



Teacher Tip #1: Sweet Starts

Excerpt from my book, *"You Know You Are a High School Teacher When ..."*, more info and excerpts found at [Book Nook Tab](#)

"They compare themselves to the candy found on their desk as they walked in and tell me their nicknames no matter how strange. We go over the course syllabus, the grading process, and where to find my website. There are no rules posted on the wall. I simply state, "I do not expect anything out of you I do not expect out of myself." After all, it starts, and ends, with me. I take them on a tour of our classroom and where to find and store their supplies joking, that this is probably the cleanest the room will ever be. Lastly, we begin to create. We create with pencil and paper, or with film and a camera, or with Playdoh."

Below is a list of activities that I have done or have seen other teachers do to create an effective first day, first impression

- Name tags on desk before students walk in welcoming them
- Have students make their own name tags to use for the first week
- Piece of candy for students to use as a boundary breaker
- Short teacher biography leading to short students biographies
- Have students do something related to subject area the very first day – less “teacher talk” 😊
- Play name learning games
- Take pics to match names to faces early
- Short questionnaire with unexpected questions
- Ask students what they feel a quality teacher should do
- Create best hopes and worst fears list – “burn” worst fears
- Answer questions using syllabus
- Team building games – check out *Silver Bullets* text for ideas
- Go outside
- Hold class somewhere other than classroom – ditch the desks
- Adapt favorite board game for first day activity
- Play *Taboo* using inappropriate actions and words as the *Taboo* list – creative way to learn classroom rules
- *Trivial Pursuit* pre-testing
- Have students create acrostic using own name and words describing themselves
- Pick a unique, most likely unknown vocabulary word that students will learn about eventually and have them write on a poster what they think the word means on the first day
- Review questions if class is second level
- Create content area alphabet to review from year before if class is second level
- Think-Pair-Share about students – they introduce themselves
- Provide an relevant, meaningful quote from someone students know –ask them to reflect
- Classroom guidelines/rules Bingo with content-area-related prizes
- Get students up and moving somehow – move among pieces of chart paper, scavenger hunt, etc.
- Show video clips related to content area or classroom guidelines – students comment
- Have students write goals based on Marzano’s *Habits of Mind* or list of behavior content-area-related such as professional scientist or musician
- Be what you want the students to be – first impressions last a lifetime or at least a semester
- Smile 😊