

Hands-On Learning with Kids

The Fundamentals of K-5 Food Education

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Everyday Classroom Foundations

Students learn best when they're doing the work themselves. Keep adult instruction in short bursts and center student activity. The sample timeline below shows one way this can look in practice.



The 45 Minute Lesson Block



2 min	**Threshold/Greeting** A routine welcome to students before the lesson begins	*Page 16*
3 min	**Opening Ritual** A meaningful start to each lesson, using a consistent format	*Page 16*
7 min	**Mini-Lesson/Stations Launch** A teacher-led instructional segment to teach new content or set up the day's activities	*Page 30*
25 min	**Hands-on Activities (small group or stations)** Students are actively engaging and discussing; the teacher is a facilitator not a leader	*Page 26*
3 min	**Cleanup**	
4 min	**Reflection and Check for Understanding** Students share what they learned	*Page 11*
1 min	**Closing Ritual** A meaningful end to each lesson, using a consistent format	*Page 17*

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Core Teaching Moves

Master these core moves to spend less time directing and more time learning!



Tool 1: Attention Getters

Teaching can't happen unless students are tuned in. Use a few signals consistently to ensure the group is ready to listen and learn.

- **Auditory Cues:** Ring a bell, use a chime, or play a specific sound.
- **Hand Signals:** Raise your hand as a sign for the class to stop and mimic the gesture.
- **Clapping Patterns:**
  - Clap a short rhythm for students to echo. Repeat the sequence with increasingly complex rhythms.
  - Use a script like, "If you can hear my voice, clap once. [pause for clap] If you can hear my voice, clap two times," etc.

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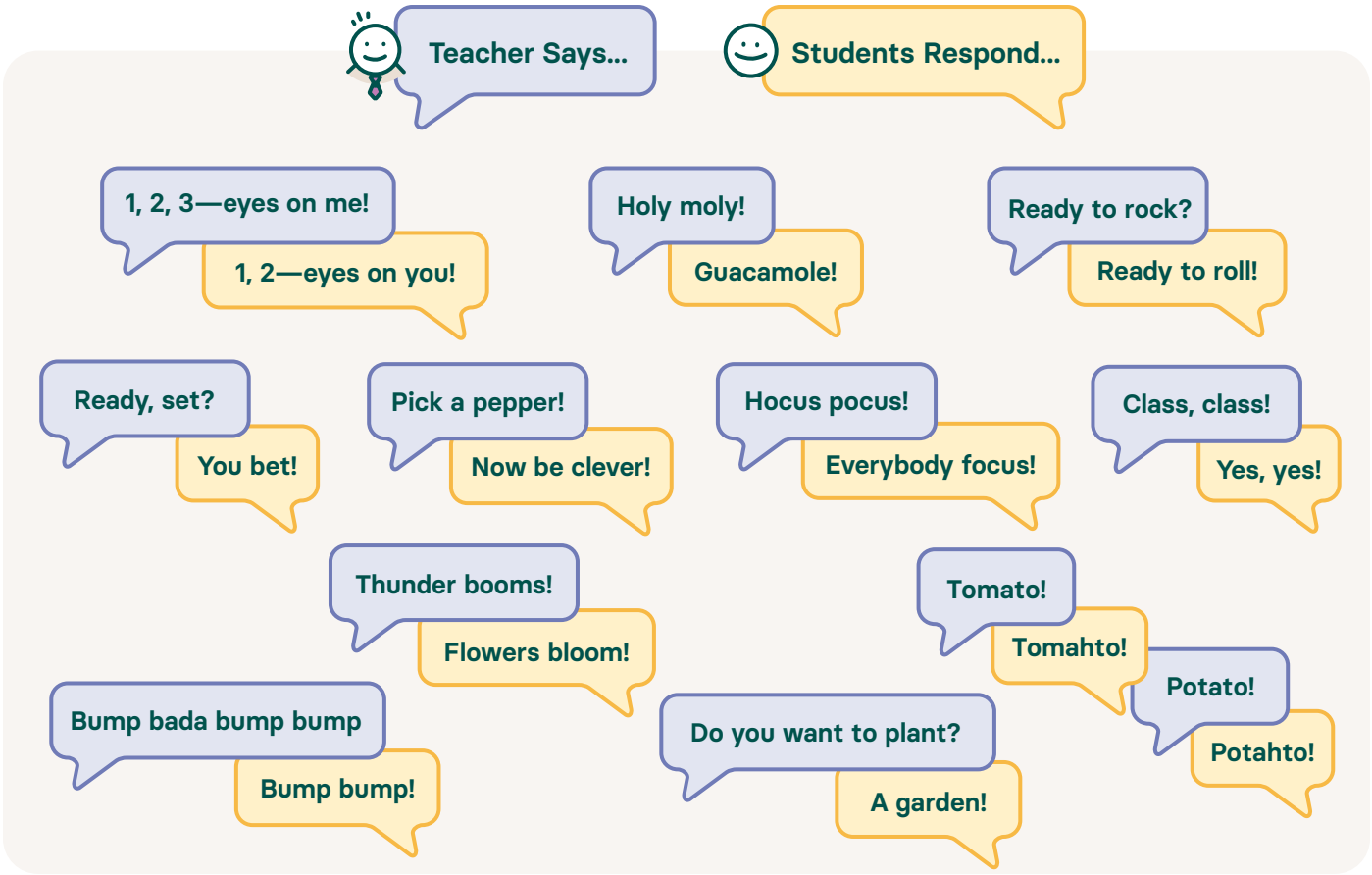
Tool 1: Attention Getters

- **Call and Response Techniques:**



Keys to Success

- **Wait for 100% of students:** Do not begin speaking until every student has stopped what they are doing and is looking at you.
- **Stay consistent:** Use the same signals in the classroom, the garden, and the cafeteria so the expectation remains the same regardless of the setting.
- **Practice:** Explicitly teach these signals on day one and re-teach them as needed throughout the year.
- **Keep it fun:** Choose signals that feel playful or connected to the class theme. Avoid commands like “hands up” or “freeze.” Those phrases can feel harsh or aggressive; focus on cues that invite students back into the group.

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Tool 2: Delivering Clear Directions



The Recipe for Great Directions

M — **Movement:** Define exactly what the body should be doing.

- *"Walk on the garden path to the herb bed and wait for my signal to begin picking the leaves."*

V — **Volume or Verbal Participation:** Set a clear expectation for noise levels.

- *"When I say 'grow,' use your Level 2 voice so we can hear each other's ideas."*



P — **Participation:** Give a specific task or "thinking job" to keep students focused.

- *"Smell the mint and think of one word to describe its scent."*

Sounds like:

"Your body's job is _____. Your voice's job is _____. Your thinking job is _____."

Keys to Success

- **Keep it short:** Use fewer words for better retention. Focus only on the what and the how.
- **Cue to start:** Have a signal for when to start the activity so students don't begin until the instructions are complete.

"When I say GROW..."

- **Repeat back:** If the direction is multi-step or new, ask a student to repeat the MVP directions back to the group before giving the start signal.
- **The 3-way delivery:** Deliver directions verbally, with visual gestures, and by writing them on a chart or whiteboard.

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Tool 3: Positive Narration

Positive Narration

noun

A proactive classroom strategy where the teacher names and reinforces productive behaviors as they happen in order to clarify expectations, model success, and shape the energy of the group. By publicly noticing students who are meeting expectations, teachers can redirect and refocus the class without calling out individual students for off-task behavior.

"I see Marcus is carrying his trowel with the tip pointed down."

"Karla has her pencil and recipe card on her desk."

"Table 2 has their bananas chopped into slices."

"I see Leo is placing his seeds exactly two inches apart in the tray."



Keys to Success

- **Be quick:** Call out specific positive actions **immediately** after giving a direction.
- **Keep it neutral:** Describe the actions in a calm, matter-of-fact way, focusing only on what can be seen or heard.

Instead of:
~~*"Mia is doing a good job."*~~

Try:
"Mia has her journal open and started writing her reflection."

- **Focus on what's going well:** Name at least three students meeting the expectation before redirecting someone who isn't.
- **Use nearby examples:** Highlight students who are on track near someone who isn't as a gentle reminder of what to do.

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Tool 4: Precise Praise

Go beyond "Good job," and use specific praise to reinforce hard work or a strategy that a student used.

The Formula: What the student did + **Why it matters** (the impact)

"You washed the cutting board immediately after using it; this prevents cross-contamination so our salad stays safe to eat. Thanks!"

"You patted the soil down gently instead of pressing hard; this leaves enough air for the roots to grow."

"Amari held the watering can with two hands to keep it steady; that kept the water from washing away the tiny seeds."



Keys to Success

- **Skip "I like/love":** Even though it's with positive intention, these phrases center the teacher's feelings and can come across as judgment. They may suggest some students are more "liked" than others and shift motivation towards pleasing the teacher.
- **Effort over accuracy:** Focus on growth, not just getting the "right" answer. Point out what the student tried, the strategy they used, or how they stuck with it, so they know what to keep doing next time.
- **Vary your delivery:** Some students love being shouted out in front of the class; others prefer a quick whisper or even a written note.

Positive Narration and Precise Praise: What's the difference?

- Use **Positive Narration** to get the class started or keep them moving. It's a neutral "announcement" of what's happening.
- Use **Precise Praise** to reinforce high-quality work. It's a specific "shoutout" for how a student reached a goal.

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Transition Routines

A transition is any time the group moves from one activity or location to the next. Without a set routine, these in-between moments are where most learning time gets lost.



What does a strong transition look like?

- **Clear:** Students receive short, sequenced directions and a clear "go" signal
- **Fast:** Done within a clear, short time (e.g., 30 to 60 seconds)
- **Safe:** Materials handled correctly, bodies under control
- **Ready:** Concludes with students focused, organized, and ready for the next activity

When to use a transition routine:

Activity to Activity

In-Class Shifts are about focus and getting ready for the next task.

- ☐ **Gather:** Moving from desks to the carpet or a central circle
- ☐ **Launch:** Shifting from whole-group instruction to independent work
- ☐ **Rotate:** Moving from station to station smoothly and efficiently
- ☐ **Distribute:** Passing out and collecting materials quickly and safely
- ☐ **Regroup:** Cleaning up materials (e.g., chopping boards, soil trays) to return to a group learning space

Space to Space

Location Shifts are about safety and accountability (keeping the group together in public or outdoor spaces)

- ☐ **Entry:** How to enter a new space (e.g., classroom, garden, cafeteria)
- ☐ **Lining up:** How students form the line, move with partners, and where adults position themselves
- ☐ **Hallways:** Expectations for volume, walking safely, and staying with the group



Keys to Success

- **Practice:** Don't assume students know how to transition; take the time to teach, model, and rehearse the routine.
- **Instant replay:** If a transition is messy or unsafe, stop and redo it immediately so students experience and internalize what the routine should look like.
- **Assign jobs/roles:** Build in small responsibilities (e.g., materials manager, line leader, cleanup checker) so transitions are more student-led.
- **Make it fun:** Sing a transition song, play special music, or add a visual timer. Time students and see if they can "beat" their best time.

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Checks for Understanding (CFUs)

Checks for Understanding (CFUs)

noun

Quick strategies used throughout a lesson to see what students are understanding, using, and learning in real time. CFUs help educators catch confusion early, adjust support as needed, and determine whether students are ready to move forward or need more practice. They can range from simple checks, such as whether students understand directions, to deeper checks connected to the lesson's learning goal.

CFU Menus

QUICK CHECKS

Short, fast checks used to monitor **basic understanding** of directions

CFU	DESCRIPTION	BEST TIME TO USE	EXAMPLE
Thumbs Up/Down/ Sideways	Ask all students to show a thumb signal to indicate understanding; quickly scan responses and decide whether to move on or clarify.	**Procedural questions and quick check-ins**	*"Thumbs up if you have 6 grapes on your table."*
Fist to Five	Have students hold up 0–5 fingers to rate their confidence; use the range of responses to decide whether to move on or reteach.	**After introducing a new concept or during work time**	*"From fist to five, how well do you understand how to cut the herbs?"*
Repeat It	Call on one or two students to restate directions or key ideas so the group hears them again clearly.	**When giving multistep directions or stating objectives**	*"I would like two students to repeat the directions for using the claw grip to chop cucumbers."*
Signal Cards/ Emojis	Give students a visual way to show understanding (cards or emojis); pause to check and respond to patterns you see.	**Throughout the lesson to monitor ongoing progress**	*"Show me green if you're ready to move on, yellow if you're unsure."*
Call and Response	Teach a short call-and-response phrase ahead of time; use it to quickly reinforce a concept or regain attention.	**To refocus the group or reinforce a key idea**	*"When I say 'wash,' you say 'your hands!' Wash!"*

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CFU Menus

Check for Misunderstanding

Strategies that **surface mistakes** or partial understanding so they can be corrected right away

CFU	DESCRIPTION	BEST TIME TO USE	EXAMPLE
Troubleshoot It	Model a common mistake, then ask students to identify what's wrong and explain how to fix it.	**During a small group lesson to hear multiple responses**	[Teacher plants two seeds very close together] *"What will happen if I plant my seeds like this? How would you fix it?"*
Four Corners	Assign each corner a choice; have students move to the one they agree with, then explain their thinking.	**When students can take a stance or compare ideas**	*"Go to the corner that shows which part of the plant we're eating."*
"Show Me" Boards	Give each student a dry-erase board and prompt them to write a response and then hold it up at the same time; scan all responses to quickly identify accuracy and patterns.	**When checking for understanding of a question or concept across the whole group**	*"Write one reason we wash fruits and vegetables; show me your boards."*

Show What You Know

Opportunities for students to **explain, apply,** or **demonstrate** what they learned

CFU	DESCRIPTION	BEST TIME TO USE	EXAMPLE
Recap It	Prompt students to summarize key ideas in their own words; listen for accuracy and clarity.	**At the end of a lesson to reinforce learning**	*"Recap in two sentences why we wash fruit."*
Teach It	Ask students to explain or demonstrate the concept to a partner to show understanding.	**To assess mastery or application**	*"Show a friend how to pick a high-fiber fruit."*
Gallery Walk	Have students display work, circulate, and give or receive feedback using a clear prompt.	**When sharing or reflecting on completed work**	*"Post your group's food waste poster and leave one comment on another group's."*

Using Student Discussion to Check for Understanding

Discussion routines like "Turn and Talk" or "Think-Pair-Share" only become true CFUs when the teacher listens to student thinking and uses it to guide the lesson. This can look like circulating to listen, prompting student share-outs, or noticing patterns in student responses.

→ *Page 26*

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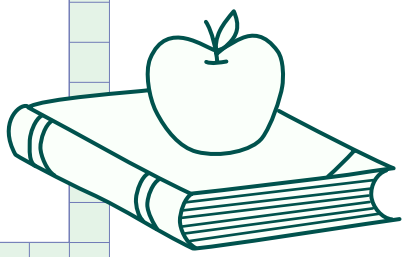
Creating a Joyful Learning Environment

Joyful learning environments are defined by their classroom culture.

Classroom Culture

noun

The overall feeling, routines, relationships, and shared expectations that shape a learning space. A strong classroom culture helps students feel safe, connected, engaged, and ready to learn. This is sometimes referred to as "classroom management," though in this guide the focus is not just on managing behavior but also on building a positive learning environment.



Developing Community Agreements

Community Agreements

noun

Shared expectations created with students at the beginning of the year that help the group learn, work, and care for one another safely and respectfully. Unlike rules made only by the adult, group agreements are built together so students feel ownership, responsibility, and belonging within the learning space.



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How to Create Community Agreements

1. Explain the Purpose

Sample language:

- *"We're going to create agreements for how this class will learn and work together."*
- *"These agreements help everyone feel safe, included, and ready to participate."*

2. Collect Student Ideas

Possible prompts:

- *"What do you want our classroom/garden to feel like?"*
- *"What helps people learn together?"*
- *"What helps people feel safe ... [e.g., during cooking and gardening]?"*
- *"What should happen when someone is talking?"*
- *"What helps teamwork go well?"*

Record student responses where everyone can see them, like an anchor chart or mural.

Different learning spaces may need different agreements. Consider creating separate agreements for the garden or cooking classroom, such as "We handle plants with care," and display them on durable signs or murals.

3. Finalize the Agreements Together

Combine similar ideas and narrow the list to the most important agreements. Rewrite agreements using short, positive, actionable language that tells students what to do. (E.g., "Don't interrupt" can become "Once voice at a time.")

4. Make It Official

Invite students to sign the chart, poster, or classroom copy to show shared commitment to the group. Post the agreements where students can see them.



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Keeping Agreements Alive

Group agreements should be used regularly, not just created once and forgotten. Reference agreements during transitions, cooking, gardening, cleanup, and discussions.

Examples:

- *"Part of our agreements is taking care of tools and materials."*
- *"One of the agreements is making sure everyone gets a turn to participate."*
- *"The agreements remind us how to move safely when carrying materials."*

Revisit and Revise Them

As the year continues, new needs or challenges may come up. Revisiting agreements helps students continue feeling ownership over the learning space.

Possible prompts:

- *"Are these agreements still working for the group?"*
- *"Is there anything the class wants to add or change?"*



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Opening & Closing Rituals

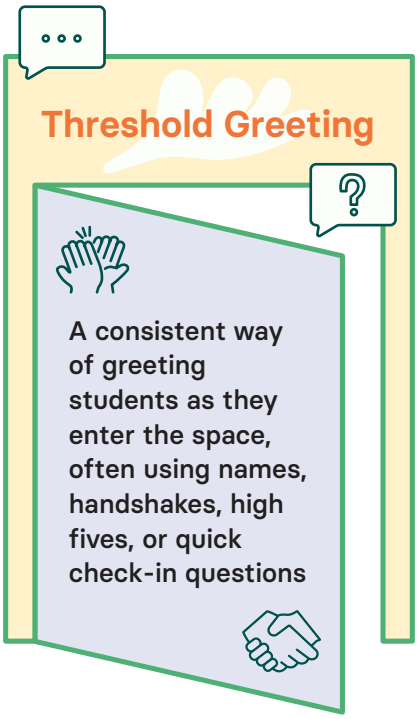
Opening and Closing Rituals

noun

Consistent, repeated ways of beginning or ending time together that help students feel grounded, connected, and ready to learn. Rituals create predictability, belonging, and a clear transition into and out of learning. Rituals do not need to be complicated. Short, repeatable structures are often the most effective.

Opening Rituals

Opening rituals help students transition into the learning space and prepare for the experience ahead. When used consistently, these routines gather attention, establish the tone for the lesson, reinforce community expectations, and support participation.



Opening Ritual Ideas

Setting	Examples
Classroom	Threshold greeting > Call-and-response song > Question of the day: Turn and talk
Garden	Designated meeting spot > Plant part stretch > Community agreements review
Cafeteria or Large Group	Attention signal > Welcome > Directions > Table-by-table cue to begin

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Foundations First

During the first few lessons together, focus more on building rituals and routines than on "getting through" lots of content. Essentials to establish include:

- ☐ How students enter or gather
- ☐ A consistent closing ritual
- ☐ How students clean up and exit

Lesson Plan Template for the First Day(s) of School (p. 42)



Closing Rituals

Closing rituals help students **reflect, reset,** and **transition out** of the lesson successfully. When used consistently, these routines reinforce learning and ensure every student leaves with **a positive final memory** of the lesson.

Closing Ritual Ideas

Setting	Examples
Any Setting	Reflection prompt > Shoutouts > Goodbye song
Garden	Garden journals > Observation share-out > Tool return routine
Classroom or Club	Cleanup jobs > Preview for next lesson > Closing chant
Cafeteria or Large Group	Table cleanup routine > Buddy reflection > Next steps announcement > Closing chant

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Strategies for Student Engagement

A joyful learning environment is built proactively, not reactively. Students are more likely to struggle during lessons when they are:

- Waiting or sitting still for too long
- Unsure what to do
- Unable to participate
- Feeling disconnected from the group

Small proactive moves can prevent many disruptions before they begin.

Quick Self-Check Before a Lesson

- ☐ Have I taught the routines for this activity?
- ☐ Will students spend most of the lesson actively engaged?
- ☐ Have I planned transitions between activities?
- ☐ Are materials organized and ready to minimize waiting and downtime?
- ☐ Is there a calm reset space available?
- ☐ Am I moving throughout the space instead of teaching from one spot?

Setup for Classroom Success

Strategy	What It Looks Like	Why It Matters
Build Relationships	Learn and use student names. Greet students warmly. Show curiosity about their interests, ideas, and experiences.	Students participate more fully when they feel safe, known, and respected.
Keep Everyone Participating	Give every student a role, tool, task, or opportunity to contribute. Limit long periods of waiting or watching.	Students are more successful when they are actively involved in the learning.
Move Throughout the Space	Circulate while teaching. Be close to students who may need support, reminders, or encouragement.	Proximity helps educators notice needs early and stay connected to the whole group.
Build In Movement	Include purposeful movement throughout the lesson, such as distributing materials, rotating between stations, or quick stretch breaks.	Many students focus and regulate more successfully through movement and hands-on learning.
Give Students Meaningful Jobs	Assign classroom, cooking, or garden responsibilities like Materials Manager, Recipe Reader, Tool Collector, or Safety Spotter.	Shared responsibility builds belonging and investment in the learning space.
Prepare a Calm Reset Space	Create a simple quiet area where students can briefly reset before rejoining the group.	Everyone sometimes needs a moment to regulate and regroup.

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Positive Redirection

Positive Redirection

noun

A quick, calm response used when a student is disengaged, off-task, or acting unsafely. Redirecting acknowledges the current behavior, then gives the student a clear, actionable next step to help them rejoin the learning and prevent escalation.

The 3:1 Rule

Aim for about three positive narrations for every one redirection. This helps build a classroom culture where students hear what they should do, not just what they should stop doing.

Verbal Redirection Techniques

Interrupt & Redirect

Clearly acknowledge **the current action** and provide **an alternative task** with simple, direct language.

_____ , you're _____ . Please _____ .

(Student Name) (Action in objective terms) (A specific and immediate action)

Examples:

Objective description. Not "you're making a big mess" or "you're not listening."

- "You're digging in the walkway. Please use your hands to dig in the garden bed instead."
- "Your feet are moving too fast. Can you be a slow-moving turtle while we walk to the next station?"

Make it fun!

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Verbal Redirection Techniques

When-Then Statements

Making a clear and **positive** connection between the desired action and what comes next.

When you _____ **, then you can** _____ **.**

Desired action — Positive immediate outcome

Examples:

- **"When** you show me you're ready with a quiet thumb, **then** I'll know it's time to reveal the mystery ingredient."
- **"When** you start your plant diagram at your table, **then** I will come help you."

When-Then or If-Then: *What's the difference?*

When-Then assumes the student will be successful and keeps the focus on the expected behavior first. If-Then focuses first on the consequence.

Whenever possible, lead with "when" statements before moving to "if" statements.

If-Then Statements

Focuses on consequences of an unsafe or off-task action to help students understand the direct impact of their choices to encourage self-regulation. Follow with a "When... then..." or directive prompt.

If you _____ **, then** _____ **. Please** _____ **.**

Current action — Immediate impact — Direction

Examples:

- **"If** you toss the mulch instead of spreading it, **then** it won't cover the soil evenly. Use your hands to gently spread it in a thin layer."
- **"If** you stay in the hallway, **then** you won't get to try our salsa. Come help me check the recipe ingredients."

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Verbal Redirection Techniques

Structured Choices

Gives **two choices** that both lead to a positive outcome and helps students feel **agency** and control.

Would you like to _____ **or** _____ **?**

(Choice 1) (Choice 2)

Even a small choice makes a big impact

Examples:

- "Do you want to carry the compost bucket or help stir the pile?"
- "Would you like to take a 3-minute break or a 5-minute break?"
- "Would you like to start with writing or coloring?



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Teaching All Learners

Students learn best when information is presented in more than one way. Strong inclusive teaching mixes visuals, movement, discussion, listening, reading, and hands-on experiences throughout the lesson. Combine any of these engagement styles for greater effect.

Give directions and questions 3 ways!



Say it! Write it! Show it!

Visual Engagement

- Use photos, icons, diagrams, charts, and labeled examples
- Write directions and questions where students can see them
- Model while explaining; don't just tell students what to do
- Use gestures, facial expressions, and pointing while teaching
- Color-code materials or steps to highlight patterns and organization
- Highlight or circle key vocabulary and important information
- Use visual reminders for routines, cleanup, or expectations (e.g., illustrated handwashing poster)
- Incorporate quick sketches, graphic organizers, or concept maps

Auditory Engagement

- Repeat directions and key questions twice
- Read important text, directions, or recipes aloud
- Use choral responses ("Everybody say...")
- Include partner talk or turn-and-talk moments
- Use songs, chants, or rhythm for routines and memory
- Encourage students to explain their thinking out loud
- Pause for quick Q&A or verbal check-ins
- Keep language concise and clear; avoid long explanations

Movement & Hands-On Engagement

- Let students handle real materials, tools, ingredients, and objects
- Include acting, role-play, or demonstrating routines
- Build in movement during transitions and participation
- Use manipulatives, sorting, matching, or sequencing activities
- Have students physically practice procedures
- Encourage drawing, tracing, building, or arranging ideas
- Use interactive games or stations whenever possible
- Give students opportunities to stand or move around during activities

Reading & Writing Engagement

- Provide sentence starters and labeled examples
- Use checklists, recipe cards, labels, and graphic organizers
- Include opportunities to sketch and label observations
- Have students write reflections, predictions, or procedures
- Keep written directions short and easy to read
- Use transcripts, captions, or text-to-speech supports when possible
- Encourage students to annotate, highlight, or underline important ideas
- Combine writing with visuals whenever possible

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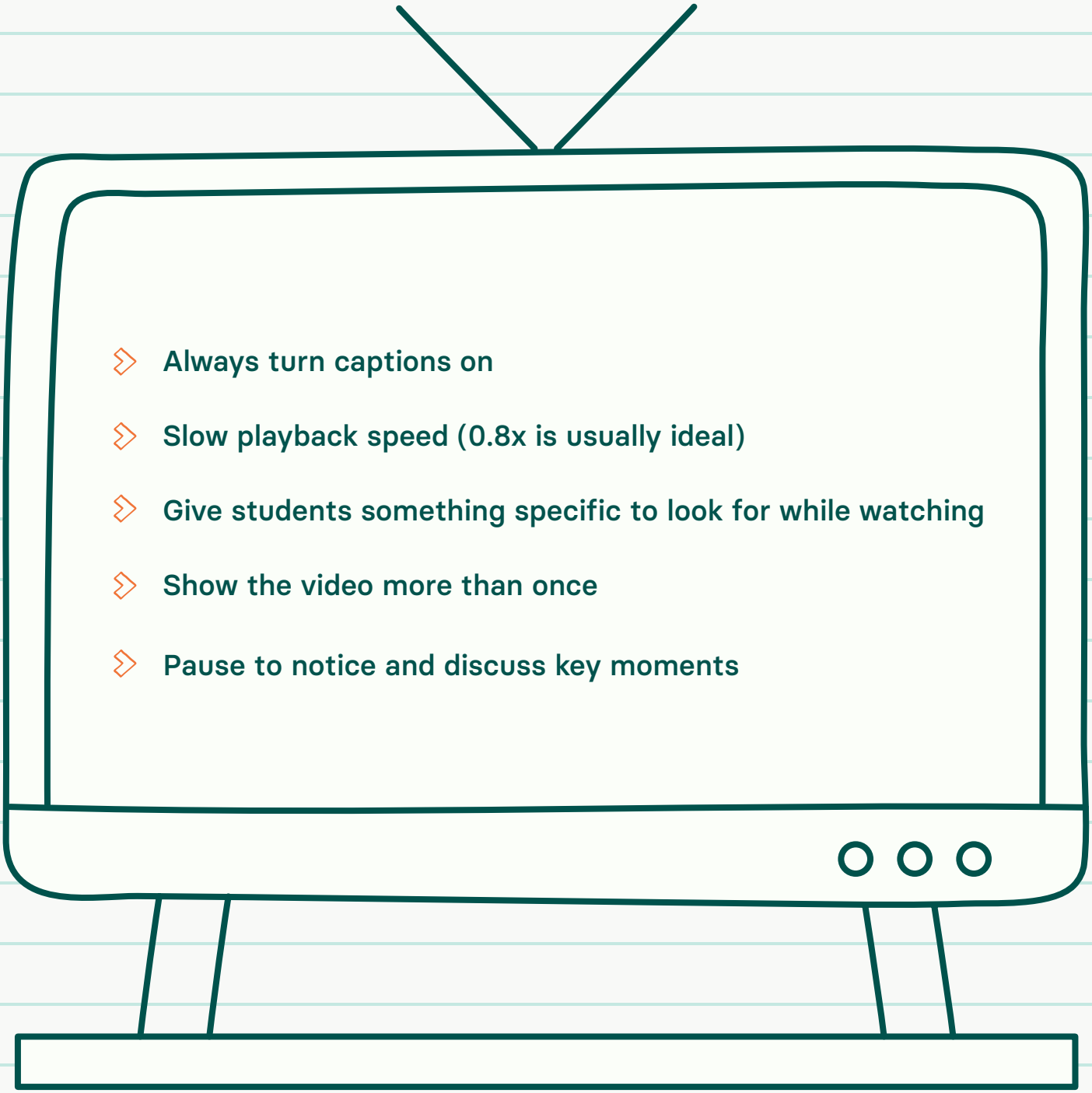
Video Tips



- Always turn captions on
- Slow playback speed (0.8x is usually ideal)
- Give students something specific to look for while watching
- Show the video more than once
- Pause to notice and discuss key moments

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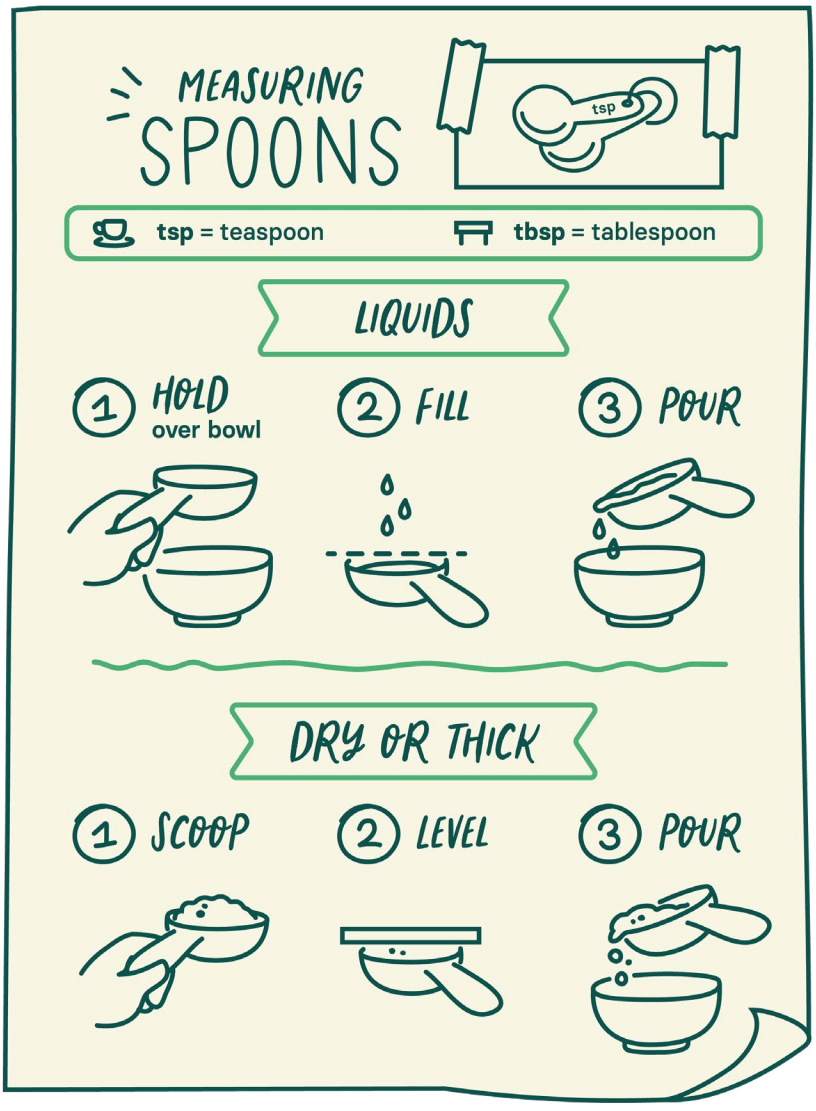
Anchor Charts

Anchor Chart

noun

A visual teaching poster or chart to "anchor" important learning, routines, vocabulary, or processes so students can return to it independently again and again.



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Anchor Charts



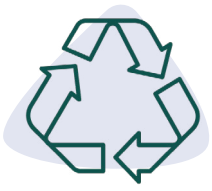
Strong Anchor Charts

- Are built with students, not ahead of time, so they can see the process and contribute.
- Focus on one routine, process, or big idea per chart.
- Include visuals, icons, examples, or sketches.
- Use large, easy-to-read writing.
- Live where they are actually needed (e.g., keeping planting instructions at the garden bed).
- Are referenced often during teaching.
- Can grow and change with the class.



Go Mini

Tiny tabletop anchor charts keep directions, vocabulary, and routines right at students' work spaces.



Reuse It

Laminate anchor charts so they can be reused across lessons, classrooms, and school years.

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Student Discussions

Structured Discussions

Move away from "anybody know?" and give every student a warmup discussion with a partner, making participation more balanced, predictable, and stress-free.

Group discussions keep students engaged and help them learn from one another. They also naturally support social-emotional learning by teaching kids how to listen, cooperate, and build relationships during daily classroom routines.

- **Turn and Talk:** Give a clear question, write the prompt where students can see it, set a short time, and have students discuss with a partner; listen in to gauge understanding.

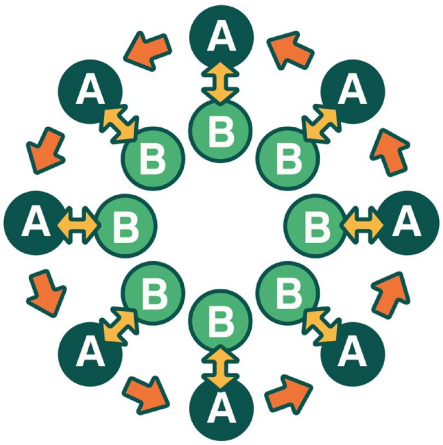
Instead of:
~~*Has anyone tried this food before?*~~

Try:
Talk to your partner: Have you tried this food before? What did it taste like?

- **Think-Pair-Share:**
  - **Think:** Pose a question verbally and in writing when possible. Students think silently and give a thumbs up when they have an idea.
  - **Pair:** They turn to a neighbor to share their answer.
  - **Share:** Open it to the whole group. Ask what their partner said to encourage active listening.

- **Toe-to-Toe:** Call out a body part (e.g., "Elbow-to-elbow!"). Students find a partner and connect those parts while they answer your prompt. Call a new part (e.g., "Pinky-to-pinky!") for them to find a new partner and a new question.

- **In-Out Circle:** Form two concentric circles facing each other. Pairs **discuss** a prompt, then the **outside circle rotates** one person to the right for a new partner and a new question.



- **Pass the Ball:** Use a "talking ball" or other fun object like a special stuffed animal. Only the person holding the ball speaks. After they share, they toss it to a peer with a raised hand.

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The Power of "Wait Time"

Teachers often feel the urge to fill silence. After asking and repeating a question, **count to five in your head** before calling on anyone. This gives students who process information more slowly the chance to formulate a thought, significantly increasing the quality and quantity of responses.

Methods for Calling on Students

To keep engagement high, use a transparent system for choosing who speaks next. This ensures a wide range of voices are heard, preventing the same few eager hands from dominating the conversation.

- **Popsicle Sticks:** Write each student's name on a stick. Pull one from a jar to decide who answers.
- **Seating Chart Tally:** Keep a small seating chart on your clipboard and place a tiny dot next to names as you hear from them. At a glance, you can see who hasn't had a turn in a while.
- **Keep or Pass It On:** Students call on one another to answer and/or ask questions. Students should not raise their hands to be called on and should be encouraged to call on a variety of people in the classroom. Students can also "pass" on a question or "phone a friend."
- **The "Warm" Call:** Increase student comfort in large groups by providing advance notice. Preview your expectation by saying, "I'm going to call on you next," or during small groups, "That's a creative idea; would you share that with the rest of the class when we come back together?"

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Supporting Multilingual Learners

Hello! — English

¡Hola! — Spanish

你好！ *(Nǐ hǎo!)* — Chinese (Mandarin)

হ্যালো! *(Hyālō!)* — Bengali

नमस्ते! *(Namaste!)* — Hindi

!مرحبا *(Marhaba!)* — Arabic

Bonjou! — Haitian Creole

Nyob zoo! — Hmong

Kumusta! — Tagalog (Filipino)

Multilingual Learner (MLL)

noun



An individual who already brings deep knowledge, culture, and communication skills from one or more home languages. A Multilingual Learner has an emerging **superpower**, defined by the wealth of what they already know.

Why "MLL" instead of "ELL" or "ESL"?

Terms like ELL ("English Language Learner") and ESL ("English as a Second Language") center English as the goal. MLL better reflects the reality that students are already multilingual, and that every language they speak is an asset to the learning community.

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Multilingual Must-Haves

Teaching a lesson in multiple languages may not be realistic, but these strategies can help support MLLs:

- Pre-teach key vocabulary before activities begin.
- Use real objects, ingredients, and hands-on demonstrations whenever possible.
- Use multilingual labels and visuals throughout the space.
- Use multimodal visual engagement strategies (see p. 22).
- Model directions physically with gestures and demonstrations.
- Pause for at least 15 seconds after asking a question.
- Be intentional about partner assignments. Think about who can help keep a conversation going, model new vocabulary, or make it easier for a classmate to participate.
- Offer multiple ways for students to show understanding, including speaking, pointing, drawing, acting out, writing, sequencing, or demonstrating physically.
- Provide sentence stems and language supports.

"I agree with _____ because..."

"At home, my family uses..."

- Use translation technology as a support tool, not a replacement for inclusion and connection.
- Keep routines and procedures consistent and predictable.
- Encourage students to use home languages during learning and discussion.

"This ingredient has names in different languages. Would anyone like to share what you call it at home?"

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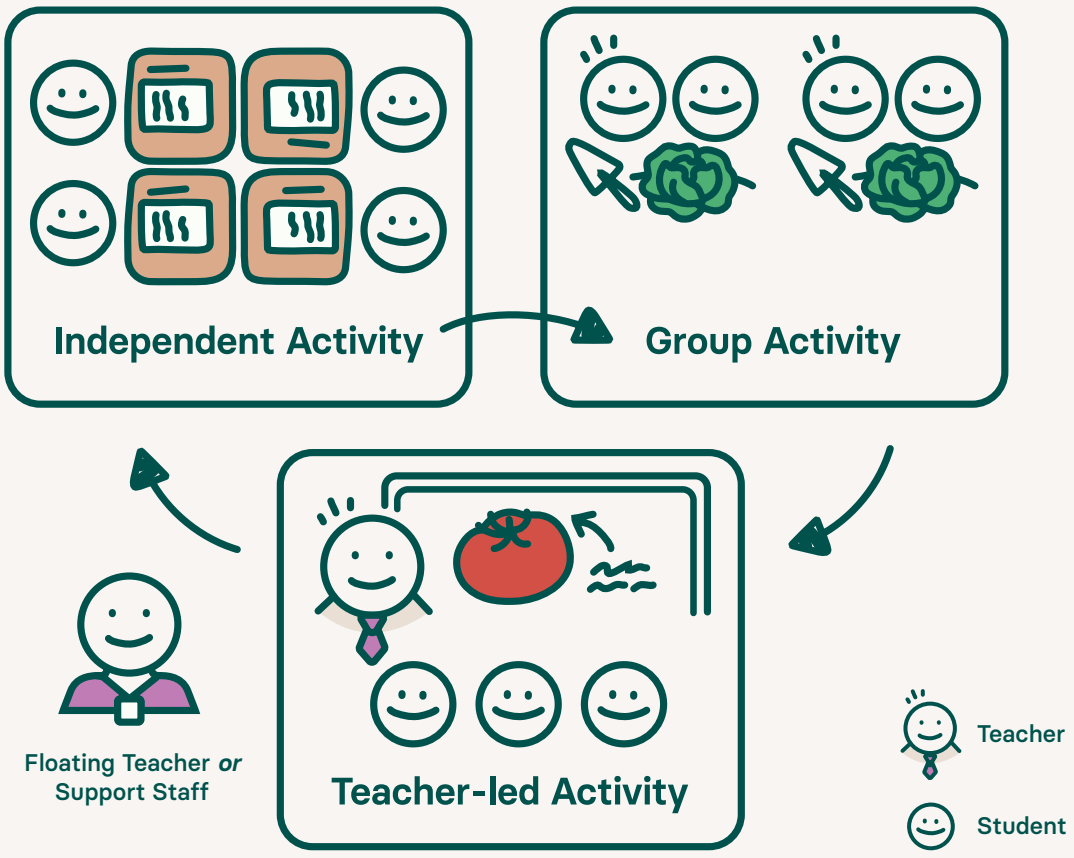
Station Teaching

Station Teaching

noun

A teaching setup where students rotate through different activity areas or tables in small groups. One station is usually led by the teacher, while other stations may include independent, partner, or group activities. This gives students more opportunities to participate, move, and receive small-group support.

The Three-Station Rotation Model



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The Three-Station Rotation Model

Station Type	Purpose & Facilitation	Example Activity
Teacher-Led Mini Lesson	Focuses on direct instruction of new skills or high-complexity tasks.	• Knife skills demonstration • Transplanting in the garden • Reading a nutrition label
Independent Activity	Self-directed work requiring minimal adult direction.	• Garden journaling • Weeding • Illustrating a recipe • Reading an article
Group or Partner Activities	Peer-to-peer work, often supported by a volunteer or staff member.	• Plant part yoga • Mixing a salad • Building a garden grid

See Appendix: Independent & Low-Support Station Activities (p.38)

Getting Started with Station Teaching



- **Teach the Independent and Group Stations:** Spend the first several lessons teaching how students will participate in the independent and group stations. Model and practice one activity at a time. Use the same basic structure for each lesson with station teaching.

Go Slow to Start Fast: Once students know the basic structure of independent and group stations, it's easy to swap in new topics using the same activity format without reteaching. For example, once students have a routine for a scavenger hunt activity, an insect scavenger hunt can become a fall leaf scavenger hunt with no additional teaching.

- **Practice the Routine:** Before adding activities, practice how students will rotate, clean up, and move safely between stations.
- **Use Clear Transition Signals:** A whistle, chime, countdown, or call-and-response helps students know when it is time to stop, clean up, and rotate. A visible timer can also help keep stations moving smoothly.
- **Post Written Instructions:** Provide anchor charts or checklists at each station so students can work independently while the teacher leads a small group.
- **Give Adults a Clear Role:** Give any present staff a simple role such as circulating, supporting students, and asking questions at stations.

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Appendices

Name Games

Name Associations

Suggested grade range: K–5th grade

Group size: Unlimited

Time required: 5–15 minutes

Materials: None

Variation: Each student repeats the names of the students before them first.

1. Stand in a circle.
2. Pick a topic (favorite food, color, vegetable, etc.).
3. One person says: "I'm Maya and I like mangoes."
4. Go around the circle.

Name Gestures

Suggested grade range: K–5th grade

Group size: Unlimited

Time required: 5–10 minutes

Materials: None

Variation: Use a sound instead of a motion.

1. Stand in a circle.
2. One person says their name and does a motion.
3. Everyone repeats the name and motion.
4. Continue around the circle.

Name Race

Suggested grade range: K–5th grade

Group size: Unlimited

Time required: 5–10 minutes

Materials: None

Variation: Say the name of the person next to you instead of your own.

1. Stand in a circle.
2. One person starts by saying their name.
3. Continue around the circle one at a time.
4. Time how fast the group can finish.
5. Try again and beat the time.

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Name Games

Peek-a-Who

Suggested grade range: K–5th grade

Group size: 10-30

Time required: 5–10 minutes

Materials: A large sheet or blanket

Variation: Send more than one player at a time.

1. Split into two teams.
2. Hold up a sheet between the teams so they cannot see each other.
3. Each team sends one player to the sheet.
4. Count to 3 and drop the sheet.
5. The first player to shout the other person's name wins a point.
6. Repeat with new players.

Race Around the Circle

Suggested grade range: K–5th grade

Group size: Unlimited

Time required: 5–10 minutes

Materials: None

Variation: Instead of names, share favorite foods/colors/etc.

1. Stand in a circle.
2. One person is "it."
3. The "it" person picks someone in the circle.
4. The two people introduce themselves and shake hands.
5. Then they run opposite directions around the circle.
6. The first person back to the empty spot stays.
7. The slower person becomes the new "it."

Names in the Air

Suggested grade range: 2nd–5th grade

Group size: Best with 8 to 12

Time required: 10 minutes

Materials: One or more bean bags

1. Stand in a circle.
2. One person tosses a bean bag while saying someone's name.
3. The catcher says: "Thank you, ___."
4. The catcher tosses to someone new.
5. Continue until everyone has had a turn.
6. Repeat the same pattern faster.
7. Add more bean bags for a challenge.

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Ice Breakers

Sharp Eyes

Suggested grade range: 2nd–5th grade

Group size: Unlimited, even numbers

Time required: 5–10 minutes

Materials: None

1. Find a partner.
2. Look carefully at your partner for a few seconds.
3. Turn around and secretly change three small things about yourself.
4. Turn back and see if your partner can spot the changes.
5. Switch roles and repeat.

Pull-Up Game

Suggested grade range: 2nd–5th grade

Group size: Unlimited, even numbers

Time required: 5 minutes

Materials: None

1. Find a partner.
2. Sit facing each other with feet touching.
3. Hold hands.
4. Work together to pull each other up to standing.
5. Try again in groups of three or four.

Zip, Zam, Boing

Suggested grade range: 3rd–5th grade

Group size: 5-15

Time required: 5 minutes

Materials: None

1. Stand in a circle.
2. Pretend to pass an invisible object.
3. Say “Zip” to pass left or right.
4. Say “Zam” to pass across the circle.
5. Say “Boing” to bounce it back to the sender.
6. Keep the game moving quickly.

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Ice Breakers

Where the Wind Blows

Suggested grade range: 2nd–5th grade

Group size: Unlimited

Time required: 10–15 minutes

Materials: None

1. Everyone stands on a spot marker except one person in the middle.
2. The middle person says: "The wind blows for everyone who..."
3. Finish the sentence with something true about themselves.
4. Anyone who matches must run to a new spot.
5. The person left without a spot goes to the middle.

Earth, Eyes

Suggested grade range: 3rd–5th grade

Group size: 5-12

Time required: 10–15 minutes

Materials: None

1. Stand in a circle.
2. When the leader says "Earth," everyone looks down.
3. When the leader says "Eyes," everyone looks at another person.
4. If two people make eye contact, they switch places.
5. Repeat faster and faster.

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Ice Breakers

Balloon Relay Race

Suggested grade range: 4th–5th grade

Group size: Unlimited

Time required: 10–15 minutes

Materials: Balloons in different colors, one per person; yarn or chalk to draw a start and finish line

1. Split into teams by balloon color.
2. Blow up balloons but do not tie them.
3. The first player lets their balloon fly toward the finish line.
4. The next teammate starts where that balloon landed.
5. Continue until all teammates go.
6. The team closest to the finish line wins.

Blob Tag

Suggested grade range: K–5th grade

Group size: Unlimited

Time required: 10–15 minutes

Materials: None

1. Choose one person to be "it."
2. The "it" person tags another player.
3. The tagged player links arms with the "it" person.
4. The tagged player tags another player, and so on, growing the blob as more people are tagged.
5. Continue until everyone is part of the blob.

Lighthouse

Suggested grade range: 3rd–5th grade

Group size: 5-10

Time required: 10–15 minutes

Materials: Blindfold

1. Choose one blindfolded "ship."
2. Choose one "lighthouse" guide.
3. Everyone else becomes silent obstacles.
4. The lighthouse gives verbal directions to guide the ship safely across the space.
5. If the ship bumps into something, restart or switch players.

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Ice Breakers

Bee Race

Suggested grade range: 4th–5th grade

Group size: Unlimited, groups of 3–4

Time required: 5–10 minutes

Materials: Two pieces of paper for groups of 3, four pieces of paper for groups of 4

1. Split into teams of 3 or 4 and spread each team across a wide area.
2. Tell students they are bees and give each team paper "wings" that they will step on.
3. Teams must "fly" everyone across the space without touching the ground.
4. Students stand only on the paper pieces.
5. If someone touches the ground, their team starts over.
6. First team across wins

My Biggest Fan: Rock, Paper, Scissors

Suggested grade range: 4th–5th grade

Group size: Unlimited, even numbers

Time required: 5–10 minutes

Materials: None

1. Find a partner.
2. Play Rock, Paper, Scissors.
3. The loser becomes the winner's cheering fan.
4. Winners keep finding new opponents.
5. Fans follow and cheer loudly for their player.
6. Continue until one final champion remains.

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Independent & Low-Support Station Activities



Garden Learning Environment



Observation & Inquiry-Based Tasks

- **Garden Scavenger Hunt:** Create a checklist of items for students to search for (e.g., “Find a plant with smooth leaves,” “Find an insect,” “Find a vegetable that's almost ready to harvest”).
- **Sensory Walk:** Students list or draw five things they see, hear, smell, and feel in the garden.
- **Weather & Plant Monitoring:** Students measure and track the daily temperature, rainfall, or growth of a specific plant.
- **Bug Watch & Sketch:** Students find and sketch different insects, labeling their body parts.
- **Color Hunt:** Students search for and record as many different colors in the garden as possible.
- **Shadow Tracking:** Students trace the shadows of plants at different times of the day to observe changes.
- **Soil Sifting:** Students use hands or simple sifters to explore what’s in the soil (e.g., small rocks, decomposed leaves, bugs).
- **Garden Mapping:** Students draw a simple map of the garden, labeling where different plants grow.

Interactive Writing & Reflection

- **Garden Journals:** Students reflect on what they see in the garden or write/draw what they predict will happen to a plant over time.
- **Recipe Brainstorming:** Students sketch and describe a dish they would make with the plants in the garden.
- **Plant Storytelling:** Students write or draw a short story from the perspective of a plant or insect.
- **Garden Poetry:** Students create an acrostic poem (the first letter of each line spells out a word) using the name of a plant, or a haiku (a short poem consisting of three lines with a 5-7-5 syllable structure) about nature.
- **Wish Leaves:** Students write one garden-related goal or wish on a small paper leaf to hang in a designated area.
- **Garden Newspaper:** Students create a mini “news article” about an exciting event in the garden (e.g., "First Strawberry Ripens!").

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Garden Learning Environment



Low-Prep Hands-On Activities

- **Garden Maintenance:** Assign specific tasks to students, such as weeding, mulching, and watering.
- **Composting Station:** Students add materials to a compost bin and turn it, observing the compost pile and noting any changes.
- **Seed Sorting:** Students examine different types of seeds and group them by size, shape, or color.
- **Rock Chalk Painting:** Students decorate small rocks to label plants or simply add beauty to the garden.
- **Stick & Leaf Art:** Students use found natural materials to make simple designs or patterns.
- **Worm Watch:** Students dig gently and look for worms, then cover them back up and record observations.
- **Garden Art Mural:** Students create a temporary nature mural using leaves, twigs, and flowers.

Teamwork Activities

- **Buddy System:** If the group is mixed age, pair younger students with older students for support in garden tasks.
- **Nature Art:** Students collect leaves, flowers, or twigs to create collages or nature rubbings.
- **Garden Math:** Students count the number of certain plant types, measure plant height, or track the number of insects seen in different areas.
- **Garden Detective Pairs:** In pairs, one student describes something they see in the garden while their partner guesses what it is.
- **Pollinator Patrol:** In small groups, students track where they see bees, butterflies, or other pollinators, then compare notes.
- **Plant Match-Up:** In small groups, students match labeled plant parts (leaves, flowers, seeds) to the correct plants in the garden.
- **Sensory Walk Guide:** In pairs, one student closes their eyes while a partner carefully leads them through the garden, guiding them to feel, smell, and listen.

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Cooking & Tasting Classroom



Observation & Inquiry-Based Tasks

- **Taste Detective:** Students taste or smell an ingredient and describe the flavor, texture, temperature, or smell using a word bank or sentence stems.
- **Ingredient Investigation:** Students examine an ingredient closely and sketch or label what they notice (e.g., color, shape, seeds, texture).
- **Mystery Utensil Exploration:** Students explore a kitchen tool and predict what it's used for before learning its purpose.
- **Recipe Sequence Sort:** Students put recipe steps or picture cards in the correct order.
- **Texture Hunt:** Prepare a list of textures for students to find (e.g., crunchy, smooth, juicy, chewy, soft)
- **Food Color Survey:** Students track how many colors appear in the recipe or tasting sample.
- **Before & After Observation:** Students compare ingredients before and after cooking using different preparation methods, using real ingredients or pictures.

Interactive Writing & Reflection

- **Taste Test Journals:** Students draw or write about what students tasted and whether they would try it again.
- **Recipe Illustration:** Students sketch the recipe steps like a comic strip.
- **Menu Creator:** Independently or in groups, students design a pretend menu item using ingredients from class.
- **Food Review Cards:** Students write a short restaurant-style review of the recipe or tasting.
- **Ingredient Storytelling:** Students write or draw a story about where an ingredient came from or how it got to the classroom.
- **Promotion Poster:** Independently or in groups, students create a poster advertising an ingredient or recipe, including a fun fact, where it comes from, and ways people can buy, grow, or find it.

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Cooking & Tasting Classroom



Low-Prep Hands-On Activities

- **Measuring Practice:** Students use measuring cups/spoons with dry materials, water, or pretend ingredients.
- **Utensil Sorting:** Students sort kitchen tools by type, size, or purpose.
- **Snack Bag Assembly:** Students portion ingredients into bags or cups for later cooking stations.
- **Recipe Card Match-Up:** Students match ingredients to recipe names or photos.
- **Spice Smelling Station:** Students smell spices and try to identify or describe them.
- **Mix & Observe:** Students stir simple combinations, like oil and water or yogurt and spices, and describe changes.
- **Food Art Designs:** Students create temporary food mosaics or patterns with sliced fruits, seeds, crackers, or vegetables.

Teamwork Activities

- **Taste Poll Teams:** In small groups, students survey classmates about favorite flavors or ingredients and graph results.
- **Flavor Match-Up:** In small groups, students match foods with flavor descriptions like sweet, sour, salty, bitter, or savory.
- **Chef Talk Partners:** Students practice explaining a recipe step to a partner before doing it.
- **Food Safety Detectives:** Students look for examples of safe kitchen habits in pictures or classroom setups.

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Lesson Plan Template for the First Day(s) of School

Setting the Intent

- **What should students see, hear, or feel today that sets the tone for the space?**
- **What information needs to be gathered about this class or setting before teaching this lesson?** (e.g., seating chart, classroom routines, student needs, materials access)
- **What routines, rituals, or community agreements should students learn, practice, and repeat today?**
- **What is the single core feeling students should leave with today?**

Date		☐ **First visit** ☐ **Second visit** ☐ **Third visit** **Other:** _____	
Grade Level		**Class** (Teacher)	
Objective(s)	*Student will be able to:* • Build relationships through name games and personal connections • Learn (or revisit) core routines that support a safe, inclusive space • Co-create (or reinforce) agreements for shared learning environments • *Others?*		
Materials & Prep Needed	*(Include anything for routines, name games, anchor charts, visual cues, etc.)*		

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Activity	Time	Details/Script
Arrival		**First Visit:** An entry routine is not being taught just yet. First, set a calm, welcoming tone and start making connections. How will students be greeted and things get started? **Later Visits:** Use and practice the consistent entry routine established in the earlier visit.
Name Game or Connection Activity		*Script/outline the activity using clear directions.*
Community Building and Norms Work		**Co-create a simple norm or agreement just for this space.** (Reference the class's existing norms for possible connections.) *Script/outline*
Teach and Practice Core Routines		**What 1–3 routines will be modeled today?** (e.g., entry, exit, transitioning, using materials, cleanup) ***What is said and shown:*** ***How students will practice:***
Closing Routine/ End-of-Class Signal		**How will students know it's time to end and reflect?** (If the closing ritual has already been taught, use it to end the lesson and allow extra time if students need more practice.) *Script/outline*

Notes and Follow-Up Planning

Successes	
Adjustments for next time	

Activities or routines to teach on the next visit	**Routines to reinforce** (review and practice)
☐ **Starting the session** (greeting, opening routine, threshold cue)	☐ **Starting the session** (greeting, opening routine, threshold cue)
☐ **Name learning and connection**	☐ **Name learning and connection**
☐ **Norms or agreements**	☐ **Norms or agreements**
☐ **Closing routine or reflection**	☐ **Closing routine or reflection**
☐ **Another routine** (e.g., materials, transitions)	☐ **Another routine** (e.g., materials, transitions)

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Resources for Further Reading

Teach Like a Champion 3.0 by Doug Lemov

Responsive Classroom:

- *Responsive Classroom for Music, Art, PE and Other Special Areas*
- *The First Six Weeks of School*

Lost at School by Ross W. Greene

Conscious Classroom Management by Rick Smith

Positive Discipline in the Classroom by Jane Nelsen

Reframing Classroom Management: A Toolkit for Educators by Teaching Tolerance

Rethinking Classroom Management by Patricia Belvel

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