

ΟΔΗΓΙΕΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΟ ΜΑΘΗΜΑ ΤΗΣ 1^{ης} ΗΜΕΡΑΣ. **The first day of the new school year is almost here.**

How should you spend your first session with your new classes? Jump straight in and start teaching? Play games? Use the time to get to know your students and let them get to know you?

Perhaps all three?

Here are some guidelines that you might find useful.

WHAT TO DO ON THE FIRST DAY

Introduce yourself and explain what you'll be teaching (the whole course? One aspect of it?)

If you don't already know the students, ask them to write their name on a sheet of paper and fold it in half so that it's displayed on their desk.

Get the students organised. Tell them which books, notebooks and folders they'll need. Ask them to write their names on all of them. If the class is shared with another teacher, make it clear which book(s) they'll be using with you.

Explain, in simple terms, what they're going to learn this school year. Do this even with junior classes – eg they'll learn to read and speak English, sing songs, play games.

Tell them what to expect, eg how many tests they'll do, when they'll get their reports, how often they'll have to write compositions, what types they'll do etc.

Establish some ground rules. Explain to students that you will be friendly and polite to them and you expect them to be the same, both to you and to each other. They shouldn't interrupt or criticise their classmates, and should be willing to work on good terms.

As regards homework, make it clear from the start that it's important for you and your students that homework should be handed back all together, so that problems can be discussed. So if, for example, you set a composition on a Friday to be handed back the following Friday, ask students to give in their compositions on Tuesday. If a student fails to hand in his/her work on the Tuesdays and says 'I'll bring it next Friday', let them know that is not acceptable. Tell them they'll have to bring it on the Wednesday. Make it clear that if they don't bring it at all next time they can use the study room or a quiet place in the school, relax and do their homework quietly. Explain that it's not a punishment. If they don't agree, ask them to make their own suggestions.

Remember that you have obligations too. Follow the same rules about behaviour and attitude that you've laid down for the students, and make sure that you hand back work on time. Do not hesitate to refer to your obligations to the students, as well.

Finally, two DON'Ts. Don't say, 'This is going to be a very difficult year'. And don't say, 'You should study really hard', even if this is true. Most students are under more than enough pressure already. Instead, assure them that this year English will be easy enough but they should be organised, and devote some time to their English regularly every week.

Some specific activities

Junior

- ❖ Play some songs from the Audio CD with the songs they'll learn throughout the year.
- ❖ Ask them how many English words they already know (goal, stop, CD, hamburger, sandwich, toast, fifty-fifty...).

Beginner's – Pre-Intermediate

- ❖ Play games. Visit www.elthillside.com for ideas and relevant material.
- ❖ Ask each student to write one personal, open-ended question (e.g. 'How do you spend your free time?') on a piece of paper. Collect the pieces, mix them up, then give one to a student. The student reads out the question, then answers it. Then give another piece to a second student, and so on.
- ❖ Give each student a piece of paper with the name of an object (e.g. 'cup') written on it. Students take turns to describe the object, or say what it's used for. The rest of the class has to guess the answer.

Intermediate – Advanced

- ❖ Talk to your students about how they spent their summer.
- ❖ Encourage them to give details, describe the places and say what they most/least enjoyed.
- ❖ Ask students to talk about their future plans, and their ambitions for the coming year.
- ❖ Ask each student to write down one wish on a piece of paper. Collect the pieces and then read them out. (Make it clear to students at the start their wishes will be anonymous.)