

Keep Calm and Carry On Teaching Teenagers
Tips for managing and motivating teens
David Spencer

Classroom Management: Some basic tips for classes with teenagers

- 1 Make sure you know before you walk into your first class what your school or institution's policy is towards typical discipline problems. What can/must you do in each case? If you have free reign, do you know what your policy is?? Decide before problems happen, not after.
- 2 In the light of the above, you may like to negotiate some class rules with your students, but don't bother negotiating what is unnegotiable.
- 3 It is usually more helpful to spend more time praising good behavior than punishing bad behavior. Make sure you keep your eyes open for good things to say to students and the class as a whole.
- 4 Learn students' names as quickly as possible and use the students' names. Prove to students that you know who they are and see them as individuals, not just part of the class.
- 5 Have activities ready to keep fast finishers busy and motivated. Fast-finishers can get bored quickly and disrupt the class.
- 6 Decide before the year starts how you want students to keep vocabulary records, grammar notes, corrections etc.
- 7 Beware shouting all the time. Ultimately, the more you shout, the less students will pay attention to you.
- 8 It may generally be good advice to be firm rather than too friendly at the start of the year. However, showing that you enjoy being with your class can only be positive.
- 9 Although it's easier said than done, it's worth remembering that, according to research (see 'Interpersonal relations and education' by David H. Hargreaves, Routledge & Kegan Paul 1975):

Teenage students like a teacher who:

- 1) keeps good control.
- 2) is fair and has no favourites.
- 3) gives no extreme or immoderate punishments.
- 4) knows and can explain their subject well.
- 5) gives interesting lessons.
- 6) is cheerful, friendly, patient, understanding.
- 7) has a good sense of humour.
- 8) takes an interest in pupils as individuals.

See also:

<https://www.theguardian.com/get-into-teaching/ng-interactive/2017/mar/31/what-makes-a-great-teacher-pupils-have-their-say>

Keep Calm and Carry On Teaching Teenagers
Tips for managing and motivating teens
David Spencer

Creating a positive atmosphere/Breaking the ice: Some activities and ideas

Did you really???

Ask students to write a variety of sentences about what they did in the holidays. Tell them to make some of the sentences true and some false, but to make it difficult to tell which is which. Students compare sentences in pairs or small groups. They can ask each other follow-up questions about each sentence in order to decide whether they think each statement is true or false. Finally, the students make their decisions and see if they were able to separate the truth from the lies.

'My Favourites' Pyramid

Ask students to draw a pyramid with five levels, and number each level from 1 to 5. Then tell them to make notes in each section about:

- 1 favourite school subject
- 2 favourite dishes
- 3 favourite hobbies or sports
- 4 favourite places
- 5 favourite actors, singers, writers...

They then compare pyramids with a partner and explain in detail their notes. Did they have any points in common?

Who, What, Why?

Ask students to think of as many question words as possible and to write them down. Then ask them to write one question with each question word they thought of to find out information about their partner. The students then interview their partner using their questions. Finally, ask the students to tell you one interesting thing they found out about their partner. The students can then choose some of their questions to find out information about YOU.

The Five-Pointed Star

Tell students to draw a five-pointed star and write their name in the middle. At the tips of the star, they write (a) the name of someone who is important in their life, (b) a date which is significant to them, (c) a number which is special, (d) a place that has some relevance to them, and (e) the name of a film/band/book/computer game that they love/hate/have seen recently... Students get into pairs, compare stars, and ask and answer questions to find out more about each point. Then ask students to tell you one interesting thing they discovered about their partner.

Keep Calm and Carry On Teaching Teenagers
Tips for managing and motivating teens
David Spencer

What was the question?

Give the students the answers to some basic personal questions and ask the students to work out the questions. The answers can be sentences or multiple choice, e.g.:

- 1)?
A Very often B Sometimes C Never
- 2)?
A One B Two C More than two
- 3)?
A Mexico B Russia C Another country
- 4)?
A Yes B No C Don't know
- 5)?
A Surfing the net B Doing homework C Sleeping

The students then use their questions to interview other students in the class and feed back to the whole class with interesting things they discovered.

Two-Minute-Topic Tic Tac Toe

Draw a noughts and crosses (tic tac toe) grid on the board and write different topics in each square (e.g. sports, music, family, cinema, home, learning English, school, holidays, my future). Students play noughts and crosses. To win the square they must talk about the topic in the square they chose for two minutes. If they don't manage to do this, the square remains free. The students can play the game again, but this time they can choose the topics themselves.

The A to Z of Classroom Language

The students must think of a word connected to the classroom for each letter of the alphabet. For example:

A = Answer, B = Board, C = Computer, D = Desk, E = Exercise, F = ...

They can leave out difficult letters and try to go back to them later. This is a great way to revise useful classroom language at the start of the year.

Draw and label, in English, a plan of your classroom/school

Again, a great way to revise useful classroom/school vocabulary in English, but also a great way to help new students find their way around their new school building.

Keep Calm and Carry On Teaching Teenagers
Tips for managing and motivating teens
David Spencer

Planning lessons for teenagers: Basic principles

- 1 The material needs to be relevant and interesting for students (some topics may be 'cold', but some can be too 'hot'!)
- 2 Aim for a variety of skills work. Speaking will tend to raise energy. Listening and writing may have a calming effect.
- 3 Aim for a variety of interaction. One argument for including pairwork in every lesson is precisely for the warming effect of keeping students 'awake'.
- 4 Pace and timing are critical for maintaining interest but also focus.
- 5 Have activities for fast-finishers – the students who get bored and disrupt the class because they have nothing to do.

Lesson Planning: Being ready for fast-finishers

1) Vocabulary games

- * How many words can you make with the letters in the word 'CONSTANTINOPLE'?
- * Brainstorm words in a lexical set, e.g. types of transport.
- * Prepare anagrams for other students.
- * Prepare 'odd-one-out' activities for other students.
- * Word chains, e.g. 'Rose-rise-rice-nice-...' or 'Tree-park-lake-boat-car-bike-wheel-...'
- * Students have an empty grid to prepare their own word searches (see attached photocopy).

2) Writing games

- * Write a description of a famous person - later read out for others to identify.
- * Write a description of a picture from the text-book - later read out for others to find it.

3) Pronunciation game

- * Write a story around one vowel sound - read out later for others to identify the sound, e.g. Harry had a black cat...

4) Gateway 2nd Edition:

The Workbook includes 'Grammar Challenge' and 'Vocabulary Extension' activities for fast-finishers, and the Online Resource Centre provides you with photocopiable 'Extra Grammar Practice Revision' and 'Extra Grammar Practice Extension' worksheets.

The Gateway 2nd Edition Flipped Classroom videos can also help with mixed abilities. For more information, watch this webinar: <http://www.macmillanenglish.com/events/flipping-the-classroom/>

Keep Calm and Carry On Teaching Teenagers
Tips for managing and motivating teens
David Spencer

Lesson Planning: Warmers

Typical characteristics of warmers

- 1 They should probably be short, and maybe fast (e.g. done 'against the clock' or as a race)
- 2 They are probably interactive, in pairs or groups.
- 3 They may be possibly competitive.
- 4 They should probably be fun, or enjoyable for the students.
- 5 They should get students starting to think in English.
- 6 They will probably get students speaking (and, coupled with other elements above, may end up being noisy)
- 7 They will probably raise energy levels. They may involve movement. And so they may make students over-excited.

1) Alphabet cards

- a) Distribute the cards between the students. Then dictate a word and students, if they think they have a letter in your word, come out to the front of the class. Then they organize themselves to spell the word to the rest of the class. The rest of the class have to say if they think the word is spelled correctly.
- b) Category scramble. Students stand in a circle. The cards are scattered randomly on the floor. You give a category of words, e.g. countries. The students have to scramble quickly and find a letter for a word in your category starting with that letter. So, if it's countries, they could pick up A for Austria, or D for Denmark. The last person to pick up a card loses a life. If you pick up a card, but then can't make a word, you also lose a life.

2) Running (or wall) dictations

You put a text or maybe a list of words on a wall outside your classroom. The students work in pairs. One of them stays in the classroom with pen and paper. The other has to go outside, read the text or words, memorise them and then run back into the classroom to dictate the text or words to their partner. You can make it into a race. The students can check their work by taking the text from the wall and checking their text against the original.

Lesson Planning: Coolers

Typical characteristics of coolers

- 1 They may well be done individually, with no interaction.
- 2 They may involve concentration.
- 3 They should get students thinking in English.
- 4 They may well practise listening and/or writing.
- 5 They may be quiet or silent
- 6 They may be slow and have a calming effect on students

Keep Calm and Carry On Teaching Teenagers
Tips for managing and motivating teens
David Spencer

1) Opposite Dictations

Dictate a simple text/story. For example:

‘There was an old woman who lived in a beautiful old house. She had five black cats and a dog. She loved playing chess and drinking tea.’

The students write down the opposite of this, but make it clear that the opposite can be interpreted any way they like: ‘an old woman’ could be ‘a young girl’, ‘an old man’, ‘a young man’... There is no right or wrong answer. When you finish, students compare stories. Then they try to re-create together the actual words that you dictated.

2) Empty grids for word searches and crosswords

You can find empty grids in many places, for example:

<http://www.studenthandouts.com/Assortment-01/Graphic-Organizers/Blank-Word-Search-Puzzle-Grid.html>

Students can use the grids to make their own word searches or crosswords, recycling vocabulary you have taught them.

3) Column dictations

Draw columns on the board and dictate words. Students write the words in the correct column. So, for example, have two columns: DO/MAKE. Dictate words which go with either one or the other (e.g. homework, a favour, the washing...). Students write individually, but then compare in pairs. Get a volunteer to write their answers on the board and then correct as a whole class.

You can do the same for lexical sets (e.g. TRANSPORT – LAND/SEA/AIR).

Or you can do word stress (e.g. Oo/oO/Ooo). So ‘happy’ goes in the first column and ‘comfortable’ in the third.

4) Opinion Dictations

Dictate statements such as ‘Life would be impossible without my mobile phone’ and the students copy it in the column which corresponds with their opinion: I AGREE/ I DISAGREE/IT DEPENDS. When you finish dictating statements, students compare answers in pairs or groups and then feed back to the class.

Got any questions or ideas about managing and motivating teenage students????

Remember, you can contact Dave Spencer via the Gateway Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/macmillangateway>