

Rules and Procedures

Rules:

At the beginning of each year, I will inform the class that we will be doing a lot of work together, as partners, groups, and a class. Then, I will ask everyone to get into groups of 5 and write down ten rules they want their classmates to follow. Each group will upload their rules to a shared Google Doc, and as a whole class, we will consolidate the rules down to ten all-encompassing norms. From then on, if a student breaks these norms, he/she will lose points on the “professionalism” portion of their assignment.

All rules, results, and procedures can be differentiated to accommodate individual students, as needed.

Independent of the class' input, my basic rules include the following:

1. Be respectful and kind.
2. Be open-minded.
3. Be responsible.
4. Do your best.
5. Defend your honor.
6. Obey the school's rules and policies.

Rationale:

1. We cannot have an effective classroom unless we listen to others' thoughts, take turns, consider others' feelings, and treat others the way we want to be treated.
2. We're going to deal with some important topics, and everyone will have a slightly different opinion about them. We don't have to agree with everyone, but unless we want to spend all day arguing, we need to consider what others have to say and why they're saying it.
3. We need to have all our materials ready to go every day, take care of our homework, use our freedoms wisely, and be on top of our other obligations so that we can actually get things done.
4. Making mistakes is an important part of the learning process, and we can expect them. The important thing is that we give our best, so that every day, our best can get a little better. Otherwise, we're just wasting our time.
5. You have integrity, compassion, and morals. Make choices every day that reflect your best self.
6. We need to create a safe, professional learning environment in order to be successful.

Negative Results:

These results are the direct result of the broken rules. (Ex. If you behave disrespectfully, then you will demonstrate respect.) Because we are an English/History class, the level C Negative Results all include a short written component to help you reflect on what happened, demonstrate a more positive behavior, and plan for a better choice in the future.

I reserve the right to skip a step if the misbehavior continues from day to day, or if the misbehavior is severe.

- A) I will give you a warning, and I'll say, "That's one."
- B) If I ask you again in the same day, I'll say, "That's two," and we'll talk after class.

- C) If I ask a third time, I'll say, "That's three," and I'll be making a call home later that day. Additionally, you'll receive a consequence that corresponds to the rule you've broken. I will hand you a paper for the appropriate rule, and you will return it by the end of the same class. If you have to stay late to finish it, I'll write you a pass for your next class.
1. If you did something disrespectful or unkind, you will write a SINCERE letter to whoever you disrespected or hurt. You will admit what you did, and try to fix it. If you so choose, you can apologize, but that is up to you. The question, "Would you like Ms. Curtis to deliver this letter?" will be at the top of the paper. You can check a box "yes," or "no," or "I want to deliver it personally."
 2. If you did not respectfully engage a topic or a fellow student (disruptive to class, unwilling to listen, causing contention, etc.), you will write a summary of the other person's point of view, and explain why he/she holds that opinion. You do not have to agree, but you do have to understand what he/she is saying. You will identify how your behavior was inappropriate, and describe what a better choice would be in the future.
 3. If you are consistently unprepared for class or irresponsible during class, you will lose participation points. Additionally, you will write a paragraph explaining what the problem is and how you can prevent it in the future.
 4. If you consistently give a poor effort, you will write a paragraph about something you really, truly care about, and explain how your education can help you with it.
 5. If you do not defend your honor (lying, cheating, stealing, breaking promises, etc.), you will write to explain what you did and why you did it. You will evaluate whether that decision will ultimately make you happy in a lasting and meaningful way, and defend your answer with two pieces of evidence. You will identify how your behavior was inappropriate, and describe what a better choice would be in the future.
 6. If you break a school rule, you will write a paragraph explaining what the problem is and how you can handle it differently in the future.
- D) You will leave the classroom if it happens again, and go straight to the office. If you refuse to go, I will call security.

Positive Results:

In addition to the intrinsic value of following these rules, at the end of each class period, if you have kept all the rules, you will earn 5 points. For every warning I give, you will lose 2 points, continuing into the negatives. If you get a B, C, or D Negative Result, then you are disqualified from points for that specific day. If I notice that you went above and beyond in keeping the rules, you will earn an additional 3 points. I will keep track of these points on my daily checklist. At any time, you can turn these points in for a Positive Result.

- A) You can listen to music during class (as long as you stay engaged). 50 points
- B) You can sit in the comfy chair during all of class. 100 points
- C) You can turn in one assignment up to 24 hours late with no penalty. 150 points
- D) You can convert one test question into extra credit (not for the whole class). 200 points

Beginning of Class:

When you walk in, turn in any homework, sharpen your pencils, and do whatever else you need to do quickly. The goal is to get all distractions out of the way so that we can make the most of class time.

I will have bell work instructions written in the day's PowerPoint. Read and follow those directions. After five minutes are up, you will turn in the bell work, and it cannot be made up unless you were absent, or late with a pass.

I'll be taking attendance during bell work time, so it's important that you're in your assigned by the time the tardy bell rings.

Absences, Tardiness, and Late Work:

If you are late to class, just come in quietly and get working on whatever we're doing. When I have the chance, I'll come by to ask you if you had a pass. If you do not, then I will go to a Negative Result.

If you were absent the day before, just check the class website. If you need a paper handout, check the bin in the back of the room in the correct folder.

You will have the same number of school days for which you were absent to make up any work. (Ex. You missed Thursday and Friday, so your work is due on Wednesday morning.) NOT INCLUDING absent work, late work will be marked down 10% for every school day that it is late. (Ex. It was due Thursday, and you turned it in on Monday morning, so you lose 10%.)

Leaving the Room:

Only one student at a time can be out for a bathroom or water break. When you leave, sign out and take the bathroom pass with you. You have three minutes to get back, or you'll receive a Negative Result.

If you need to go to the nurse, grab a nurse's pass, fill it out, and hand it to me to sign.

If you have to leave to get missing schoolwork or materials, you will lose two participation points for the day. It's not damaging on its own, but a consistent pattern of unpreparedness will hurt your grade in the long run.

Materials and Equipment:

Every day, bring everything you need to class: paper, pencil, hand-outs, homework, notebook, binder, computer, etc. I will tell you what days you need to bring the textbook.

Sharpen your pencils at the beginning of class. If you absolutely need to sharpen them in the middle of class, just get up and do it quickly and quietly. If you disrupt others on your way to or from the sharpener, or take more than 60 seconds, there will be a Negative Result, just like in any other situation.

The materials in the back of the class are for use on projects from this class only. I will tell you when to get them. If you need a pencil or paper, you can use the extras in the back, but be warned: once they're gone, they're gone. I will not buy more, so make sure to return the pencils every day before class ends.

The materials on my desk and behind my desk are not for you to use or touch.

Ending the Class:

I'll give you the last 3 minutes of class to pack up, clean up, and do your exit ticket. Don't start before I give you the signal because it causes the class to lose focus.

During Class:

During lecture time, or during a student's presentation, or during a guest speaker's presentation, you should have your head up, eyes open, and mouth closed. You may listen, take notes, or doodle, but stay mentally present and do not distract others.

During silent work time, you shouldn't be talking. If you have a question, raise your hand and I'll come help. If I don't see you after fifteen seconds, you may approach me. If I'm with another student, wait for me to finish first.

During regular work time, you may talk with those around you and exchange ideas, ask your peers questions, or work together unless otherwise stated. The noise level needs to stay at a reasonably low level. The expectation is that you stay seated unless you need to get up for something. Wandering across the room to talk with friends is not an acceptable reason for getting out of your seat.

Turn everything into the Big Black Box of Everything at the front of the room, or online.

When your individual work is completed, you may work on your homework for this class, homework from another class, or do the extra work for quiz/test retakes. If you have finished all those tasks, you may free-read in the comfy corner.

Quiet Desk:

This is not a punishment. It's primarily self-help, but I will send students to it if I think they could use a break. If a student needs a break from regular classroom activity because of anger issues, emotionally sensitive content, a difficult life situation, or any other serious reason, this is a safe spot for them. The desk has tissues, stress balls, loose-leaf paper, pens, pencils, a trash can, and a calming picture of the ocean on the wall. Students can use the Quiet Desk at any time without permission, but while they are there, they must either be doing work for this class or writing down why they are using the Quiet Desk (i.e. "Why do you need to use the quiet desk?" "What problem are you facing?" "Why do you feel that way?" "What can you do from here?"). Students are free to give me the paper, or to keep it so that I won't ever read what they wrote. Either way, I will still check to see if they were writing during that time. Failure to use their time well at the Quiet Desk will cause a Negative Result.

Transitions:

When moving into groups, walk, don't run. Sometimes you will get to pick your groups, and sometimes I will assign you. Our procedures are assignment-specific, so listen for instructions. When you need supplies, send one person to the back to grab them so that we avoid over-crowding.

Signals:

When I want your attention, I might shut the lights off, at which point you should quietly listen for instructions. Alternately, I might call out, "Holy Moly!" The whole class should then respond, "Guacamole!" and then quietly listen for instructions.

Other call-response options (by class preference) include: "Hot fudge... sundae!" "Shark Bait... Hoo ha ha!" "To infinity... and beyond!" and "Harry... Potter!"

Grades:

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

F: 0-50%

I do not round up or down. If your grade starts with a “7,” then it’s a C. If it starts with an “8,” then it’s a B, etc.

I will offer one or two small extra credit assignments throughout the semester, but they will not be enough to save your grade if you do not do your best work consistently.

If you do poorly on a test or quiz, you can complete three worksheets that cover the same content area, and then re-take the quiz. The point of a test/quiz is to show your mastery of a concept, so you can re-attempt a quiz/test twice, but each time you take the test/quiz, it will have slightly different questions.

Sources

Emmer, E. T., & Evertson, C. M. (2013). *Classroom management for middle and high school teachers* (9th ed.). Boston: Pearson.