

E-4 Teach expectations (and their purposes) at the beginning of the year

How should I teach expectations and their purposes?

Follow your plans for introducing your expectations (P-5) and remember to:

- Discuss the purpose of rules
- Explain, model, and practice what each rule means and the consequences of breaking the rules
- Check for understanding
- Remember to be assertive and use best practices for conveying content

Discuss the purpose of rules.

- Discuss the need for rules with your students, both at the beginning of the year and periodically throughout the year. If students recognize the rationale and value of rules, they are more likely to become invested in them.

Example

Educational researcher Robert Marzano recommends beginning this process by exploring real-life situations that require rules: For example, most students have a sense that there are certain expectations for behavior during dinner when guests are at the house that are different from the rules and procedures that apply when only family members are having dinner together. Similarly, most students are aware of the fact that there are rules and procedures governing behavior in church that do not apply to the behavior in one's own living room. A discussion regarding the importance of rules and procedures in situations outside of school provides a nice set-up for the discussion of classroom rules and procedures.¹

- Explain the benefits of following rules, including how each specific rule connects to your learning goals. For example, explain to students that the rule for “listening when someone else is talking” is designed to let all students learn as much as possible from one another so that together the class can reach its goals.

Explain, model, and practice what each rule means and the consequences of breaking the rules

- Have students brainstorm what each rule means and provide examples of what following each rule looks like (and doesn't look like) in action. This is especially important for rules that encompass several behaviors, such as “Respect your classmates” or “Class time is for class activities”
- Model what it looks like to be following each rule and have students role play to help demonstrate
- Review the progression and meaning of the consequences.
- Use student volunteers and role play to show what it looks like to receive consequences

¹ Marzano, Robert. *Classroom Instruction that Works*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2001.

- Once students have thoroughly explored the specific expectations of each rule, you might type up a “class contract” that lists each rule and the explicit behaviors that fall under each rule. Then, give students their own copies and ask them to read through them and sign them. Keep these for future reference or have students keep them in a binder that remains in class.

Check for understanding

- Determine if students have internalized the rules by probing their understanding (E-3)
- For example, many teachers test students on the rules of the classroom with a cause-effect quiz. Some have students draw cartoons of appropriate and inappropriate student behavior, akin to the “Goofus and Gallant” duo

Remember to be assertive and use best practices for conveying content

- Just like when you present academic material, if you don’t sound clear, confident, and convincing when you introduce expectations, students may not tune in. Remember to use solid posture, make strong eye contact, and emphasize the most important points in order to capture student interest and understanding. When showing students what to expect for the year, demonstrate the firm, positive, and respectful tone that you will use to enforce your expectations.

After teaching rules and consequences, don’t forget to reinforce the expectations as needed throughout the year.