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***New Activities Here (8/25):**

 Creative-Writing-Challenge-About-Me.pdf

 Creative-Writing-Challenge-About-Me.pdf

 Dear-School-Year-A-10-Sentence-Letter-Challenge.pdf

 Writing-Challenge-My-Life-as-a-Metaphor-10-Sentence-Story.pdf

First Week of School (Activities Only)

Day 1:

 First-Day-of-School Survey (Includes Worksheet!)

 First-Day-Of-School Survey.pdf

 First Day of School Survey (Student Example).pdf

 Icebreaker Activity: Whodunit?

 Whodunit.pdf

 First day of school exit ticket.pdf

Day 2:

 Six-Word Memoirs (Write 40, 20, and 6-Word Stories)

 Six-Word Memoirs.pdf

 Six-Word Story Examples

Day 3:

 Create 5 Classroom Norms/Agreements

 Classroom Agreements-4.pdf

 Classroom Agreements-2.pdf

 Classroom Norms Worksheet.pdf

Begin first writing sample:  Writing Challenge: Show Off Your Knowledge!

 Show Off Your Knowledge-3.pdf

Day 4:

Finish first writing sample:  Writing Challenge: Show Off Your Knowledge!

 Show Off Your Knowledge-3.pdf

 Class Activity: Learn from a Classmate

 Learn From a Classmate (Notes).pdf

Day 5:

Write a reflection in response to notes:

 Learn from a Classmate (Reflection).pdf

Fun activity to end the week:  Who Said It: Tupac or Shakespeare?

First Week of School “Game Plan”

The following “game plan” is not meant to be prescriptive. This is simply the general plan I follow the first week of school. Hope it helps!

First Day of School “Game Plan”

Goals for Day 1:

- Start learning the names of my students.

- Start learning about the interests of my students.
- Keep the mood light-hearted and fun.

The first day of school is more of a social event than an academic one for my students. And I respect that. Many students are nervous about who they are going to sit by at lunch, and other social pressures. Therefore, I keep the day light-hearted, silly, and positive. I strive to help students find their classes and navigate the school.

Step #1: Introduce Myself as Their Teacher

My name is...

I am from...

I teach these classes...

My hobbies are...

What questions do you have?

Step #2: Student survey

The purpose of the student survey is to learn a little bit about each student. I keep the survey short, and I finish with a silly “Would you rather?” activity. Students share their responses with a classmate and—if they want—they can also share their writing with the class.

 [First-Day-of-School Survey \(Includes Worksheet!\)](#)

 [First-Day-Of-School Survey.pdf](#)

Alternative First Day of School Survey:

<https://briantolentino.com/first-day-of-school-activity-student-survey-includes-worksheet/>

Step #3: Icebreaker Activity

This is a great activity for students to share something interesting about themselves. You can either print out the pdf provided or have students write their responses on a small sheet of paper.

 [Icebreaker Activity: Whodunit?](#)

Worksheet:  [Whodunit.pdf](#)

Step #4: Exit ticket

Once again, my mission for the day is to learn about my students. An exit ticket gives students another chance to share something with me that was not provided on their student survey.

 [First day of school exit ticket.pdf](#)

Second Day of School “Game Plan”

Goals for Day Two:

- Read syllabus (Introduce students to the “nuts and bolts” of the class)
- Write Six-Word Memoirs

Step #1: Read syllabus

I read the main points of the syllabus—that’s it. I keep it short and sweet. In the past I had students complete activities related to the syllabus, but now I don’t. You do whatever works best for your students.

Step #2: Write Six-Word Memoirs

Six-word memoirs are a simple and creative way to capture one’s life story. Students begin by writing their life story in 40 words. They then must reduce their 40-word story to 20 words. Then they reduce their 20-word story to six words. This is a great activity to introduce students to the concept of “brevity.”

 [Six-Word Memoirs \(Write 40, 20, and 6-Word Stories\)](#)

 [Six-Word Memoirs.pdf](#)

You can have students create their story as a Google Slide or on Canva. Here are some examples:  [Six-Word Story Examples](#)

Or you can have students write their stories on paper and display those stories on the walls of your classroom.

Third Day of School “Game Plan”

Goals for Day 3:

- Establish classroom norms
- Get students writing about a passion/interest (**This will be my first writing sample**).

Step #1: Classroom Norms/Agreement

Here is the video explanation I share with students: [Create 5 Classroom Norms/Agreements](#)

I like to create classroom norms with all my middle school classes, and some of my high school classes. The purpose is to establish what behavior and norms are expected in the classroom—and to include students in this process.

I want my students to think about the classroom from the teacher's perspective. I pose this question:

If you were the teacher, what agreements and norms would be necessary to run a fun, fair and effective learning environment?

I use a think/pair/share approach to this activity.

Think: Students write five norms/agreements on their own.

[PDF Classroom Agreements-2.pdf](#)

Pair: Students share their norms/agreements with an elbow partner.

Share: Students share their norms/agreements with the class. Then—as a class—we decide which 5 norms we like the best. You can write the norms on poster paper, or a worksheet like this: [PDF Classroom Norms Worksheet.pdf](#)

Step #2: Writing Challenge (I use this as a first writing sample)

The purpose of this task is twofold: learn more about students and their interests - and to collect my first writing sample.

When introducing this activity, be sure to explain that it is not a formal essay. The goal is simple: “show off” your knowledge on a passion or interest of yours. Don’t worry about structure—just have students write. Tell students there is one objective: demonstrate a “mind at work.”

When students write 250 words or more, I get a feel of who they are as writers and thinkers. I see how well they use writing conventions (spelling, punctuation, grammar, and capitalization), what kinds of vocabulary words they naturally use, how they transition ideas, and the overall depth of their thinking.

[Writing Challenge: Show Off Your Knowledge!](#)

[PDF Show Off Your Knowledge-3.pdf](#)

Fourth Day of School “Game Plan”

Goals for Day 4:

- Finish “Show Off Your Knowledge”
- Have students teach each other a topic of interest (collaborative activity)

Step #1: Finish “Show Off Your Knowledge”

Some of my students struggle to meet the 250 word requirement. I often need to emphasize why it is important for students to “stretch” their thinking and reach the 250 word requirement. I typically have to give extra time for students to finish (depends on the class and grade level).

Step #2: Learn from a Classmate

The goal of this task is for students to pair up and teach each other something interesting. Students will say things such as “I don’t know anything.” That’s hogwash. We all have knowledge on something we can teach someone. Many students use their topic from “Show Off Your Knowledge” for this activity.

Here is the video explanation I give students: [▶ Class Activity: Learn from a Classmate](#)

Step one: Take notes as someone teaches you. [PDF Learn From a Classmate-2.pdf](#)

Fifth Day of School “Game Plan”

Goals for Day 5:

- Write a reflection from notes taken the previous day.
- End the week with a game.

Students need to learn how to process notes. Anyone can jot down ideas. But can students process their notes and turn random facts and ideas into something personal and deep? Throughout the year I have students take notes, and return to those notes to further develop ideas. This is the first activity to familiarize students with this process.

*Hint: Students typically resist this process. The more you repeat it, the more students start to understand it.

 Learn from a Classmate (Reflection).pdf

Fun activity to end the week:  Who Said It: Tupac or Shakespeare?

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