



Classroom Rules

Classroom Rules:

The first few weeks of school are important for establishing the atmosphere of the classroom. The teacher can involve the students in setting the tone of their learning community. One way to do this is to have the students help write the classroom rules. Students like being part of the decision making and are more likely to believe in and follow the rules they help set.

The following activities will guide you through lessons that will help your students establish a sense of community by writing their own classroom rules. Worksheets for the first three activities are included with this lesson.

Activity One: Brainstorming a list of classroom rules

- Divide your class into small groups. Have each group choose a recorder to write down the information from the group and a reporter to share the group's ideas with the rest of the class.
- Ask students to brainstorm ideas for classroom rules. Tell them they will be asked to share these ideas with the class and to explain their choices.
- Ask each group's reporter to share one idea and record it on the board, a large piece of paper, or an overhead projector. Continue until all the ideas have been shared.

Teacher Note: Instruct students to phrase their rules in positive terms. For example: "Walk in the classroom" instead of "Don't run in the classroom."

Activity

- from these reports to make a list of rules.
- In their groups, students should discuss and debate the lists and then circle the five (or as many as you want) that they feel are most important.
- Class discussion and decision making—students and teacher narrow the list after discussions.

Activity Three: Ideas for displaying classroom rules

- Each group should plan a way to display the classroom rules.
- After planning their project, students will work on their project until it is completed.
- Each group presents their display project to the class.
- Each project is displayed in the classroom.

Teacher Note: Here is a list of suggested ways for students to present the classroom rules: posters, bulletin board; classroom constitution; mobile; banners; pennants; video, audio, or PowerPoint presentation; booklet; brochure; newsletter; newspaper

Activity Four—Role Playing

Once the classroom rules have been decided, ask students to roleplay various scenarios with the rules. What does following the rule look and sound like? What does breaking the rule sound like?

Teacher Note: The first few weeks, remind the students through role playing. For example: "Today we will be working in small groups. Who can demonstrate how to use our soft voices?" Remember to give positive feedback for good roleplaying, just as you would for good behavior.