A Guide to Planning and Creating the Environment

Good planning is the key to a successful first month of school. It builds confidence and enables your lessons to run smoothly and students to become engaged in the curriculum. Planning your lessons in detail during the first few weeks will help you to anticipate and prepare for problems in advance.

This chapter will provide a variety of planning strategies and tools for annual, midrange, daily, and weekly planning including sample daily calendars and schedules. It includes transitions from one task to another and various samples of daily and weekly activities. It also includes a section on planning focused on the needs of English learners.

This chapter also contains ideas to organize your classroom, room arrangements including centers for K–2 classrooms, lists of supplies, environment checklists, suggestions for first-day preparation including how to prepare class lists and bus and name tags. The chapter also provides you with a list of essential knowledge with which your should familiarize yourself prior to school starting regarding academics, equipment and machinery, school personnel, school procedures, and supplies.

ANNUAL PLANNING

The task of planning may seem overwhelming. To make it easier, first obtain copies of curriculum guides, frameworks, and content standards. Review any pacing guides that have already been developed for your grade level. Locate copies of texts, reading materials, and other relevant materials for your school and grade level. A good source for this information would be a veteran teacher or your principal. Become familiar with the big picture. Realize that throughout the year, you will make decisions concerning what to teach and the *length of time* students should be engaged in a particular unit. If possible meet with the other teachers at your grade level to collaborate on long-range planning.

♦ Review the Language Arts and Math Content Standards (content standards are published by State DOEs. California standards are available at: http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/).

♦ Review curriculum guides, frameworks, texts, and literature associated with each content area, and compile a list or map of the specific subject matter and assessments. You will need both a calendar and a matrix to map out the year. You can do this with pencil and paper or on the computer. An Excel spreadsheet or simple Word table will work well for the creation of the matrix. Across the top list the months of the year. Down the left side list the subject areas to be covered.

Figure 1.1   Annual Plan

	Month			
Subject	**September**	**October**	**November**	**(Continue December through June)**
Reading	Assessments Comprehension Fluency	Summarizing Retelling	Plot analysis	
Math	Assessments Skills Problem solving	Chapters 1–4 Multiplication tables Logic problems	Chapters 5–9 Solving word problems	
Social Studies	The American Revolution	Development of constitutions Separation of powers	Early U.S. history Bill of Rights	

Use the above matrix and an Excel spreadsheet to map out the year to ensure coverage of any texts, materials, standards, and content required during the year. This rough sketch will be revised as you become familiar with your students' knowledge, skills, interests, and needs. Notice links between subject areas, and develop integrated, thematic units of study. Use the matrix for Back-to-School Night to inform family members of your year-long plan.

K–6: Lesson Plan Book

Obtain a copy of both the school and district master schedules. You may use a ready-made plan book or create your own on the computer. To create your own planner use a table that has the days of the week across the top and the time blocks with bell schedules down the side. Enter important dates in your plan book first in a monthly calendar to put the important dates and events for each month for quick review (i.e., Back-to-School Night, report cards, parent conferences, standardized testing dates, staff development days, special holidays, and school and district events). Then create a weekly planner with the dates and special events of the week and include your school's bell schedule, library time, restructured days, and mandated time for specific subjects. Plan carefully so your daily schedule will remain constant throughout the year.

Set up your plan book with dates for the year (look at a school calendar and put the starting and ending dates of the weeks of school at the top of the pages in your plan book and list all holidays). At the first teachers' meeting, you will probably receive various other important dates to remember. If you have your plan book set up, you can immediately transfer those important dates and responsibilities into your book so you don't forget them. The following are some examples:

- ◆ Yard duty for each week (this is important—put this right next to the date at the top of the page in red ink)
- ◆ Back-to-School Night
- ◆ Parent conferences
- ◆ Vacation days
- ◆ Staff development training
- ◆ Vision and hearing screenings
- ◆ Special events
- ◆ Testing schedule
- ◆ Report card deadlines
- ◆ Release time

Having the schedule set up ahead of time will relieve you of trying to find that calendar of events in your piles of papers. This is a good habit to get into: Every time you receive a piece of paper in your box with an important date, you have a place to write it down where you will remember to look at it!

When you set up your plan book, leave a space or column for a things to do and places to go list. List your major preparation here. Also list meeting times and places so you don't forget them.

MIDRANGE PLANNING: GETTING TO KNOW YOUR STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY

Once you have a sense of the school year, it's time to think in terms of units of study. We suggest the beginning-of-the-year theme, *Getting to Know You*, which will be used as an example of how to develop integrated, thematic unit planning. Start with these questions:

◆ *Who are my students, and what do they bring?* Surveying students' interests and backgrounds and assessing their skills regularly will enable you to match your instruction to your students. Use your knowledge of their experiences, families, and community to create relevant lessons. Phone each family or visit them at home. Familiarize yourself with the school community.

Review all the information available to you from former teachers and cumulative records. Create a profile sheet (see sample below) with the name of students down the left and the assessment information you will be using across the top. These assessments include language status, ability in English, ability in reading, math, and special categories for students (migrant, special education, speech, gifted, etc.). This class profile list will help you in determining groups for differentiated instruction.

Figure 1.2   Sample Class Profile Sheet

Teacher: Mrs. Campos
Grade: Third

Student Names	Primary Language	ELD Level	Reading Fluency	Reading Comp.	Math Level	Special Designation	Bus #	Writing	GATE	Migrant
1. Maria Aguilar	Spanish	3	50	75	5		92	Med	X	X
2. Ye Keo	Cambodian	2	30	45	4	Speech	75	Low		
3. Hanja Kim	Korean	FEP	20	75	3.5	Special Ed	Walk	High		
4. Joe Smith	English	EO	60	80	4	ADD				
5. Sarah Zaad	English	EO	70	90	6				X	

◆ *What do I want them to know and become able to accomplish?* Knowing your subject matter and having short- and long-term learning goals will help you clarify what to focus your instruction on. Consider which assessments enable you to learn what your students know and are able to accomplish. These should guide the planning, selection, and sequencing of activities and assist in making adjustments to your students' individual needs. Review standards and required texts to determine what skills and content you will be covering during the year.

◆ *How will I move them forward?* You will be most successful if you choose a variety of instructional strategies to match what students will learn. Promote critical thinking and problem solving within each lesson. Use resources and materials that all students can use and understand, and incorporate learning materials to reflect the linguistic and academic diversity of your classroom. Provide experiences that promote interaction, autonomy, and choice. Teach procedures for each activity within the lesson. Model expected behaviors and provide examples of the quality of work expected of the students.

◆ *How will I know what they have learned?* Use multiple measures for assessing student learning. For example, it is possible to assess students' understanding of concepts through story retellings, written reports, projects, oral presentations, timed tests, worksheets, anecdotal records, written stories, visual displays, and physical demonstration of skills. Involve students in developing criteria (or a grading system) for completed products by assessing and reflecting on their work and by setting personal learning goals based on their assessments. Use assessment results to guide instruction and to improve your assignments. Involve parents and guardians as assessment partners. Communicate often about their child's progress (see Chapter 2, Assessments).

See Tables 1.1 through 1.3 for specific examples of planning tools and activities. To recap the elements basic to midrange planning:

◆ Know the content and subject matter. Determine what students know and are interested in learning.
◆ Use standards to develop goals for student learning.
◆ Assess students to create baseline assessment data in language, literacy, math, etc.
◆ List possible activities and assessment strategies to develop lessons.

DAILY AND WEEKLY PLANNING

Table 1.1   Theme: Getting to Know You; Possible Activities and Assessments—Intermediate

Build a Community of Learners	Implement Classroom Procedures and Routines	Include Transition Activities	Establish Standards for Behavior: Rules and Consequences	Assessments
Paired Interviews 　Name Games 　Find Someone 　　Who . . . 　Graffiti Boards 　Me Pictures 　Shields 　Partner 　　Drawings 　Name 　　Scramble 2	**Procedures Needed** Getting quiet Entering and leaving classroom Equipment checkout Jobs and monitors Snack time and lunch Independent work Group work Outside, PE behavior Homework "Transition activities"	**Transition Activities** (following recess): Sustained silent reading Journals Sentence corrections Read-aloud time Math warm-ups	**Rules** Please/Please Don't Develop four class rules from Please/Please Don't Illustrate rules—individual books Group skits to show examples of rules **Consequences** *Positive*: Group points for being at task, being ready *Negative*: 1. Give warning 2. Time out in class 3. Recess, other class 4. Call home, meet with parents **Other** Appreciation words Positive adjectives Conflict resolution Problem-solving skits	**Literacy** Read aloud vignettes from *House on Mango Street* Morning Messages Names: scramble, origins, sort Think-Alouds—personal stories Personal Stories—writing process **Math** Graphing unit (bar, picture, line) Letters in name Month of birthday Eye color Favorite ice cream (out of three flavors) Favorite TV show Travel to school Like to be when grown up **Reading** Oral reading and comprehension assessment What I Think About Reading **Writing** Wiggly Line Personal stories What I Think About Writing **Math** Computation Problem solving What I Think About Math **Other** Attitude Line-Up Introducing How I Feel

Table 1.2   Theme: Getting to Know You; First Week of School—Grades 4 to 6

	Monday	*Tuesday*	*Wednesday*	*Thursday*	*Friday*
8:30–10:00	Welcome Attention signal Introductions Name Scramble 2 Letters Getting ready for recess	Opening Sentence corrections Literacy—*Names*	Opening Journals Literacy—*House on Mango Street* Prewrite "Memorable Moment" Early finishers: SSR, journal, worksheet	Opening Sentence corrections Literacy—*Laughter* Oral paragraphs First drafts	Opening Journals Literacy—*Rice Sandwich* Finish first drafts
10:00–10:15	Recess	Recess— Yard duty	Recess	Recess— Yard duty	Recess
10:15–11:30	Math warm-up Math-graphing KWL Please/Please Don't Before-lunch procedures	Math warm-up Math—bar graph, "Careers" Please/Please Don't, Part 2	Math warm-up Math—Students create bar graphs Names games, initial adjectives	SSR Math warm-up Math—Line graph Partner surveys	Math warm-up Math—Circle graph "What I Think About Math" survey
11:30–12:15	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:15–1:30	Read aloud Know Your Classmates	Read aloud Partner drawings	Read aloud Shields	Read aloud Finish Shields	Read aloud What Makes a Good Listener?
1:30–2:30	Homework Jobs PE (knots) Closure and dismissal	Homework Jobs PE (cooperative relays) Closure and dismissal	Homework Jobs PE (running laps) Closure and dismissal	Homework Jobs PE (stretching) Closure and dismissal	Homework Jobs PE Closure and dismissal

Table 1.3   Theme: Getting to Know You; Second Week of School—Grades 4 to 6

	Monday	*Tuesday*	*Wednesday*	*Thursday*	*Friday*
8:30–10:00	Opening Sentence corrections Literacy—*And Some More* Feedback on stories	Opening Journals Literacy—*First Job*	Opening Sentence corrections Literacy—*Core literature*	Opening Journals Literacy—*Core literature*	Opening Sentence corrections Literacy—*Core literature* "What I Think About Writing"
10:00–10:15	Recess	Recess—Yard duty	Recess	Recess—Yard duty	Recess
10:15–11:30	SSR Math warm-up Math—Begin project "What I Think About Reading" survey	SSR Writer's Workshop—peer edit Math warm-up Math—Develop rubric	SSR Writer's Workshop—final draft Math warm-up Math—Finish graphs	SSR Writer's Workshop—Illustrations Math warm-up Math—Self-assess and trade graphs	SSR Writer's Workshop—Cover, title page, About the Author Math warm-up Math—KWL, pretest
11:30–12:15	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:15–1:30	Read aloud I Messages	Read aloud Appreciation words Graffiti boards	Read aloud Problem-solving skits	Read aloud Emotions	Read aloud Group definition of cooperation and cooperative triangles
1:30–2:30	Homework PE Jobs Closure and dismissal	Homework—Line graphs PE Jobs Closure and dismissal	Homework PE Jobs Closure and dismissal	Homework PE Jobs Closure and dismissal	Homework PE Jobs Closure and dismissal

Daily Calendar

In your plan book create a daily calendar showing your bell schedule for recesses and lunch. Include all known times: library, PE, music, and so forth. If your school has special activities during the week or year, list those in your plan book right away.

Subject Schedule

Determine the schedule for individual subjects, combinations of subjects, or themes. Consider a possible theme time integrating social studies, language arts, music, and art during the day. Determine how your schedule fits with possible team interaction. If you have English learners in your classroom, determine how they will get systematic English language instruction at the appropriate level daily in a small group. Determine when you will do frontloading for new vocabulary or structures in the text and how you will shelter content for English learners.

Transition Activities

Brainstorm transition and routine activities occurring after each recess. Some examples are journals, math warm-ups, sentence corrections, sustained silent reading (SSR), and read-alouds. Decide about placement in your daily schedule. If you routinely have a transition activity after each recess, it will allow you time to meet with students as needed, to assess them individually, or to complete preparation for the next activity. These routines should be explicitly taught during the first month so students may practice their expected behavior.

Daily and Weekly Activities

Consider other daily and weekly activities, such as morning message, calendar, daily agenda, jobs, homework assignments, current events, quizzes, tests, and class meetings. Enter these in your plan book.

You now have a basic daily and weekly schedule. While scheduling your midrange planning, you can add the sequence of activities for each unit and series of lessons.

Certain lessons require more details than others. Consider adding a basic plan structure to your plan book. Another notebook may include more specific plans: for instance, an introduction to the lesson or set, instruction, guided practice, independent practice, and closure. A detailed outline for routine procedures is necessary only for initial teaching, to assist you in planning the routine's procedures, modeling, and practice.

Careful planning does not imply that these are etched in stone. Your students' backgrounds, interests, and needs will drive your instruction. Plans can serve as a road map, but remember: The route may be changed whenever needed!

Planning for English Learners

You must learn the capabilities of both the English and the content of each of your English learners. There are required assessments for English language—learn what those are in your state and district. Find out from your students' record at what level they have been assessed, and use that as a starting point to begin to determine what language needs students have. When you assess students in subject areas, keep in mind that their language skills may hide greater abilities in reading or math. To determine the subject area skills you may need to bring in someone who speaks the language of the English learner. Give simple assessments of mathematics and reading that will allow you to determine if a learner has sound symbol and numeric relationships. You will need to plan for three strands of addressing language needs: (1) *Systematic English language development.* Students should receive twenty to thirty minutes of instruction daily in English at an appropriate level. If the student is a beginner in English s/he needs to be grouped with other beginners for this systematic approach to English. This may require working across classrooms to provide the small group instruction needed; (2) *Intentional teaching of needed vocabulary and structures* of lessons; (3) *Sheltered strategies to clue in English learners* to understanding and participating in content area instruction. These three strands on English instruction all require planning on a weekly basis.

Systematic English Language Development

There are a variety of programs that provide a systematic approach to teaching English. Systematic English language development moves students through the developmental levels of learning English from simple beginning structures and vocabulary to more complex language. It ensures that students learn all of the basic language they will need to function in school. This should be done in small groups with other students at the same level of learning English and may be organized across grade level teams or across larger school groups depending on the numbers of English learners in the school.

Intentional Teaching of Language Structures and Functions and Vocabulary

Look at each of the units you will be covering during the first month of school. Think about what the vocabulary is that students will need to use in each of these units. Plan out in advance how you will teach that vocabulary. Create charts for the walls that students can refer to with pictures or definitions to help them remember the key vocabulary. Plan to create mind maps with your students or charts with the basic concept in the middle and webs that move from students' prior knowledge to the new vocabulary related to things students might already know.

Consider the ways in which students will need to use the language (functions) that they will need in the lessons. Will students be asked to describe something? If so, they will need to learn that adjectives in English usually precede the noun they are describing. Will you be asking students to introduce someone? If so, they will need to learn language structures used in introduc-

tions such as, "I would like to introduce you to. . .," "This is Maya. Maya is. . .," or "I want you to meet Khanvhi." If you are asking students to read word problems in mathematics, you will need to analyze those problems to be able to teach the structures the language students will need, not only to read those problems but also to answer the problems. For example: "If Joe has two apples and Mary gives him three apples, how many apples will Joe have?" In this problem your students will need to be able to use the "If. . .then" structures as well as the conjugations of the verb "to have." To answer the problem they will also need to use the future or conditional tense of "will."

Teaching language requires advanced planning not only of the content and vocabulary but also an analysis and planning of how those language structures will be taught and reinforced. There will be a need to pre-teach the structures for students to carry out those functions. Pre-teaching can be through role play, providing cloze sentences, "If he does ___, then ___ will happen." Whatever the lesson expectation, teach the language needed to meet that expectation. For example, your students need to write an essay on an animal. Consider the language they will need to describe the habitat, food, and functioning of an animal. Then teach the structures they will need to write the essay. Create charts for the walls, or individual help worksheets or booklets for English learners to refer to in scaffolding the lesson. For every lesson in each subject area you will need to plan ahead to analyze the text and lesson expectations to support your English learners in gaining access to the text.

Sheltered Strategies

Whatever the content you are teaching there are a number of strategies you can use to shelter a lesson, making it more understandable for English learning. Some strategies include using pictures, gestures, voice intonation, repetition, and writing key words on the board next to familiar words or pictures. You can start lessons with a mind map (putting the topic in the middle and mapping related ideas around the outside connected with lines to the main concept) that allows students to familiarize themselves with a topic and connect to prior knowledge. Creating hands-on experiences, allowing students to work together in pairs using cooperative strategies including specific roles in a group, etc., will give English learners more opportunities to participate. Graphic organizers, maps, and charts can help students organize information in a way that will help them learn the connections and the vocabulary. When you are planning your lesson try each week to come up with a couple of sheltered strategies that will help you get content across to your students, and write them into your planning guide for the week.

CREATING THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

A very important part of planning is organizing the environment for success. Organize your classroom in a way that allows for a variety of learning styles and situations and that keeps materials organized and accessible to students. You will want to think through how you will introduce your students to the room organization and train them to keep it clean and organized by putting things back in their proper place after an activity. Clearly coding the classroom will help keep it organized.

Room Arrangement

Environment plays a critical role in the classroom. How you set up your room affects the learning that will take place. Before students arrive, organize your room with an eye toward flexibility in the future.

Following are suggestions for activity areas. If space, furniture, and equipment do not allow setting these up as separate areas, you might rethink the storage of equipment and supplies so an area can be used for more than one center (i.e., an art center might be used as a teacher-directed lesson space if that center is not used during the time block for group instruction).

◆ Sufficient space for whole-group meetings on the floor (rug area) near a bulletin board—or within easy viewing of a chart stand when writing together

◆ Table large enough to work with groups or for teacher-directed small groups (two tables required if an aide assists with small groups)

◆ Art center with supply storage that can be easily accessed by students; if your center includes a table and easels, it can be maintained more easily if located near the sink

◆ Listening center for two to four students at a small table or on the floor; center should be equipped with tape recorder, two to four sets of earphones, and a jack for hooking earphones to the tape recorder

◆ Writing center with paper, pens, pencils, crayons, and markers stored in a clearly organized manner

◆ Center areas where two to four students can do independent study activities (e.g., small tables, individual desks, counter space, or floor areas)

◆ Library corner with thematic and current-interest books displayed so students may see their covers, plus additional space for a growing collection of student-authored books; also needed: inviting reading space with a comfortable chair, lamp, pillows, and so on (Note: On the first day, *do not* overstock the library. Allow the collection to grow as you read and write books together.)

◆ Observation and science area for objects your students bring to share for a particular theme (e.g., shells displayed for a sea life theme or objects with scents displayed for a five-senses theme)

◆ Dramatic-play area containing dolls, telephone, dishes, playhouse furniture, plastic food items, and so on; as different themes are studied during the year, this area can be converted to a museum, post office, grocery store, or doctor's office
◆ Construction area for blocks, LEGO®, or other manipulatives
◆ Computer center

Flexible use of space requires your students to understand *when* it is appropriate to be in a certain area or center. Prepare several Stop signs or Open–Closed two-sided signs that can be hung up when a particular center is not available. It is not necessary for each area to be up and running the first day. Area planning allows you to enrich your classroom with materials without rearranging furniture to gain additional space. Train students on how to use each center before allowing independent use. Such training should be a large part of your first month's instruction. Set up centers that are most critical to your instructional goals.

Seating (Dependent on Your Preference)

◆ Kindergartners need cubbies rather than assigned seating. On the first day, it is not necessary to label cubbies with students' names. During the following few days, they may choose their particular cubby. Having students decorate name cards for their cubbies is a good small-group lesson.
◆ First and second graders use tables or desks. If tables are used, students need cubbies for storing schoolwork, backpacks, and lunch boxes. First and second graders usually have assigned seats for part of the day, but this arrangement allows for seats to be used in various ways during the day (i.e., reading groups or centers).
◆ Third- to sixth-grade students may only use desks. Varied seating arrangements can be used, but we recommend that desks be grouped in fours or sixes to encourage cooperation. The first-day seating arrangement can be arbitrary, in alphabetical order, or by student choice. As you become familiar with students' behaviors and abilities, you can work together on making changes.

Organization of Supplies

Environment means more than furniture arrangement. Review your materials storage: crayons, glue, scissors, pencils, paper; also games, puzzles, blocks, books, manipulative materials, and so on.

Color code and symbol code general supplies so students can become independent when cleaning up. Store supplies in movable tubs or boxes labeled with the same color as the table or work area. Storage area for supplies should be labeled with the same color or shape. Example: If general supplies are needed in five areas, label each with a piece of laminated construction paper cut in these shapes: orange rectangle, red circle, green triangle, yellow square, blue oval.

Then, label five supply tubs (containing pencils, crayons, scissors, and glue or paste) with corresponding shapes. Last, label the area to return supplies with those same five shapes. Now, students can easily find and return supplies as needed. Other items used by students on a regular basis such as puzzles, math manipulatives, games, LEGO® blocks, and so on, can be stored consistently on shelves labeled with their names.

Environment Checklist

♦ Start with a few fiction and nonfiction books, remember to look for books that appeal to the range of students in your class (female and male characters of diverse backgrounds on a variety of topics), then add to your collection during the coming weeks. Younger children return to familiar books, and they read with greater concentration. Add to your collection of read-aloud books.

♦ Establish an inviting library corner. Students should have access to cassette tapes or CDs that accompany books. Auditory accompaniment will allow students to benefit from books that exceed their independent reading level.

♦ Have reading material other than books available (magazines, catalogs, and cards). Also make videos and CDs available.

♦ Include creative materials for students to express their own personal interpretations in project form.

♦ Make opportunities and materials available for students to conduct research and experiments.

♦ Allocate spaces for oral activities like Readers' Theater, choral speaking, and play acting that will not interfere with silent reading and listening activities.

♦ Provide blank cassette tapes for students to record or listen to their story readings, or both.

♦ Establish quiet corners for students to write, read, dream, and think. Hang bulletin boards to display students' work, allow for learning and interaction; support what is taught.

♦ Space should be neatly organized and designed for easy maintenance by the class community.

♦ The classroom should provide opportunities for students to choose from several activities and places or ways to work.

PREPARATION PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY

Prepare the following before students arrive:

K–6 Class List

This includes all students' addresses, bus routes and stops, and telephone numbers. New students should be added to the list immediately. Refer to a map

or take a tour of your attendance area to become familiar with neighborhoods and bus stops. Obtain this information from your school secretary or a veteran teacher, or ask them to be your tour guide (or both). Start by organizing your list in alphabetical order by *first name*. The school's list is prepared by *last* name. As you will be concentrating on learning students' first names, use of the school's list will slow you down. Also, students' given names are not necessarily what they use; for instance, if Maria Guadalupe is called Lupita, you'll become confused. Creating your own list is worth the effort.

A computer database is an efficient way to create a class list. Many types of integrated software are available: *AppleWorks*, *Microsoft Office*, *Microsoft Works*, and so on. This way, making changes and correcting errors becomes easier. Also, the database can be used to create labels for a substitute, field trips, bus transportation name tags, and so on.

K–6 Bus Tags and Bus List

Carefully research how your students will get home. Know their bus routes and stops, who will be picked up and by whom, and who will walk home and with whom. For younger students, this information is critical—you do not want to lose a student! Ask how to obtain this information from the school secretary or a veteran teacher at your grade level, then:

◆ Create a master bus list (in alphabetical order by first name) to be kept on a clipboard and carried with you to the bus lines.

◆ Prepare a *How We Get Home* graph, matching students to their respective buses. Post as a wall display for reference at dismissal time. (Creating this graph with students on the first day is a good opening-day, whole-group activity.)

◆ Prepare individual bus tags with students' first and last names, home address, phone number (optional), and bus route and stop. (If using a database, use the *print merge* option for address labels that include this information. Printed address labels equate to instant, easy-to-stick-on bus tags that may be prepared daily and reflect any class changes.)

◆ Depending on students' ages and their bus drivers' needs, some students wear bus tags for the first two weeks. Younger children need tags longer than older students. Bus drivers carry an enormous responsibility in making sure that students arrive home safely. Ask what is required of you so their jobs can run more smoothly.

◆ Decide if students should return their bus tags daily. If so, laminate the tags, and they can become lasting necklaces. Often, there are several students who do not return theirs and require new tags. Decide which is best: a master tag that can be copied onto address labels, printing new tags each time for all students, OR making new tags for those few students when needed. Decide on a time and procedure for figuring out who needs new tags. Remember to plan a time to make new tags each day.

K–6 Name Tags for Permanent Seats

Name tags can be prepared prior to the first day, or you might have students create name cards for their own permanent seats. One first-days goal is to build a sense of community and inclusion. Creating a climate where community members are known by name is an important part of this goal. The more ways that students can create their own communities, including working together on individual name cards, the better.

K–2 Name Tags

Wearable name tags must be prepared for each student. During the first day, one of your most important tasks will be to learn their names. The more visual information available, the faster names can be learned. Some schools have a high transiency rate, meaning that the list you receive before the first day may be inaccurate. Ask a veteran teacher or school secretary if this might occur at your site. If so, choose a tag style that can easily be changed or discarded.

Name tags can represent the special shape or character of your first theme. Create these from sturdy paper, laminated for use over several days. Attach roving or string to make necklaces—or you may purchase plastic holders affixed with a pin, clip, or string. These are inexpensive and available at office supply stores. Write names on the cards, add a sticker, and then slip each one into a plastic holder. These tags will survive the school year, can be available for a substitute's use, and are easily changed when a student leaves or arrives. When forming temporary groups for first-week activities, color code the name tags using different colors of roving or varied stickers. Place students with the same color roving or sticker into the same group. Collect name tags at day's end; replace with a bus tag, if appropriate.

In K–1, students might read the names each day as a whole group. One of the first things students learn to read are each other's names. Making this a routine provides many opportunities for teaching phonics in context.

K–6: Calendar. The classroom calendar should be up and ready to go. This calendar and its related activities constitute a routine you want to establish. It is relatively easy to get together and can be a ten- to twenty-minute activity done every day. See the section on the calendar routine in Chapter 3 for how to set one up.

K–2: Pre-Selected Read-Alouds. These should be short, with good illustrations and predictable, repetitive text. Having these pre-selected and within easy reach of the whole-group area will help with those moments that need to be filled. See the section on read-alouds in Chapter 8 for a bibliography.

3–6: Preselected Read-Alouds. Books that you really enjoy and that will capture the interest of your students make reading aloud an enjoyable part of the day.

K–2: Written List of Fingerplays and Songs. You should memorize and be ready with a repertoire of at least ten songs and fingerplays. See Chapter 6 for

some easy ones. Student attention is more easily and gently gained through chanting and singing than through overt phrases, such as, "I need your attention." If you start a chant, soon all the students will join in.

K–6: File Folder for Each Student. Write each student's name on a file folder, and alphabetize the folders by first names. Have the files easily accessible in an open box or tub. Keep extra folders on hand for new arrivals. Having your folders ready will enable you to quickly file those beginning-of-the-year activities that you want to save (e.g., self-portraits, writing samples, teacher observations, parent notes).

K–6: Homework Tub or System. Set up a tub where students put their homework, notes from home, permission and other forms, and the like. Keep this in a consistent place near the door.

1–6: Individual Work Folders. Make each student a construction-paper folder labeled with his or her name. All daily work can be corrected or checked and filed. These folders should be kept in a central location, not in individual student desks. All work can be compiled and sent home on Friday or Monday to be reviewed and signed by parents. This provides one night a week of homework and the opportunity for parents to see their children's progress over a week's time.

K–6: Bulletin Boards. Create a learning environment that is interesting, inviting, and comfortable. Bulletin boards should reflect the atmosphere you want to have in your classroom.

♦ Leave at least one blank board for the display of an initial classroom project.
♦ Plan a welcome-type bulletin board (e.g., Famous Fourth Graders: put up pictures, names, interview information).
♦ Use your bulletin boards to tie into the beginning-of-the-year themes.

Many districts have teacher centers where you can use a die-cut machine to cut the letters that you need for bulletin boards. Teacher supply stores also may have prepackaged commercial bulletin boards. But to obtain maximum advantage from bulletin boards, you should involve students in the design, layout, and especially in the content.

Basics to Know About Your Classroom

Be sure you know how to find:

♦ Classroom keys, cabinet keys
♦ Classroom light switch
♦ Classroom heat control
♦ Intercom

Academics

♦ Cumulative records
♦ Diagnostic and placement tests
♦ Grade book
♦ Grade-level and subject expectations
♦ Library books, texts, workbooks
♦ Plan book
♦ Profiles, individual records

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- Report cards
- Science and math manipulatives

- Standardized test results
- Student and home information

Equipment and Machinery

- Computers, flash drives, printer, paper, LCD projectors
- Cookware, stove
- Desks, chairs, tables
- Easels, chalkboards
- Electrical outlets
- Projectors, screen, extension cords

- Films, videos
- Laminator
- Dry-erase markers, whiteboard
- Pencil sharpener
- Photocopier, photocopier key
- Tape recorder
- Video and audio equipment

Personnel (Name, Schedule, Location)

- Paraprofessionals
- Cafeteria staff
- Custodians
- Fellow teachers

- GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) staff
- Nurse
- Secretary, office personnel
- Special education staff

Procedures

- Abuse and neglect reporting
- Bus rules and procedures
- Cafeteria rules
- Evacuation of building
- Field trips
- Fire, earthquake, or disaster plan
- Fire extinguisher
- Library and hall passes
- Location of all schedules
- Lunch money, tickets, charges

- Petty cash
- Phone procedures
- Playground rules
- Power outage
- Roll sheet
- Seating chart
- Student or staff illness
- Substitutes: number, plans
- Supply and purchase orders
- Weekly bulletin

Supplies

- Art supplies
- Chalk, chalkboard erasers
- Cleaning supplies: broom, dustpan, sponge, soap
- Clipboards
- Crayons
- Envelopes
- File folders
- First-aid kit
- Hole punch
- Tissues
- Label-making gun and tape
- PE equipment: whistle, stopwatch

- Paper: butcher, construction, scratch, writing, tagboard
- Paper clips
- Paper towels
- Paste, glue
- Pencils, erasers, pens
- Pins
- Post-it® notes
- Rubber bands
- Rulers
- Scissors
- Staplers, staples
- Stickers
- Tape: transparent, masking