**Start Your Engines!**

Just as Harry Wong says what happens on the first days of school will be an accurate indicator of your success for the rest of the year, what happens in the first minutes of your class will indicate your success for the rest of the class period. To be effective, you must be at your door to greet students, as well as have a planned strategy for providing activities that will immediately engage students as they walk in the door. Activities used to start class (which are meaningful to students) provide an “emotional hook,” that in turn fosters attention and learning. This “daily activity” and routine (bellringer, etc.) must be explained and practiced from the first time you meet with your students, so it becomes part of the “procedure” for entering your classroom. Below you will find 65 different ways to begin your class. Plan well and adapt your content for success. Vary your beginning strategies for motivation.

**Beginning Your Class (or Have Them With Hello)**

1. **Admit Slips -** Students write the answer to a question given by the teacher the previous day and turn it in as they enter class the next day.
2. **Agree/Disagree -** A formal approach to discussing and researching issues. As students enter the classroom, they are polled for agreement or **Matrix** disagreement with a statement/s and their responses are recorded in a matrix. As class progresses, students research the topic, and again their responses are recorded. Finally, small groups meet to discuss the results and changes.
3. **Agree/Disagree -** Teacher makes or posts a statement about a controversial issue. The students then line up in proportion to their agreement or disagreement with the issue. Can use 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for not sure, 2 for disagree, 1 for strongly disagree. Tell students to be prepared to defend their choice.
4. **Alphabet Summary** - Each student is assigned a different letter of the alphabet upon entering the classroom and asked to generate a word starting with that letter that is related to the topic to be discussed. Students share their terms with the class, partner or write it on paper.
5. **Analogies** - Post one or more unfinished analogy for students to complete as they get seated. An analogy is a thinking skill demonstrated by a  student when he or she can give examples similar to, but not identical to a target.  Example: Maze : confusing as enigma : \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_,“I have a Dream” was to the Civil Rights Movement as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. **Anticipation Guide** - Checklist written by teacher to activate existing knowledge. At the beginning of a lesson or unit of study, write 3-5 questions or make 3-5 statements about the topic.  Students respond with agree or disagree.  After the lesson or unit of study is complete, go back to the statements and see if any students would change their response.
7. **Biopoems** - Poems written by students about any specific person or object (character in book, living or inanimate objects). Its purpose is to summarize student knowledge of topic.
8. **Cartoons -** Introduce a thought, concept, skill etc. by posting, reading or creating cartoons. Cartoons can also be cut up and used as a sequencing activity.

1. **Classification -** Create packets or envelops with cut a part objects or concepts with instructions for students to pick up and complete as they enter the classroom. (When objects or concepts are classified, they are grouped with other, similar things, and the group is given a label. As a thinking skill, classification requires the application of knowledge. When students invent their own classifications, they practice discovery and invention along with being able to apply prior knowledge about the objects or concepts being classified.)
2. **Color-by-Number -** It’s not exactly color-by-number.  Have a page full of words on a topic, and at the bottom, have written instructions to color or circle with particular color. (color or circle all the verbs red, nouns-blue, etc. or for Social Studies, color or outline European countries in yellow, North America in green, etc. It works well to have a box with bundles of colored pencils or crayons) Using Tables in Microsoft word is a good way to make worksheet.
3. **Comparing -** Post or display objects or concepts, so students can observe or consider the characteristics of two or more, looking for both similarities and differences. Can use graphic organizers such as comparison matrix or Venn diagram or foldables.

1. **Comparison Matrix -** A graphic organizer handed to them as they enter the classroom or placed where they can pick it up, that can assist students in gathering information and comparing objects or concepts.

1. **Continuum** - Upon entering the classroom students take keywords (can be placed in envelopes or baggies) and arrange them to form a continuum based on a variety of criteria. For example, "beaver, rattlesnake, deer, plankton" would be arranged as "rattlesnake, deer, beaver, plankton" if asked to arrange according to their preference for water, and "plankton, rattlesnake, beaver, deer" if asked to arrange according to size.
2. **Contrasting -** Have display or words posted, etc. as students enter so they can begin class by**e**xploring or describing differences between objects or concepts.

1. **Copying -** Have diagrams, drawings, text, motions, graphs, etc. posted and students are responsible forreproducing as they enter the classroom. Used to encourage students to look more carefully at something.

1. **Current Events -** As students enter have them respond to posted events in recent news in various ways—listing three ways it could affect them, drawing a cartoon, etc.  Use responses for student discussion or student work centers.
2. **Daily -** An opener activity in which teachers post statements or any number of daily questions, problems, etc. for students to correct, finish, explain, etc.
3. **Driting** - As students enter, have a word or concept for explanation by drawing and writing. Often used in foreign language classes.
4. **Estimating** - Post questions or problems or put cut up problems in envelopes for approximate answers as an estimation review or introduction  to an estimation lesson.
5. **Find the Rule** - Students are given sets of examples that demonstrate a single rule (like "i before e except after c.") and are asked to find and state the rule. You can use examples of a law or theory in math or science.
6. **Fishbowl -** Cut up questions and put in a fishbowl. Have students draw out one question from a past lesson and be prepared to answer on your signal after roll call. You can also use questions for reading and finding the answer in an assigned paragraph.
7. **Flashbacks -** Design and post one or more questions made from your subject’s content or skills and use as a daily or bellringer to start your class.
8. **Flow Charts -** Have students pick up, or hand to them as they enter, a partially complete flow chart to finish. Flow charts are graphical depictions of processes or relationships. Typically flow charts include icons showing particular processes or steps, and arrows indicating paths.
9. **Foldables** - Collection points or visual paper activities that help students organize key concepts and information. Students fold pieces of paper in various ways to hold their written notes and other information. Great study tool with multiple uses in all content areas. A Glencoe resource. (Call Linda Stewart for examples and more information)

1. **Forced Analogy** - Have students make analogies by comparing problem term to a randomly selected term (for example, compare algebra to a cracker). Then use the new combinations to solve a problem or create something.
2. **Frayer Model** - As students enter, give them word choices for using this vocabulary development tool. Students use a graphic organizer to categorize their knowledge about a word. Squares with 4 to 6 blocked spaces work well.
3. **Gaps** - Post sentences or sequences with gaps (missing words, numbers, or symbols) and students are asked to fill in the gaps.
4. **Graphic Organizers** - Hand out to students as they enter, or have placed to pick up, a partially complete graphic organizer. Graphic organizers are visual frameworks to help the learner make connections between concepts.
5. **Hypotheses** - Have a display, post a problem, or loop a demo through LCD display so students can give a tentative explanation for patterns or observations.
6. **Information Transfer** - This activity needs to be modeled ahead of time or show an exemplar so students know how to perform. This activity involves the changing of information either from a diagram to words or vice-versa. The interpretation of text, diagram or tables is an important skill. Ex. Give students text and have them transfer the information to an organizer made by the teacher or an outline and have them write a paragraph or vice versa.
7. **Journal Writing** - Typically done for a few minutes each day. The writing is done in a notebook and is often used for exploration of ideas of interest  to the students or to encourage reflection. Journal writing is typically not graded, and in some instances, is not read by anyone but the student. In other instances, the journal can be used to establish an ongoing written dialog between the student and the teacher.

1. **Jumbled Summary** - Teacher posts or cuts up and places in an envelope randomly ordered key words and phrases from a lesson. Students put the terms and phrases in a logical order to show understanding.
2. **Knowledge Rating -** A prereading strategy designed to evaluate students’ prior knowledge of a topic by having them rate how well they know the content vocabulary words. The vocabulary words are presented and students rate each word with a number—1 know it well enough to define it, 2 think I know it, 3 have heard it or have seen it, and 4 no clue. Teacher can then identify how much prereading instruction will be necessary for critical reading as well as identifying words for explicit vocabulary instruction. It also allows the teacher to differentiate instruction based on a student’s need.
3. **KWL  -** "Know, Want to know, Learn" Students identify what they know about a topic, what they want to know, and after reading or instruction, identify what they learned or would still like to learn.
4. **Letter Writing** - Upon entering the classroom students are asked to write a letter to a specific person or place for specific reasons relating to prior lessons. It encourages students to think about a specific audience and practice skills.
5. **Listing**  - As students enter, ask them to make lists of words, objects or ideas. Can be used to organize thoughts before a writing activity or as an assessment to demonstrate the ability to recall.
6. **Matching** - Post on board or individual slips of paper words, phrases, concepts, skills, etc. Making matches can be done in many contexts. Students can match words with their definitions or mathematical expressions with their solutions, etc.
7. **Metaphors -** Give out paragraphs, assigns pages, etc. for students to find metaphors or create metaphors. Metaphors can be used as examples by teachers, or students can form metaphors.
8. **Mnemonics -** Post a list of information to memorize and give a mnemonic phrase for students to use to remember info (sentence with words using the first letter of the key word for memory. Ex.Kangaroos Hop Down Mountains Drinking Chocolate Milk. The first letters epresent K-kilometer, h-hectometer, D-decameter, M-meter, D-decimeter, C-centimeter, M-millimeter. Ask for learned info after roll call or group practice. Mnemonics is any of several techniques or devices used to help remember or memorize names or concepts.
9. **Modifying** - Provide students as they enter the classroom with models or information that are nearly correct or complete and allow students to modify the model or information to make it more complete. Useful in the classroom as a scaffolding too
10. **Pop Quiz** - Give out pop quiz, an assessment given without notice (graded or non-graded), as they enter the classroom or display on board. It is sometimes used as a review (non-graded), and is definitely used to motivate students to study each day.
11. **Predictions** - Display situations or problems so students can make predictions to indicate extended understanding of concepts from previous day or prior lesson.
12. **Questionnaires -** Post or hand out questionnaire as they enter classroom. A list of questions concerning a specific topic in order to gather info to use in helping you plan lessons according to student level and interest.
13. **Scanning** - Assign to each student upon entering class a section, paragraph, page etc. for reading or looking at material quickly to gain an overview of the content. Can note, share with a partner, or discuss with class.
14. **Similarities & Differences -** Either in graphic or symbolic form, representing similarities and differences enhances students’ understanding of and ability to use knowledge. Four forms to use are Comparing, Classifying, Creating metaphors, and Creating analogies.
15. **Skimming** - Use same as scanning.  Reading or looking at material quickly to gain an overview of the content.
16. **Slip Writing -** Post topic so students entering can individually brainstorm on paper to be followed by sharing of the written ideas in small groups.
17. **Story Impressions** - The teacher posts ten to fifteen terms to students prior to reading. These terms appear in the same order that they appear in the reading. Students write a passage using the terms that they think predicts what will happen in the reading. Students share their predictions with others. Finally, students read, comparing their predictions (story impressions) with the reading.
18. **Suggestion Box** - Useful for collecting any form of anonymous feedback of previous lesson or activity. Student opinions can be regularly collected as part of class activities, or the box could be used in the classroom as an informal method for students to make comments about activities in the classroom. Often most effective when paired with the Admit Slip/Exit Slip approach.
19. **Surveys -** Hand out a mini-survey at the beginning of a unit, topic, etc. that asks for opinions and knowledge concerning the subject material.
20. **Unknown Objects** - Display an object in class that students are unlikely to recognize. Ask students to write three questions they want to ask about it. Can be used as writing or discussion prompts, as subjects for an investigation, or even in an art class.
21. **Venn Diagrams**  - Display partial Venn Diagram and have students fill in the rest. It is a form of graphic organizer commonly used in mathematics and comparisons.

1. **Vocabulary List -** Give students a word or a list of words and discuss briefly to familiarize them before they begin the lesson, story, or unit.
2. **Want Ads** - Have students write want ads. Varieties include "historical," "humorous," and as a employer.
3. **What Is It?** - The teacher displays an object in class that is unfamiliar or has some historical significance. Students are asked to identify the object, describe how it might have been used, or how it might be related to the topic.
4. **Word Associates -** Require students upon entering class to identify which word or object is different from a series of others. Students then make a general statement to link the other words or objects. It requires higher-level thinking skills and help students identify relationships between words while recognizing categorizing factors. Examples:  In these groups, which one does not belong?  Explain why. (i.e. • condensation, precipitation, perspiration, percolation)
5. **Word Sort** - Have Word Sort packets or envelopes ready for students as they enter the classroom or display on board. Organizing and classifying words so that relationships among words can be seen is the goal of word sorts. A word sort activity requires students to categorize words. In open sort activities, the way of sorting words is not given ahead of time. Rather, students are given words to write on index cards and told to group the words together in some way. Then they discuss the different ways they grouped the words and the reasons behind their groupings. In closed word sorts, students are told how to group the words. You might say, "Sort the words according to whether they are places in South America or North America”, or “Sort by sexual reproduction or asexual reproduction”, “Sort by parts of speech”, etc. Word sorts can be done with the students working individually, in pairs, or in small groups.
6. **Wordsplash** - Prepare a collection of key terms from a written passage, which the students are about to read and give as they enter the class. The terms selected represent important ideas that the teacher wants students to attend to when they actually do the reading later, but initially the students' task is to make predictive statements about how each of the terms relates to the title of the reading. Display selected terms randomly and at angles on a visual chart of through a projector. Students brainstorm and generate complete statements (not just words or phrases), which predict the relationship between each term and the topic. Once students have generated statements for each term they turn to the printed material, read to check the accuracy of their predictive statements and revise where needed. "Splash" refers to the random arrangement of the key terms around the topic at the start of the activity.
7. **Spotlight On** - Similar to "Student of the Week." The work and background of a single student is showcased to the class and students are asked to say three positive things about that person’s work.

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