

Making the Most of Your 88,800 Minutes

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1. Beginning of the year letter to students and parents

- The Goal - To let people know who you are and what you're about! It also starts the year on a positive note.
- Helpful Hint - Send one letter to students and one letter to parents. The message can be the same, but the tone should be different.
- Notes -

2. Get to school early each morning

- The Goal - To give you time to prepare for the day. Plus, it opens your door for students who might just want to talk.
- Helpful Hint - The printer is often open early in the day! Take advantage of this!
- Notes -

3. Write the plan for the day on the board

- The Goal - To help your class understand the plan for the day while keeping you from going off on random tangents.
- Helpful Hint - Putting up the four or five main ideas is all you need. If it helps, you can even include the timing of each idea next to the concept itself.
- Notes -

4. Greet your students at the door (by name)

- The Goal - To set the tone for your class in a way that is welcoming.
- Helpful Hint - As you greet them, offer up some words of encouragement as they enter the room. And smiling and laughing never hurts, either.
- Notes -

5. Create an engaging lesson plan

- The Goal - To eliminate negative behaviors within the classroom. Remember, the best defense is a strong offense!
- Helpful Hint - Every lesson needs a strong beginning, middle, and end. And don't forget to break up the learning into manageable chunks!
- Notes -

6. Vary your teaching methods

- The Goal - To make the learning accessible for all your students.

- Helpful Hint - To do this, you might have to teach in ways that don't necessarily play into your strengths. But if it's good for your students, then do it!
- Notes -

7. Trust 'em 'til you bust em!

- The Goal - To instill in your students a sense of trust.
- Helpful Hint - Saying it is one thing...doing it is another. That first take-home test will be scary, but you can do it!
- Notes -

8. Don't talk too much

- The Goal - To let your students talk more.
- Helpful Hint - It's ok to talk a lot some days. It's not ok to talk a lot EVERY day!
- Notes -

9. Plan out your transitions

- The Goal - To avoid classroom disruptions by intentionally planning out your transitions. My advice is that you need to have a smooth transition every time you change direction in class.
- Helpful Hint - Don't forget to include the timing these take when you are laying out your lesson.
- Notes -

10. Come up with a variety of transitions that can be repeated

- The Goal - To create a smoothness to your class that your students are used to.
- Helpful Hint - Songs, countdowns, and chimes are simple-yet-effective transitions.
- Notes -

11. Praise every idea shared

- The Goal - To show students that you value their thoughts.
- Helpful Hint - You can even praise wrong ideas! Show that you appreciate the effort, not just the correct response!
- Notes -

12. Support your students outside of the classroom

- The Goal - To show that you see them as more than just a student.
- Helpful Hint - You don't have to stay for the entire event! And always remember to follow-up with the students the next day in class.
- Notes -

13. Always over plan!

- The Goal - To make sure your students are engaged in a meaningful experience from start to finish.

- Helpful Hint - Over-planning can also include non-academic activities as well. Just make sure they have a meaningful intent.
- Notes -

14. Incorporate movement into your daily lessons

- The Goal - To let your students move in a way that enhances the learning.
- Helpful Hint - Try to go beyond “brain breaks” by intentionally finding ways that allow your students to move around class as the learning takes place.
- Notes -

15. Let students self-assess

- The Goal - To empower students in the assessment process.
- Helpful Hint - Be specific in the feedback students should provide. Also, model your expectations for each “level” of the grading process.
- Notes -

16. Reflect often

- The Goal - To help you become a better teacher.
- Helpful Hint - Frequent, simple reflections are of great value.
- Notes -

17. Thank your students at the end of each class

- The Goal - To end class in a way that shows respect to your students.
- Helpful Hint - As students walk out, it’s a great time to offer an additional word or two of encouragement.
- Notes -

18. Let your students share things about themselves

- The Goal - To help create a culture of community.
- Helpful Hint - Starters and exit tickets are a simple way to add a personalized touch to your classroom.
- Notes -

19. Email early and often!

- The Goal - To end each day on a positive note
- Helpful Hint - You can copy and paste emails. And it’s a good idea to keep a list to make sure you contact as many students as possible.
- Notes -

20. Allow students to catch you messing up

- The Goal - To establish an environment where making mistakes becomes the norm.
- Helpful Hint - You can do this both intentionally and unintentionally.
- Notes -

21. Give students a range of assessment opportunities

- The Goal - To allow your students an opportunity to show their understanding in a way that plays into their strength.
- Helpful Hint - Always give them a chance to create their own assessment!
- Notes -

22. Teach your students to compare themselves against themselves

- The Goal - To get students to look at their learning in terms of their own growth rather than in comparison to others.
- Helpful Hint - You will have to offer a lot of reminders about this one!
- Notes -

23. Realize that every second of class counts

- The Goal - To help you realize that every second of your class is valuable!
- Helpful Hint - Please note that this includes what you say as well! Choose your words wisely!
- Notes -

24. Take risks!

- The Goal - To help you keep things fresh for both you and your students.
- Helpful Hint - You don't need to change entire units to take a risk! Try adding in a little something new to each unit rather than an entirely new unit.
- Notes -

25. Go observe other teachers!

- The Goal - To give you a chance to frequently learn from others.
- Helpful Hint - Mix up whose classes you visit. And remember, you don't need to stay for the entire class period in order to pick up a new trick or two.
- Notes -

26. Attend professional development

- The Goal - To allow you the chance to improve your craft.
- Helpful Hint - Mix up the PD you attend. Go to conferences that range from content specific to student specific (and everything in between). Also, if you attend as a group, divide and conquer the sessions you want to attend.
- Notes -

27. Let students assess your teaching

- The Goal - To improve based on immediate feedback.
- Helpful Hint - Feedback like this can be both informal and formal. And don't wait until the end of the year to find out what is/isn't working with your students!
- Notes -

28. Use social media to your advantage

- The Goal - To improve the relevancy of what you are teaching.

- Helpful Hint - There is an awesome YouTube clip for pretty much anything you are teaching. And you can use a Twitter summary to summarize any topic.
- Notes -

29. Allow retakes

- The Goal - To allow your students the opportunity to improve.
- Helpful Hint - Doing corrections or having students explain their learning are two valuable ways to “retake” an assignment.
- Notes -

30. Provide frequent formative assessments

- The Goal - To better understand if your students are hitting their learning targets as you go rather than waiting until the end of the unit.
- Helpful Hint - These assessments can be informal in nature. “Fist-to-five” and “stoplight” assessments are great for this. Oh, and so is simply talking to students about what’s going on.
- Notes -

31. Be a practitioner, not a theorist!

- The Goal - To get you to adapt what you know (theory) to what you experience (practice).
- Helpful Hint - Adjust your teaching to fit the strengths of your class rather than having your class adjust to your teaching.
- Notes -

32. Have a “What if I can?” mentality

- The Goal - To push you to try new things rather than sticking to the status quo.
- Helpful Hint - Remember, you can always go back to your “system” if the new approach fails. That said, what if the new method is better than your current system?
- Notes -

33. Intentionally plan for fun

- The Goal - To help make your class a place where your students want to be.
- Helpful Hint - Your class can be both challenging and fun! One way to do this is to find topics your students are interested in, and build your learning targets around those.
- Notes -

34. Be a role model

- The Goal - To be someone who people (students and colleagues) look up to.
- Helpful Hint - Being a role model is about doing the little things. Be honest, be respectful, and follow through with your words. There are lots of different ways to be a role model...find the ways that work for you!
- Notes -

35. Reevaluate the work you assign

- The Goal - To consider quality versus quantity.
- Helpful Hint - Think of it as a return on investment. Do they really need to do that many problems in order to understand the concept?
- Notes -

36. Record yourself teaching

- The Goal - To help you reflect upon and improve your craft.
- Helpful Hint - As you watch, break things down into five-minute chunks where you focus on a specific element each time. Plus, if you're teaching online/hybrid, you can download yourself to help those at home.
- Notes -

37. Visit other classrooms

- The Goal - To give you a chance to see others in action!
- Helpful Hint - Take notes on the strategies they use that are helpful. Also, time permitting, have a conversation with them about how and why they do the things that you noticed.
- Notes -

38. Be authentic

- The Goal - To establish your teaching "style" in a genuine way.
- Helpful Hint - Students appreciate authenticity, so be true to who you are! Students will prefer the authentic version of you rather than an imitation of someone else.
- Notes -

39. Empower your students in the learning process

- The Goal - To establish a class culture that is "ours".
- Helpful Hint - You will get a huge return on giving up some of the "power".
- Notes -

40. Avoid cold calling

- The Goal - To stop the "gotcha!" teaching mentality.
- Helpful Hint - Set the expectation that everyone participates, and constantly encourage students to engage in the learning.
- Notes -

41. Don't punish the entire class for individual behaviors

- The Goal - To hold individuals responsible for their behaviors.
- Helpful Hint - Do you enjoy being held responsible for bad stuff that your colleagues do? Students don't like this either. Plus, it creates a negative classroom culture when everyone gets punished for something one or two students did.
- Notes -

42. Be solutions based

- The Goal - To look forward rather than backward.
- Helpful Hint - Start with the solution in mind and work backwards!
- Notes -

43. Start fresh every day

- The Goal - To begin each day with a positive mindset.
- Helpful Hint - This is hard to do! That said, letting your students (and yourself) have a clean slate each day makes teaching much more fun for everyone.
- Notes -

44. Do pre-assessments

- The Goal - To get you to begin where your students are rather than where you *think* they are.
- Helpful Hint - KWLs are a simple way to do this. And yes, these work for secondary students!
- Notes -

45. Grade things in class!

- The Goal - To cut down on the paper load and to clarify the learning.
- Helpful Hint - Use these opportunities as a chance to solidify and enhance the learning rather than simply check on it.
- Notes -

46. Have a routine to your class

- The Goal - To keep things moving!
- Helpful Hint - Don't confuse routine for repetition! Have structure, not redundancy!
- Notes -

47. Find things to celebrate!

- The Goal - To put a little fun into your class.
- Helpful Hint - Keep a monthly birthday board where students can write down their birthdays. Plus, there are all kinds of funky holidays that students enjoy celebrating.
- Notes -

48. Write down your goals for the week/month/year

- The Goal - To give you some direction as to where you want to go.
- Helpful Hint - I love making a goal list and crossing things off as I go! Writing some weekly goals on PostIt notes (no more than three) and keeping them on your desk can serve as a reminder about what you hope to accomplish.
- Notes -

49. Find, and use, your escape routes

- The Goal - To help make it so your tank doesn't get too empty!
- Helpful Hint - Having both big escape routes (during breaks) and small escape routes (during the week) will help keep your tank topped off throughout the year.
- Notes -

50. Try something new

- The Goal - To keep you hungry for ways to improve!
- Helpful Hint - Even small things additions can be beneficial! Don't think you need to create an entire new unit (although that can be cool, too).
- Notes -

51. Remember, it's supposed to be hard!

- The Goal - To remind you that if teaching was easy, then everyone would do it!
- Helpful Hint - Even the best teachers, regardless of if they are in their first year or their fortieth, struggle at times. It not only is normal, it's expected!
- Notes -

52. Take it one day at a time

- The Goal - To help you get through those tough days.
- Helpful Hint - Generally speaking, things usually aren't as good or as bad as they first appear. Try to let yourself, and your students, have a fresh start each day.
- Notes -

53. Let students explain their grade/learning

- The Goal - To let you understand the process rather than simply the final product.
- Helpful Hint - This is a great addition if you let students do retakes. Simply ask them to explain what they learned or where/how they improved.
- Notes -

For additional information on these and similar ideas, please check out..

- [*Hacking Modern Teaching*](#)
- [*Hacking Classroom Management*](#)
- [*Chasing Greatness: 26.2 Ways Teaching is Like Running a Marathon*](#)

To contact Mike about doing a presentation at your school / district , please check out...

- www.thebaldenglishteacher.com (website)
- thebaldenglishteacher@gmail.com (email)
- [*@BaldRoberts*](#) (Twitter)

Tip of the Week Videos

Week one – Be the hero of your own movie (Joe Rogan)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTUEIM6T50w>

Week two – Things aren't always as they seem (castle)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUbraNFEHkA> tv

Week three – Pay attention to the small things (dancing bear)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ahg6qcgoay4&t=1s>

Week four – Be creative (rapping flight attendant)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYA_ivyj3kE&t=1s

Week five – Pursue your passions (Tom Thum)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNZBSZD16cY&t=600s>

Week six – Believe in your abilities (Autistic basketball player)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1fw1CcxCUgg&t=9s>

Week seven – Have a sense of humor (Hank Green jokes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMFj3eU1IS8>

Week eight – Find the good (Jocko Willink)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdTMDpizis8>

Week nine: Struggle is a part of life (Famous Failures)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLYECIjmnQs>

Week ten – Always Play like an Underdog (Matthew McConahey video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0p1fjLPjYQ>

Week eleven – Find your greatness (Nike video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYP9AGtLvRg>

Week twelve – Stop Whining and Start Doing (David Goggins video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zy5c2k3W458>

Week thirteen – Make the most out of each jellybean

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOksW_NabEk

Week fourteen – It's ok to rank every now and then (Hank Green rants)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xV_4EA-wrPc

Week fifteen – There is more to life than winning (Brother helping brother finish tri)

<https://www.nbcsports.com/video/alistair-brownlee-stops-helps-brother-cross-finish-line>

Week sixteen – Be nice (Free huge)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vr3x_RRJdd4

Week seventeen – If given a choice, always choose the hard way

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMb9XPgkHBE>

Week eighteen – Make the most out of each jellybean

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOksW_NabEk

Week nineteen – Pursue your passions (Tom Thum)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNZBSZD16cY&t=600s>

Week twenty – Actions Speak Louder Than Words

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6xLYt265ZM>

Week twenty-one – Do awesome stuff

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjNbR23HRQo>

Week twenty-two – Let excellence be your brand (Oprah)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skj-ALA1HFE&pbjreload=10>

Week twenty-three – Embrace the challenge (Barkley)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQmoxlUy33A>

Week twenty-four – More good jokes (Hank Green)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTR2tVr2a6A&t=140s>

Instructional / Theory Videos

Hip Hughes' Advice for New Teachers - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ekNZU5dwWw>

Desk arrangement - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rjsPP-T7zQ>

Standing desks - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBBcJNXNYgU>

Classroom Management Tips (part one) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvIR7o81x2Q>

Personalized handshakes - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0jgcyfC2r8>

Classroom Management Tips - Part two <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9yOOwGYfU>

Content Area Literacy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZWlWpgzxBA>

How to do a Close Reading https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_hhMeE7Osw

Close Reading Strategies https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EG_8JnVOr_o

Release of Responsibility <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kK5uBmriDNo>

Balanced Literacy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nhZ7g0955Q&t=13s>

Direct instruction https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJJkkUPC_yM

Mini Lessons <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPHVmlOcfBg>

Teach Like This Vocabulary Acquisition <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXM14bdvXFQ>

Teaching Channel Vocabulary Paint Chips <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9g98i9DWjw>

Teach Like This Frayer Model <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AdjN09VouaU&t=9s>

ZPD <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Du6vqSOj7UU&t=30s>

Gardner's Multiple Intelligence - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2EdujrM0vA>

Bloom's Taxonomy According to Seinfeld - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NsBna5lVBYg>

Funny / Inspirational Teaching Videos

Soul Pancake (First Day) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miPYLJI247g>

Teaching Center - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYOg8EON29Y>

Kindergarten Cop - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMQADg1Dp9g>

Hugh Jackman - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fipSEmdj3i0>

Every Kid Needs a Champion - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFnMTHhKdkw>

Star Wars in 99 Seconds - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22mdHYEzKC0>

Harry Potter in 99 Seconds - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y57sYHIDP_Y

Teachers Dancing Behind Students - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vk2qyXDpn4k&t=2s>

A World Without Teachers - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN3iLeq1828>

Mr. D (grading papers) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fn_vAhu_Lw

Mr. D (sick days) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6eNPrqTGOE>

Mr. D (spelling test) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Evga-9VdC0>

Language problems <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xN--gGkS8aU>

Star Wars in 99 Seconds - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22mdHYEzKC0>

Teacher Coupon Book - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_PirOBhnTQ&t=18s

Said no Teacher Ever <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXFSSwisAM8>

Sir Ken Robinson <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbY>

Strayer University Thank a teacher <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gANeGBoSBs>

Word Crimes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Gv0H-vPoDc>

Movie Teacher Clips

Hack One (Lean on Me) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ng3rp7uffe8&t=77s>

Hack Two (Stand and Deliver) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2yqlm58ULo&t=2s>

Hack Three (Friday Night Lights) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-iPiN_YHjY&t=4s

Hack Four (Dead Poets) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8BYDK9JX5E>

Hack Five (Mr. Holland) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CB1-ASsrNQL&t=8s>

Hack Six (Freedom Writers) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f8liieRepk&t=6s>

Hack Seven (Harry Potter) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSQ8mWARnSo&t=6s>

Hack Eight (Step) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVN4aVYA2eA&t=23s>

Hack Nine (Dangerous Minds) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gA-5nLQCmW8&t=4s>

Hack Ten (School of Rock) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMvpJDbWX_c&t=294s