



How To Get Along With Your Teachers



Yesterday your teacher got after you for talking during class. And today the same teacher singled you out for goofing around. You feel like you're being picked on. So what can you do?

Try to think of your teachers in the same way you would think of athletic coaches. You are on the same team. Your teachers want to help you train your mind and teach you valuable information and skills. By finding ways to work with your teachers, your outlook on school will improve—and eventually your grades will, too!

BEGIN at the BEGINNING

Building a successful relationship with your teachers starts early. Here are five things you can do right now:

1 **Get to know your teachers.** Teachers are human, just like you, with hobbies and interests. Make an effort to find out a few tidbits about their likes and dislikes. You may discover that you have more in common than you thought.



2 **Share important information** that can make it easier for your teachers to understand you. Sometimes things happen at home that can affect how you perform in school. Let your teachers know about a family move, a recent divorce or any other situation that may be distracting you while you are in class.

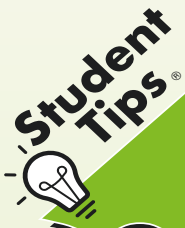
3 **Find out what's expected.** Make sure you completely understand each teacher's expectations and policies about schoolwork.

4 **Make a commitment** to do the work. Once you know what is expected, create ways to stay organized and on top of your class assignments. A calendar and a "to-do" list are powerful tools that can help you remember what is expected. Teachers appreciate students who are committed to doing the work necessary to learn.



5 **Come to school on time** every day! Attendance is important. Your teachers can't teach you if you're not in class, and learning builds day by day.





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Just a little respect

You probably get along better with family members when you treat them with respect. The same is true for getting along with teachers. Everyone wants to feel respected, and by showing your teachers respect, you are likely to get along just fine.

Here are some ways you can show your respect:

- **Pay attention in class.** That may be easier said than done in some cases, but there is no way around it: When your teacher is speaking, your job is to listen.
- **Follow the rules.** Teachers have rules for a reason. Rules keep classrooms running smoothly and create an environment that will help you learn.
- **Be polite.** Raise your hand in class. Never yell out answers or mock classmates' responses. Say *please* and *thank you* when appropriate.
- **Be honest.** If you didn't finish an assignment, don't make up a far-fetched story about it. That will only insult and irritate your teacher. Instead, just tell the truth and apologize. Your teacher may be more likely to cut you some slack if you are straightforward and honest.

Use a 'sandwich' to get along with your teachers

You like your teacher, but there's one thing that really bothers you. Should you say something? Absolutely. Ask the teacher for a few minutes of one-on-one time. Then, try stating your request as a "sandwich." Here's how:

1. **Begin by saying something nice.** Tell the teacher you really like science (if you do).
2. **State your concern.** "I'm having a hard time hearing you. Do you think I could sit closer to the front?" Try not to sound bossy or whiny. Keep your tone both friendly and respectful.
3. **Say something else nice.** "I appreciate your listening to my concern and helping me out."

If you need more help

So you tried talking with your teacher—even writing a note about your concerns, but you're still having a problem. What should you do?

- **Talk with your school counselor.** Counselors are trained to resolve situations like the one you're facing.
- **Talk with your parents.** They are your biggest supporters. If necessary, ask them to go with you for a meeting with the teacher.

It's always OK to ask for help when you're having a problem with a teacher. But start by talking with your teacher first.

Don't forget to say 'Thanks'

Has a teacher done something special to help you? Is there a certain teacher who makes learning so interesting that you look forward to that class? Take a few minutes to say *thanks*.

You could even write a thank-you note. It can be handwritten or typed, on fancy paper or on a page torn from your notebook. Teachers are just like you—they want to feel appreciated.



It's not always easy

Getting along with teachers is a two-way street. And there may be some cases where you just don't like a teacher. But liking and getting along with someone are two entirely different things. If you take the time to get to know and understand your teacher, you will get more out of class. And remember, you and your teacher have the same goal—to help you succeed in school and in life.

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