

Ways to Beat the First Day Jitters

Organization + Activities = Success

Plan the drive to school

If you plan to drive to school, drive it at least once during the time of day you will be driving to school. Find the best route and an alternate route in case of a traffic accident.

Learn your way around

Familiarize yourself with the building. Locate exits, principal's office, gym, nurse's office, cafeteria, supply room, faculty lounge and media center.

Know the rules

Get acquainted with school policies and procedures, such as opening and closing hours, attendance procedures, fire drill regulations, lunchroom regulations and nurse services. Ask if there is a student handbook. Set up a notebook or folder to hold official notices, policies and schedules.

Introduce yourself

Meet the teachers on your hall. They can be of assistance in the first few weeks of school. Take the time to say "hello" to other important people in your building: the librarians, the counselors, the school nurses, the cafeteria workers and custodians.

Decorate your room

Get your room ready. Make sure your classroom is friendly and livable for opening day. Put up pictures, design a colorful bulletin board and add a few plants. Before bringing in an animal, check school policy and student allergies.

Consider traditional seating

Start with the traditional arrangement of desks until you've established control and know your students' names. Make a temporary seating plan. Check for "blind spots" from your desk and various parts of the room. Keep traffic patterns in mind when arranging.

Get your materials ready

Make sure you have all the materials you'll need for getting school under way: paper, pencils and books. Obtain blank forms such as hall passes and textbook forms. Identify the forms that will be used the first week, what information should be included and how they are handled. There are more than you could ever expect! Obtain supplies provided by the school. These go fast—learn how to keep track of them. Among supplies you'll need are: paper, pencils, pens, paper clips, masking tape, scotch tape, scissors, chalk, stapler and staples. Find out how to obtain textbooks. If you are a floating teacher, prepare a means of moving materials from room to room, such as a luggage dolly with a small basket.

Store supplies

Go through the storage and filing cabinets and decide where to store things to which students will have access and things to which only you will have access. Be careful with money, calculators and your grade book. Locate a secure spot for your personal valuables.

**provided
to you
by**



Schedule your time

Make a detailed schedule for the first few days, including times for each subject, restroom and lunch breaks and other times your students will leave the room.

Plan, plan, plan

Create lesson plans for the first few days. Plan at least twice as much as you think you can cover. Write down everything. Detailed plans will provide you with a feeling of security when facing the class for the first time.

Make procedural decisions

School will begin much more smoothly if you have decided in advance how to handle routine procedures. It is especially important for you to develop classroom discipline procedures that follow your districts' policy and guidelines. *Elementary teachers should decide on a system for:* taking attendance, book and paper distribution, money collection, restroom visits, fire drills, classroom entrances and exits, and bus loading. *Secondary teachers need to decide how to:* take attendance, deal with tardy students, make assignments, collect papers, handle make-up work, and give hall passes.

Get there early

On the first morning, arrive early so you'll have time to ask any last minute questions, go over final plans, and relax before the students come in.

Greet your pupils

Be in your room when the pupils arrive. Have your name written on the chalkboard. Greet the students with a smile and a pleasant "Good morning."

Get down to business

Make opening exercises brief. Your goal for the morning is to get down to the business at hand.

Start the learning

Make the first day of school a real one. Accomplish some constructive learning with your students.

New Teacher Questions to Ask Before School Starts

- Where and how do I secure supplies?
- How do I check out regular and supplemental texts?
- What are the procedures for use of audio-visual equipment?
- How do I make arrangements for a field trip?
- How do I sign my class up for the media center?
- What are the procedures for taking a class to an assembly?
- When am I responsible for locking my room?
- What machines are available for me to use – copier, computer, DVD, LCD, etc.?
- Where can I get free or inexpensive materials?
- With whom should I consult as I make decisions on the use of supplemental materials?
- What are the attendance procedures for students, and what are my responsibilities in attendance record keeping?
- What do I do with any money I collect?
- What are the grading guidelines for the school system? What documentation must I provide?
- When and how do I fill out an interim report?
- To whom do I report serious problems with a student's health or behavior?
- What student records must I maintain in cumulative folders?
- What procedures do other teachers in my school follow for contacting parents by letter or phone?
- When do I work with my mentor?
- What should I do if I must leave my room during class?
- What should I do in case of a medical emergency in my classroom?
- How do I handle a fight between students?
- How do I report a disciplinary problem?
- How do I arrange for a substitute?
- How do I apply for personal, professional, vacation, or sick leave?
- What is my salary and what deductions are taken (use the payroll organizer in your FEA pocket calendar to keep track)
- Are there any unwritten rules for teachers in my school?
- What is my personnel file and what is in it?
- Where do I go if I am having trouble?
- What instrument will be used to evaluate me? When will my first observation take place?
- Who is my association building representative?