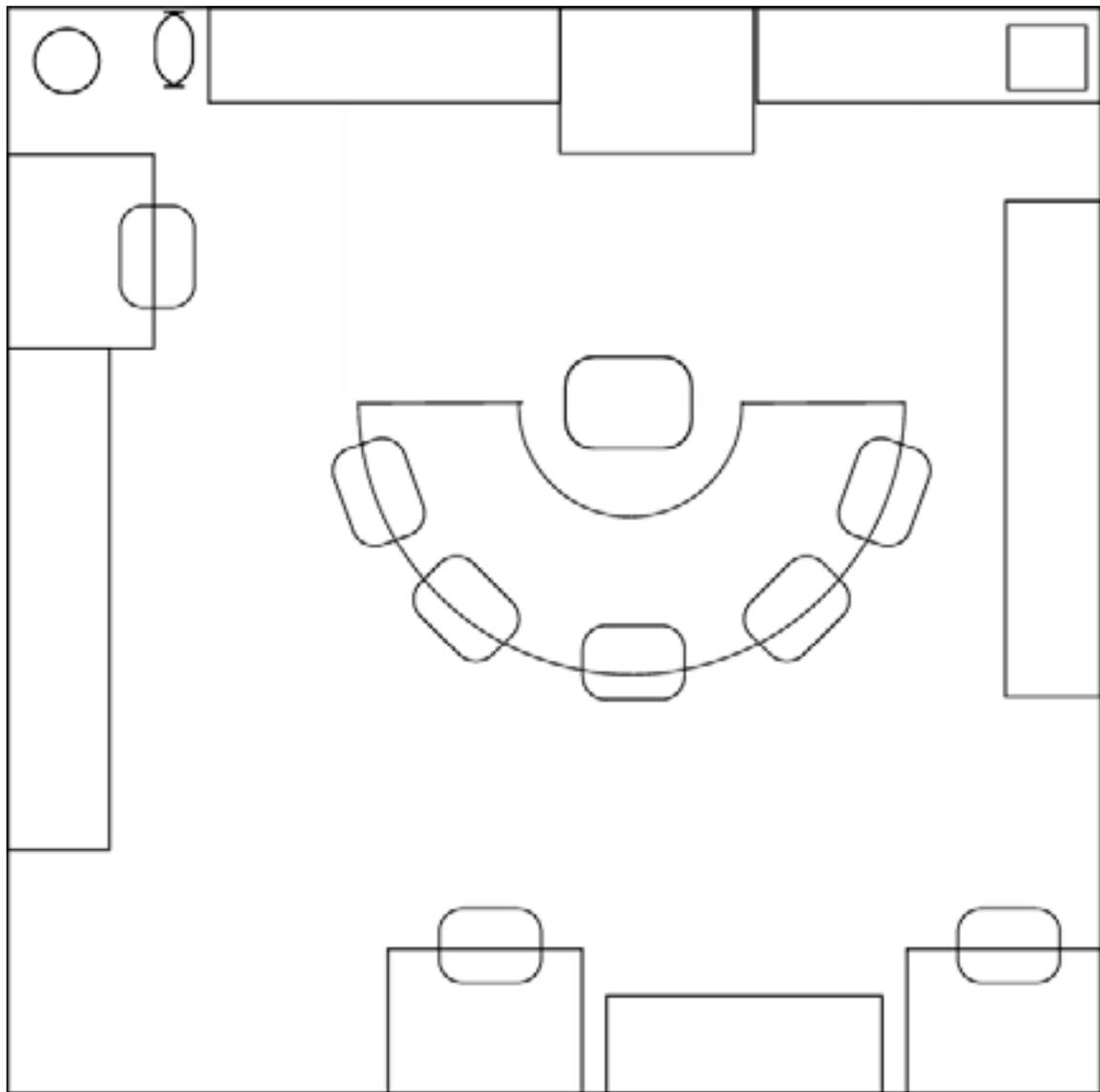
### Desk Rows Diagram



### Desk Clusters Diagram



### Special Education Classroom Diagram



# CHAPTER FOUR

## Using Time Effectively

### Why You Should Do It

Having an organized class period goes a long way in establishing yourself as the authority in the classroom. A daily schedule determines ahead of time exactly when you and the students are going to follow required procedures. It also minimizes wasted time and apparent indecision. You and the students know exactly what to expect and have enough time to be engaged in a lesson, which can occur over several days or be concluded in a single period. The tips in this topic will help you plan your day and organize your time.

### What You Should Do

Effective time management requires thinking and pre-planning about the following topics:

- ◆ Schedule class periods
- ◆ Plan for classroom transitions
- ◆ Prepare for student arrival
- ◆ Maximize the first five minutes of class
- ◆ Use the last five or ten minutes
- ◆ Keep track of time
- ◆ Use flexibility to prolong effective instruction
- ◆ Save yourself time in the future
- ◆ Warm-up with alternatives
- ◆ Plan for block scheduling

## HOW TO DO IT

### **Schedule Class Periods**

*Set up a schedule that you can adhere to daily.* Chunk the time so that you schedule what you will do before students arrive and during the first five minutes of the period (Warm-Up activity), the main lesson, and the last five or ten minutes (closure activity and clean up). Post the schedule for easy reference.

### **Plan for Classroom Transitions**

*Prepare your students for classroom transitions before they occur.* Let students know up front how much time they have to work on a task in class. Watch your time carefully and let them know throughout the task how much time they still have. Transitions are far smoother when students can anticipate the change and know the time constraints they are under.

**Reproducible:** [Five Easy Transition Activities](#)

### **Plan for Student Arrival**

*Communicate what students need to do as soon as they arrive.* List on the board the required materials that students will need to get out and place on their desks before the bell rings. Also post the topic for the warm-up activity that the students will do during the first five minutes of the period. If there is a new homework assignment, try to post it on the board as well.

### **Maximize the First Five Minutes**

*Have students participate in an independent warm-up activity as you work through daily procedures.* Generally the warm-up activity will involve journaling or solving a problem of the day. By engaging students in an independent activity, you are freeing yourself to take roll and deal with any tardy students. You can also have a student helper collect homework and record it in a record book.

**Reproducible:** [Sample Warm-Up Activities](#)

### **Use the Last Five or Ten Minutes**

*Have students participate in a closure activity and clean up at the end of the period.* Let volunteers share what they learned or read examples of their work. Collect any instructional materials the students might have used. Next, collect in-class work or have students place it in their notebooks, depending on whether the work is complete. For students who do not finish an assignment at the same time as the majority of the class, have a procedure for

completing the work as homework. You may want to delay telling students their work can be completed as homework until the end of class in order to keep them on task. Finally, assign homework, as necessary.

### **Keep Track of Time**

*A small, portable digital timer is an effective tool for keeping track of time during a lesson.* For example, you could set the timer for five minutes as the students complete a warm-up activity. Then, give your instruction for the day and set the timer for the amount of time left for students to work independently (the amount of time left in the period minus five or ten minutes for the closure activity and clean up).

### **Use Flexibility to Prolong Effective Instruction**

Be flexible with classroom time when necessary. When students are on task and engaged in an activity, consider postponing a planned activity if the task they are engrossed in is both meaningful and appropriate. Try to identify why students found the activity so interesting and aim to repeat it or transfer those qualities to other activities.

### **Save Yourself Time in the Future**

*Make a sequential record of the warm-up activities you have students complete.* Choose one of the following methods. 1) Handwrite each activity on a separate index card. Number the cards and file them sequentially in a card file. 2) If you have a computer, you can keyboard each activity in a large font. Then at the beginning of subsequent semesters, you simply print the warm-ups and each day, post one activity on the board. You will never have to rewrite them.

### **Warm-Up with Alternatives**

*Adapt the warm-up activity to suit the subject that you teach.* For example, in science classes students can write a hypothesis. During subsequent days of the lesson, the students could journal about what they learned during the previous class. In math, the warm-up activity might be solving a problem of the day on Monday through Thursday, but on Friday, the students could journal about how they used math this week.

### **Plan for Block Scheduling**

*Block scheduling occurs when a course meets for longer periods of time over fewer days.* For example, a course might meet for twice as long as a traditionally scheduled course, but for only half the year. The advantages of block scheduling include fewer transitions,

more in-depth study of a subject, increased student interaction, fewer classes taught by the teacher, increased student-teacher relationships, and less time spent introducing and closing lessons.



**REPRODUCIBLES**

## Five Easy Transition Activities

### 1. Free-Writing Exercises

Give students who finish an activity early a guided, free-writing topic that relates to the next subject that you are about to teach. You can ask them to:

- write everything they know about the subject
- write a list of questions they have about the topic
- write their personal feeling about the topic
- imagine they are another person, a historical figure perhaps, and how they would view the topic

### 2. Big Question Writing

Ask students to write a paragraph about a "big question." A few suggestions:

- What qualities should a president have? List at least three.
- If you could invite three people to dinner, whom would you invite? Why?
- If you could travel to the moon, would you go? Why?
- Do you believe there is life on other planets? Why?
- If humans are able to create sophisticated forms of artificial intelligence in robots, what should the robots be used for?
- Does the planet really need biological diversity to sustain life? Why?

### 3. Challenge of the Day

Write a challenge question on the board and allow students to begin working on it while they trickle into class. Award students points for effort and more points for getting it right.

### 4. Homework Business

Ask students to review homework a final time prior to turning it in.

Have students write down new homework assignments that have been written on the board.

### 5. Skim and Scan Pre-Reading

Ask students to skim and scan the next chapter in the textbook and create an outline based on the table of contents, section titles, and/or first sentences of the first paragraph in each new section.

## Sample Warm-Ups

### Journaling Activities

#### Language Arts:

- Imagine that you are one of the characters we read about yesterday. Write a diary entry in your journal as if you were that character dealing with the events in the chapter.
- Give advice to one of the characters that you have read about in the book you are currently reading.

#### Social Studies

- Think about the political leaders studied last week. Choose one and explain why you think he or she acted as historians tell us he or she did. There is no right answer. Your writing should be based on your opinion.
- Think about the current events we have discussed recently. What advice would you give to one of the political leaders to help solve a social issue? Write your ideas in your journal.

#### Art History or Appreciation

- [Display an art print.] Describe what you see. Then tell how the artist used one of the following elements to give structure to the artwork: line, color, texture, or value.
- [Display several art prints.] Choose your favorite artwork from among these prints. Explain why you like it.

#### Science

- Imagine that you are a scientist in a lab. Yesterday, one of your assistants accidentally forgot to return a rack of test tubes, so they were not refrigerated with all the others. Write about what you think you need to do now in order to ensure the quality of the experiments.

### Problem of the Day:

#### Math

- Keenan has a new part-time job as a mechanic's assistant. He will earn \$7.25 per hour, but his after-tax earnings will be \$5.70 per hour. He wants to buy a new car. The payments will be \$125 per month plus \$50 for insurance. How many hours per month will he need to work to be able to afford the car?

# CHAPTER FIVE

## The Homework Process

### Why You Should Do It

To give homework or not to give homework? That is a question you will have to answer for yourself. Some subjects seldom include homework for students. Others have classically assigned homework. If you decide to have students do homework for your classes, the following tips will help you manage it smoothly.

### What You Should Do

Regardless of the amount of homework you will require in your class, you should be prepared to do the following:

- ◆ Assign Meaningful Homework
- ◆ Create a Homework Policy
- ◆ Define Procedures for Assigning Homework
- ◆ Define Procedures for Collecting Homework
- ◆ Grade and Track Homework
- ◆ Help Students Pace Homework Assignments
- ◆ Communicate with Students Who Do Not Do Homework

## HOW TO DO IT

### **Assign Meaningful Homework**

*When considering how much homework to assign, consider how meaningful the work is.* When students see the purpose of a homework assignment or are interested in the topic, they are more likely to do it. When they can select the topic, reading materials, or apply the work to their own lives or interests, they will put more into the assignment. As often as possible, encourage students to read and write. Have students journal about their reading, asking them to write at least a paragraph about each article or chapter they read.

### **Create a Homework Policy**

*Communicate your homework policy to students and their families.* Decide what your homework policy will be prior to the first day of class. Will assignments be started during class and finished as homework? Will you give separate homework assignments? Or will you do a combination of these two? When will the homework be due? What percentage of a student's final grade will be determined by the homework? Will homework be evaluated or simply marked as being completed? Once you have determined your policy, write it down. Then post it and prepare a letter to send home with the students, preferably during the first week of school. Be aware of the amount of labor involved in daily homework grading.

**Reproducible:** [A Sample Homework Policy](#)

### **Define Procedures for Assigning Homework**

*Set up simple procedures for assigning homework.* Always post homework assignments in the same place. Label them as homework and give the due date. Have students write the assignment in their notebooks at the beginning of class. Whenever you give a homework assignment, be sure to include how many points it is worth. When determining how many points each assignment should get, consider the amount of time it would take to complete the project. The largest, most important projects should receive the most points. Make sure the number of points matches your homework policy and grading system; see the Grade and Track Homework section below.

### **Define Procedures for Collecting Homework**

*Keep your procedures simple.* First, label a homework basket for each period you teach. Then determine whether you want students to check their own papers during class. If you do this, have students work in pencil or on computer and correct in pen. That way you can differentiate between what was done before class and what was done during class. If students check their papers during class, have a monitor collect the papers and place them in the

homework basket. If you never have students check their own papers, then have them place their papers in the homework basket as they enter the room.

### **Grade and Track Homework**

*Set up a simple procedure for grading homework.* Depending on the subject, you might consider having students check their own work. Sharing work with peers to get feedback is also effective. Large projects may be presented to the whole class or small groups. You will want to grade the most important projects yourself. Record the assignment and points earned on a Homework Grade Sheet. Leave blank any assignments that are outstanding so that you can record the actual grade later. Define what constitutes 'late' homework in advance. If it is due at the beginning of class, is it late turned in at the end of class?

If you diminish the number of points a student receives for turning in assignments late, make sure your point system fits easily into the equation. For example, homework assignments will need to be worth multiples of 4 if you want to give 75% credit for work turned in one to three days late, 50% credit for three to seven days late, and 25% credit for more than one week late. So a simple assignment might be worth 4 points, a long report might be worth 100 points. Papers turned in late due to illness should receive full credit if completed in a timely manner.

**Reproducible:** [Homework Grade Sheet](#)

### **Help Students Pace Homework Assignments**

*For long assignments, set benchmark dates for smaller sections of the assignment to be due.* First, break down long assignments into smaller parts, identifying a benchmark date for each small part to be due. On each given benchmark date, have students bring the specified work to class to share with their classmates. As the students share what they have done so far, you can conference with individuals and check off who has completed that portion of the assignment.

### **Communicate with Students Who Do Not Do Homework**

*Communicate clearly when students do not do their homework.* Show any students who do not do their homework the record that indicates they are missing work. Tell them how this will affect their final grade. If the situation jeopardizes a student's standing in your class, communicate with parents, identifying the missing assignments and the effect this will have on the student's grade. If necessary, set up a weekly communication program for which you and the student fill out a homework checklist every Friday. You, the student, and a parent sign the checklist, which shows the completed and missing assignments for the week. The missing work is due the following Monday.

**Reproducible:** [Homework Checklist](#)



**REPRODUCIBLES**

## **Sample Homework Policy**

1. Posted homework assignments are to be recorded in the Homework section of your notebook.
2. Posted homework assignments need to be turned in on the posted due date.
3. Posted homework assignments will make up 40% of your final grade.
4. Posted homework assignments will be recorded in the grade book. Late papers will receive 75% credit when turned in one to three days after the due date. Papers three to seven days late will receive 50% credit. Papers more than a week late will receive 25% credit.
5. With approval of the teacher, full credit may be earned for homework turned in late due to illness.
6. Many class assignments are intended to be completed the same day they are assigned. Turn them in at the end of class. Papers completed at home will be considered late, unless otherwise indicated.



<b>Homework Checklist</b> To Be Filled Out Every Friday	<b>Homework Checklist</b> To Be Filled Out Every Friday
Name _____	Name _____
Class _____ Period _____	Class _____ Period _____
Week of _____	Week of _____
Homework Assignments due on the checked days are complete. Well done. Days that are crossed out and initialed by the teacher had no homework due.	Homework Assignments due on the checked days are complete. Well done. Days that are crossed out and initialed by the teacher had no homework due.
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday
The following assignments are still outstanding (to be filled out by the student and approved by the teacher): _____ _____ _____ _____	The following assignments are still outstanding (to be filled out by the student and approved by the teacher): _____ _____ _____ _____
Please complete and return the missing assignments with this form on Monday. All signatures must be included.	Please complete and return the missing assignments with this form on Monday. All signatures must be included.
_____ Teacher Signature	_____ Teacher Signature
_____ Student Signature	_____ Student Signature
_____ Parent or Guardian Signature	_____ Parent or Guardian Signature

# CHAPTER SIX

## Focus on Student Conduct

### What It Means

Having effective daily procedures, being organized, establishing rules, setting up a respectful environment, and using time effectively will result in a well-run classroom in which most students can conduct themselves effectively. However, even the best-run classrooms will have a few students who struggle with conduct issues. They may be habitually late, disruptive during class, defiant, or exhibit any number of outward signs of needing additional support in their social development and acceptance of responsibility.

### What You Should Do

The following tips include strategies that you can apply in your efforts to help these students succeed in your class so that everyone can work effectively. If one suggestion does not work for a specific student try another. There is no precise recipe for helping a struggling student succeed.

- ◆ Conduct an interests survey
- ◆ Look for positive attributes
- ◆ Communicate nonverbally when a conduct issue arises
- ◆ Converse with students with conduct issues
- ◆ Dealing with a defiant, hostile student
- ◆ Student self-assessments for students with conduct issues
- ◆ Calling parents/guardians when conduct issues arise
- ◆ Communication devices for students with conduct issues
- ◆ Contracts with students with conduct issues

## HOW TO DO IT

### **Conduct an Interests Survey**

*Find out what your students value by conducting an Interests Survey.* During the first week of school, have students complete an interests survey. Use the information to learn more about your students; this can help you connect with them personally. Give special attention to the interests of students who seem to be struggling to fit in, who might be shy, who might be under-valued, or new to the school. Also use what you learn about the students who have conduct issues so that you can connect with them about things that interest them.

**Reproducible:** [Interests Survey](#)

### **Look for Positive Attributes**

*Take note of positive attributes that you see in a student who exhibits conduct issues.* When it becomes apparent that a student habitually makes inappropriate decisions in class, make a list (either mentally or on paper) of positive attributes the student exhibits. Making such a list can be a challenge, but push yourself so that you have some positive means of connecting with him or her. Refer to the Interests Survey for ideas to include.

Take time to point out some of these attributes to the student so that he or she does not feel picked on. This is best conducted privately so the student does not become the focus of attention. It is also imperative that you communicate this in an unaffected way that is natural for you, lest the student feel patronized. In some cases, this might even help build the students' self-esteem and rapport with you so that the conduct issue starts to resolve itself.

### **Communicate Nonverbally When a Conduct Issue Arises**

*Make eye contact with or move closer to offending students when an issue occurs.* Give as little public attention to an issue as possible. Doing so will help diffuse the situation and allow you to quickly get back on track. Make sure students indeed get back to work; otherwise they will ignore your signals in the future. If a group of students seems to be having issues over a period of time, reorganize the seating chart to separate them. When selecting new seats, place problematic students near the front of the class and away from other potentially problematic students.

### **Converse with Students with Conduct Issues**

*Try to keep your interactions with difficult students as positive as possible.* Whenever you can, say something positive, even when you need to reprimand individual students. Doing so will help difficult students feel less defensive. Humor can go a long way toward diffusing most situations (but obviously not all). If you need to reprimand a difficult student, try to

keep the conversation as private as possible, which will help the student save face. Of course, if a student wishes to make an issue public, remain as calm as you can and continue to say positive things as well as point out what needs to change. Be firm in enforcing consequences.

### ***Dealing with a Defiant, Hostile Student***

*Avoid public power struggles.* When an outburst occurs, diffuse the situation as calmly and quickly as possible and delay any further discussion of it until a later time when the class is either not in session or busy with a task. If this does not work, call or send for the vice principal immediately. When the whole class acts inappropriately, stay calm, try to disarm them with a little humor, and move on. And remember, don't sweat the small stuff.

### ***Student Self-Assessment for Students with Conduct Issues***

*Have students with behavior issues assess their own conduct.* A student self-assessment of conduct can help a struggling student take responsibility for his or her own actions. By looking at his or her own behavior and being held responsible for it, a student might begin to change. Be sure to offer plenty of support and reinforcement, especially praise, to a student who is willing to do daily self-assessments. Be willing to sit down and listen to the student. Perhaps what he or she really wants is some supportive, non-judgmental attention.

**Reproducible:** [Student Self-Assessment](#)

### ***Calling Parents/Guardians When Conduct Issues Arise***

*Establish a positive rapport with the student's parents or guardians.* When you call parents or guardians to discuss an issue, try to start with some positive points about the student. Keep in mind that most parents/guardians know what to expect when they get a phone call from a teacher. Tell them you need their help in supporting their child to succeed in your class. Explain the problem, describe what you have already done, and ask the parents to make suggestions. Ask them to discuss the issue with their child. Be clear about what you need the student to do and what you will do. You might want the student to complete an Action Plan before you call a parent.

**Reproducible:** [Student Action Plan](#)

### ***Communication Devices for Students with Conduct Issues***

*Make easy-to-use forms to keep communication with parents direct and clear.* When students have conduct issues, involving parents might help. Using straightforward forms to communicate with parents on a regular basis gives them the opportunity to help their children. For students who need to be kept on track with homework or class work, a progress report might be useful. For students who need support for their attitudes or conduct, a student briefing might be helpful. Ask parents to sign and return the forms to you on the next school day. If a student does not return the signed form, call the parents. Be sure to keep a record of

the student's infractions of the rules (available as a Reproducible in Chapter Two) and file the signed forms.

**Reproducible:** [Progress Report and Parent/Guardian Briefing Form](#)

### **Contracts with Students with Conduct Issues**

*Create a contract with a student with conduct issues.* When rules are habitually broken and the consequences for doing so appear to have no effect, a written contract can clarify what a student needs to do to succeed and how you will help him or her. Write the contract with the student so that his or her ideas are included, possibly resulting in more cooperation. If the parents seem cooperative, you could invite them to sign the contract as well. Either send a copy of the contract home for the parents to sign and return to you or have the parents and the student attend a conference with you. The student keeps a copy of the signed contract in his or her notebook while you keep a copy for your records.

**Reproducible:** [Sample Contracts Among Student, Parent/Guardian, and Teacher](#)



**REPRODUCIBLES**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_

### Interests Survey

Please fill out the survey below to help me determine projects and topics that may be of interest to you this semester. Our class can also use this information to find experts to share what they know. Thank you for your time and for sharing information about yourself. I look forward to learning more about you.

Please keep your responses appropriate for a school setting. Inappropriate responses may be shared with the school principal or your parents or guardians.

1. What do you like to do? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you do best? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your favorite interest? \_\_\_\_\_

4. If you could be doing anything right now, what would you do?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Complete this sentence.

I am an expert at \_\_\_\_\_

6. Write a description of yourself doing something you really enjoy.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Write about or draw a highlight from your life.

### Student Self-Assessment

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Week of \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

Rating:      2 — Excellent      1 — Okay      0 — I need to improve

Assess how well you followed each of these class rules. Write 2, 1, or 0.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
1. I was in my assigned seat and ready to work when the bell rang.					
2. I brought my books and materials to class.					
3. I listened when someone was speaking.					
4. I stayed in my seat when someone was speaking.					
5. I followed directions the first time they were given.					
6. I turned in homework on time.					
7. I turned in classwork on time.					
8. I treated everyone with respect.					
9. I treated the property of others with respect.					
Add any additional issues you would like to work on regarding your conduct in class:					
•					
•					

One goal I have for myself is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If checked, return this form with a parent signature. \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Action Plan**

What rule or rules have been broken?

List the reasons for the problem. (What is causing you to break the rules?)

What can you do to solve the problem?

---

Signature of Student

---

Date

**Progress Report**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Check type of work:

- Homework
- In-class work

Check completed work:

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

Incomplete assignments:  
(To be filled in by the student. Give the completed form to your teacher to sign.)

---



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---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's or Guardian's Signature

Parents, use the space below, if you wish to add comments.

---



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- Parents, check here if you want a conference with the teacher.

**RETURN THIS SIGNED REPORT TO THE TEACHER THE NEXT DAY OF CLASS.**

**Progress Report**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Check type of work:

- Homework
- In-class work

Check completed work:

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

Incomplete assignments:  
(To be filled in by the student. Give the completed form to your teacher to sign.)

---



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---



---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's or Guardian's Signature

Parents, use the space below, if you wish to add comments.

---



---

- Parents, check here if you want a conference with the teacher.

**RETURN THIS SIGNED REPORT TO THE TEACHER THE NEXT DAY OF CLASS.**

### Parent/Guardian Briefing Form

**Work Habits**

- Works independently
- Needs some guidance to remain on task
- Consistently needs guidance to remain on task
- Is easily distracted
- Distracts others
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Conduct**

- Is a role model to others
- Accepts responsibility
- Is generally responsible
- Is habitually late
- Disrupts class
- Needs to show more respect for others
- Acts defiantly
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Attitude**

- Positive
- Mostly positive
- Is Improving
- Needs to improve

**Effort**

- Excellent
- Good
- Is Improving
- Needs to improve

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Signature

### Parent Briefing

**Work Habits**

- Works independently
- Needs some guidance to remain on task
- Consistently needs guidance to remain on task
- Is easily distracted
- Distracts others
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Conduct**

- Is a role model to others
- Accepts responsibility
- Is generally responsible
- Is habitually late
- Disrupts class
- Needs to show more respect for others
- Acts defiantly
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Attitude**

- Positive
- Mostly positive
- Is Improving
- Needs to improve

**Effort**

- Excellent
- Good
- Is Improving
- Needs to improve

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Signature

### Sample Contract Among Student, Parent/Guardian, and Teacher

We agree to work together to complete work in class.

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
          student, agree to do my work in class. I can do this by staying in my seat and talking to my friends after my work and their work is finished. I will complete unfinished work as homework each day. I will bring home a weekly progress report each Friday and return it signed by one of my parents each Monday. Over the weekend, I will complete any outstanding work and return it to school with the signed progress report.

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
          parent, agree to support you by checking your weekly progress report to see what work you have completed and what still needs to be done. I will sign the progress report and send it back to school the following Monday. I will also help make sure you complete your outstanding work over the weekend.

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
          teacher, agree to support you by periodically encouraging you when you complete your work and filling out a weekly progress report to show what you have completed and what still needs to be done. Additionally, I will provide you with time after school to complete any unfinished work at the end of each day.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher's Signature

Note: The above agreement could be modified for homework or could be made between the student and teacher only, if parents choose not to be involved.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# Planning the First Day of School

### Why You Should Do It

The tone you set on the first day of school will impact your relationship with your students and the smooth running of your classes for the rest of the year. If you appear friendly and warm, organized with procedures in place, and firm and fair in your establishment of rules, the students will be left with a powerful first impression. However, teachers who are distant or short with students, have few procedures in place, or are unclear about rules will have to work even harder for a longer period of time to retake the class. First impressions are compelling. The following tips will help you have a successful first day of school and, as a result, a more successful year.

### What You Should Do

Consider the following:

- ◆ Be Friendly
- ◆ Decide on Seating Arrangements
- ◆ Introduce Yourself on the First Day
- ◆ Take Roll on the First Day
- ◆ Encourage Strong Voices
- ◆ Introduce the Rules on the First Day

## HOW TO DO IT

### **Be Friendly**

*Try to make the students feel comfortable and welcome in your class.* Greet each student at the door. On the first day of school, even returning students feel nervous about coming back. Will they still have friends? Will they make new friends? Who will be in their classes? How will they fit in? Although you may also feel nervous, most students feel incredibly vulnerable. You can help them feel safe by being friendly and warm. If you feel comfortable doing so, joke with the students, but be careful not to tease anyone. Be at ease and treat students respectfully and you will establish a high standard for the tone of your classes.

### **Decide on Seating Arrangements**

*Decide ahead of time if you want to assign seating or let students select their own seats.* If you let students select their own seats, you are giving them at least some control over their own environment. You may wish to point this out in addition to the responsibility that it entails (i.e., resisting the temptation for abuse and the need to keep behavior in check). Be sure to tell them that you expect them to choose seats that will work well for them. Let them choose their own seats as long as they agree to move if asked to do so during group activities or if they are disruptive.

On the other hand, if you select the seats, you can avoid, at least temporarily, having students re-establish ineffective relationships in the classroom. In either case, make a seating chart for each class once the seating arrangements are in place.

### **Introduce Yourself on the First Day**

*Be open with the students and share who you are with them.* Sharing some personal information about yourself will help you establish a trusting environment. For example, you might tell the students where you went to high school and college, why you decided to become a teacher, what your favorite pastime or hobby is, or what is important to you. You might mention a favorite book, movie, magazine, musician, or sports team. By setting a respectful and open tone, you will encourage students to take risks, too.

### **Take Roll on the First Day**

*Ask each student to tell you his or her name and note his or her presence on the role sheet.* Explain that you want students to tell you what they wish to be called in class. Tell them that they need to say their preferred first name and their last name, so you can find them on the roll sheet or roster. Letting the students say their own names prevents you from struggling with pronunciations and avoids embarrassing students with unusual names. If you cannot

find someone's name on the roll sheet, make a quick note and move on. After you have marked everyone, privately go back to any students whose names you could not easily find and determine who they are, if they are indeed on the roll sheet, and if they are in the right classroom. Refer to Procedures for Taking Roll in Chapter One for ideas about how to take roll quickly.

### **Encourage Strong Voices**

*Ask students to speak in a strong, clear voice so everyone can hear.* Explain that the students' ideas are important and that you want to support them in practicing how to speak so everyone can hear them. When students speak in a soft voice, tell them that you are interested in what they have to say. Ask them to repeat what they have said in a strong, clear voice so everyone can hear. That said, be respectful of the fact that some students are naturally shy or quiet. Don't belabor or exaggerate the point.

### **Introduce the Rules on the First Day**

*Read the posted classroom rules to the students.* First explain that you have a list of rules that shows what you expect from the students. Tell them that after going over the rules and consequences, you will give them the opportunity to share their expectations and to create a respect agreement for this class (see Chapter Two). Then read each rule and encourage students to explain what they think this means. When necessary, clarify the meaning of the rule. Explain to students that you will keep a record of when they break the rules. Show a copy of a blank record of broken rules (see Chapter Two for a reproducible template).