

## Setting expectations

### OVERVIEW

*Expectations are the behaviors you want to happen in your classroom – but will need to teach and reteach until students learn to do them consistently. They contrast with rules, which never change and always invite consequences. Expectations are often called procedures or routines.*

*Most problem behaviors aren't defiance. Instead, they often stem from students learning how to accomplish the tasks set before them. Clear expectations help you bridge this gap – and help your classroom run smoothly.*

### PROCEDURE

1. **Identify moments that cause friction.** Think through a normal class period. Where might things break down? Consider moments like transitions, group work, getting help, etc.
2. **Decide what success looks like in those moments.** Be specific. Ask: *What should students be doing, saying, or not doing during this part of class?*
3. **Make expectations visible in the moment.** Decide how students will be able to review expectations for the current activity.
  - a. This might be a flip chart they keep at their desk, a CHAMPS-style chart, a slide, or a different visual reminder. The key is to signal: *"These expectations apply right now."*
4. **Teach the expectations explicitly.** Explain them. Model them. Show examples and non-examples when needed. Do not assume students already know, no matter how old they are.
5. **Briefly practice the expectations.** A short practice now prevents repeated correction later.
6. **State expectations *every time* the activity begins.** Remind students of the expectations at the start of each activity. Don't assume they remember, even if you've taught it before. Subsequent explanations do not need to be as long or as detailed as the initial teaching.
7. **Respond to missed expectations with reteaching.** Point out the expectation, reteach it, and give the student a moment to practice it. Do this privately when possible (avoid singling out a student unless it's absolutely necessary). When private correction isn't possible, reteaching the whole class may be effective.
  - a. If the student refuses, things have shifted from an *expectation* violation to a *rule* violation.
8. **Revisit and adjust expectations as needed.** Expectations may need to change with new activities, new groups, or new levels of independence.

### TIPS/TRICKS

- You can buy expectations charts online. **Don't.** You need *your* expectations for *your* class to run smoothly.
- **Expectations are instruction, not discipline.** If students aren't meeting them, they need additional teaching.
- **Reteach as necessary.** If you find yourself correcting the same behavior repeatedly, the expectation has not been taught clearly enough.
- **Expectations can change** from activity to activity and can adjust throughout the year as students mature.