



# Bright Ideas for Managing the Positive Classroom



**Peter Clutterbuck**

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## TO THE TEACHER

### Early days

A new school year: for you, a new class; for the students, a new teacher. The students eagerly await your first words and actions.

Learning their individual names quickly is a great start as it sends a clear message to students that you are genuinely interested in them.

In the 'Early days' section you'll find some simple, short activities, adaptable to all primary or elementary levels, to help you all get to know each other better.

### Through the year

Now you know each other's names and faces, there is much more to know about each individual student if a caring, supportive and growth promoting environment is to be created.

Students develop most effectively in an environment in which they feel safe and trust other class members and you – the teacher. Students want their ideas, thoughts and feelings to be valued; and a place where they can express them openly without fear of derision or ridicule. This occurs when they are provided with encouragement, affection and support.

The 'Through the year' activities will help you to get to know your class members better. They are simple, non-threatening and fun, and adaptable to all primary or elementary levels.

## Early Days

### Guess a name

Tell the students you are going to play a name guessing game. Explain that you will call out a name and if someone is called by that name, they must stand, say good morning to you and introduce themselves. Make sure that you have told the class your name and written it up so they can respond appropriately.

For example:

Teacher: 'Jack!'

Jack, who is in the class, stands and introduces himself:

*'Good morning (Mrs Harris). My name is Jack.'*

If you make a correct guess of a name you score a point. If there is no student by that name, then the class scores a point.



## Student introductions

In this activity a selected student stands and introduces him or herself and then introduces another student whom he or she knows in the class.

For example:

*'Hello, my name is Michael and this is my friend David.'*

David then introduces a student he knows. And so on around the class.



## Rhyming names

Say a word at random and ask the students whose first names rhyme with the word to stand up and introduce themselves.

For example: *Ferry.*

*'Good morning, I'm Gerry Naismith.'*

*'Good morning, my name is Terry Smith.'*



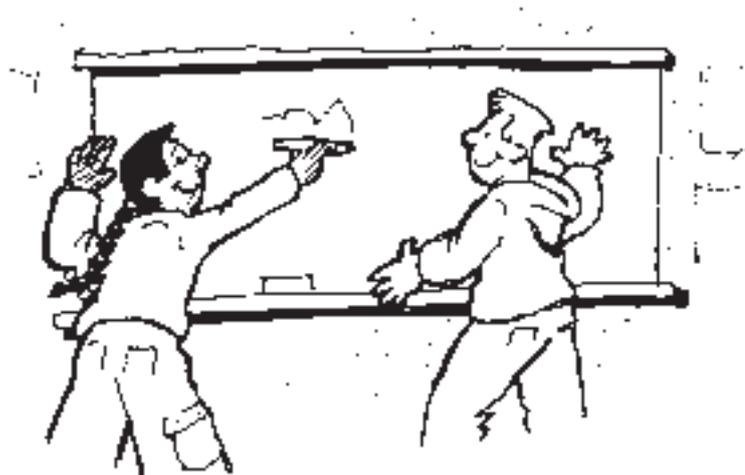
## Jumbled names

You will need to have studied the class register beforehand to do this activity.

Write given names on the blackboard in a jumbled form.

For example: *y a S l l.*

Point to each name in turn. When *Sally* recognises her name she stands and tells the class something about herself, such as: *'Hello, my name is Sally Cockroft. I am seven. My favourite television show is Neighbours.'*



## Identification cards

Identification cards can easily be prepared using a little imagination. Photocopy enough so that each student has one to complete.

They should have spaces for *name, age, colour of eyes, colour of hair, things I like, things I dislike, my favourite food, my favourite activity, other special things about me*. Include space for a self-portrait or to attach a photograph.

Fold the card so it can sit neatly displayed on the student's desk.

See photocopiable resource on page 14.



## Guess who it is

On a sheet of paper each student writes a brief description of him or herself, but does not include his or her name.

For example:

*I have short brown hair. My eyes are blue. I like to collect stamps. My favourite sport is cricket.*

Collect each one and shuffle them. Then distribute them to the students at random, who in turn read each one aloud.

You or other students must guess who is the student being described.



## Alphabet animals

Ask the students to write the alphabet on the left-hand side of a sheet of paper. Then ask them to write the name of a living creature that begins with each letter.

For example: A – *ant*  
B – *bear*  
C – *cow*  
D – *dog*

## Letter start

Ask the students to write a word that begins with each letter of the alphabet that spells the name of the day.

For example: *FRIDAY* – *fish, rock, ink, dog, ant, yellow.*

## Alphabet foods

In this activity students are challenged to remember lists of words.

One student begins with something he or she ate that begins with 'a'.

For example: *'I ate an apple.'*

The next player says: *'I ate an apple ...'* then adds a food beginning with 'b'.

For example: *'I ate an apple and a bun.'*

The next player repeats the whole sentence adding something beginning with 'c'.

For example: *'I ate an apple and a bun and a cake.'* And so on.

The activity continues until players cannot remember all the things that have been eaten.

This can also be played using other categories.

## Doodling away

Each student will need a sheet of A4 paper.

Ask the students to make a simple doodle or picture on the paper, then pass it on for the next student to add to it.

Each doodle or drawing keeps getting passed around the room until all students have added something to each other's doodles.

## TO THE TEACHER

The attentive classroom is one in which all the students feel they are an integral part of a cohesive group. The class teacher provides stimulating lessons and adds mystery and suspense to the teaching, while at the same time promoting active involvement. Teachers who continually work towards developing a strong, positive group feeling among the students will find them more attentive and more willing to participate in class activities.

## LEARNING TO LISTEN

To promote an attentive classroom, the students must first be taught to 'listen', that is, they must be able to hear the information, then process it.

The following simple activities can be used to help students develop listening skills.

In the following pages you'll find games and activities that promote an attentive classroom and that are easily adaptable to all levels. They are focused on:

- developing listening skills in your students.
- actively using periods of silence in the classroom.
- encouraging creative noise.

### The attentive 'word'

Use a key listening word as an attention grabber.

Select a word at the beginning of the week and use it to get the immediate attention of all students. Choose words that are unlikely to be said in normal conversation. When you say this word, all students must respond by stopping what they are doing and listening.

Award points to those students who are the quickest to respond.

The class can be loosely grouped into teams. The team that is first to respond to the attentive word is given points and the winning team is announced at the end of the week.

Reward the winning team members with such things as five minutes extra on the computer and so on.

### Pair up

Ask the students to walk around the room to the rhythm of music.

When the music stops they must pair up with the nearest person. One of the pair asks the other three or more questions.

For example:

- *'What is your favourite food?'*

- *'What football team do you follow?'*
- *'What makes you sad?'*

When all the students have asked their questions and been given the answers, ask them to sit in a circle. Students describe their partner to show how well they listened.

## Story time

- 1 Read a short story to students and then ask them to recall facts about it.
- 2 Make up a story in which you have deliberately inserted some little nonsense details. Ask the students to listen and find the nonsense parts.

For example:

*'Yesterday when I walked to the supermarket I saw a flock of penguins flying overhead. When*

*I paid for my shopping I gave the cashier three pound coins.'*

- 3 Read out lists of words or numbers to the students. On a given signal, ask them to recall and write the lists on a sheet of paper, in the correct order.

For example:

*Dog, cat, mule, zebra, horse.*

## Variety

Use a variety of ways to communicate with students to encourage them to listen and be attentive to the message you are giving.

- 1 **Whisper instructions.** The students will have to be very attentive to hear what you want them to do.
- 2 **Spell out the directions** you are giving:  
T-A-K-E ... O-U-T ... Y-O-U-R ...  
S-P-E-L-L-I-N-G ... B-O-O-K-S
- 3 Communicate directions to students **using only your hands** (or other body language). For example: if you want the

students to write down some spelling, point to the word 'spelling' on the blackboard and mime writing words in a book.

- 4 Instead of saying instructions, **write them on the board.** Alternatively, ask a question, such as 'What is a penguin?', by writing it down. Ask students who know the answer to write it on a sheet of paper and hold it up for you to see.
- 5 **Try mouthing directions.** Challenge students to 'read your lips' to discover what you are saying.



# Presentation Ideas

## Creative writing

When writing words, write them in novel, interesting ways. The way you write the word can often reflect its meaning. For example:

We saw a **fat** pig.

frac  
tions

This can help students to remember the spelling of words.

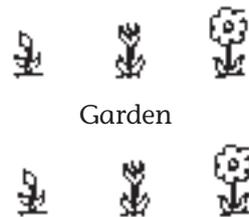
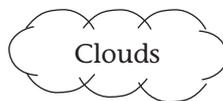


LOOK, HE SAID

## Fantastic frames

Add colourful frames around headings.

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \times 3 + 4 - 2 + 3 = 8 \\ + \\ 2 \quad \text{Maths} \quad 4 \\ = \\ 3 + 2 - 1 + 7 - 7 = 4 \end{array}$$



## Thought for the week

Supply a regular 'Thought for the Week' each Monday for the students to contemplate during the week.

Example: *I cried because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet.*

You will find more thoughts on page 67.

## Graffiti segment

Have a graffiti segment reserved for the students to write and draw in during free time.

Call it something they can relate to such as Kids' Space or Graffiti Garage.

## Mystery drawing

At the beginning of each week start a drawing on some part of the board. Each day add a few more lines and let the students guess what it might be.



## Make a sentence

Begin a sentence on Monday. Each day ask the students to add a word or two of their own, until the sentence is finished on Friday. This is also a useful language activity.

<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thurs</b>	<b>Fri</b>
The dog	ran	fast	to chase	the stick.



For a variation of 'Make a sentence', start a sentence and ask for suggestions for other words that mean the same thing, so you have more than one sentence being built.

<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thurs</b>	<b>Fri</b>
The dog	ran	fast	to chase	the stick.
The canine	raced	like a flash	to run after	the twig.



The classroom environment that students experience is critical to the development of their own behaviour. Peter Clutterbuck has compiled a collection of ideas and activities to help the busy teacher be an effective teacher and at the same time build a positive classroom.

Topics covered include:

- **Activities for a positive start to the day**
- **Clever ways to attract and keep students' attention**
- **Thoughts for the week**
- **Student roles**
- **Games for forming groups**
- **Co-operative rule-making**
- **Student rewards**

**Peter Clutterbuck** is a prolific author of educational texts. Like all his books *Bright Ideas* is practical and user-friendly. A practising and wholly committed classroom teacher, he has collected tried and tested activities and has created and tried out interesting new exercises. These have proved to be educationally successful as well as being enjoyed by both students and teachers. The activities challenge students and generate an enthusiastic desire for learning.

“... a welcome and comprehensive collection of creative, easily-implemented tips and techniques to enliven your primary classroom. Designed for hard-pressed teachers, this book will give you ideas when ideas are lacking!”

“Ranging from short, snappy activities to more substantial approaches, the ideas brought together in this volume will help you to deliver the kind of personal, social and thinking skills upon which effective learning depends.

“Peter has drawn on old and new, on familiar and novel, and presented the material in such a straightforward, quick-fire way that you will be inspired by just a cursory glance at almost any page.”

**Paul Ginnis, Author of *The Teacher's Toolkit***

“... a must for every teacher: the newly qualified as well as the seasoned and experienced. It's truly a treasure trove of tips for every class situation you can possibly encounter. I was thrilled to find ideas I have never thought of myself nor seen used by other teachers. The very new and original are mixed with some many of us have used and frequently forgotten about.

“... will help all teachers enrich their repertoire of activities and will serve as a 'bag' to dip in when their busy and tired minds need support. A wonderful addition to the teacher's bookshelf!”

**Dr Eva Hoffman, Author, Founder and Director of Inspired Learning**

“When their minds shut down, teachers welcome lists of things to do. *Bright Ideas for Managing the Positive Classroom* is full of them. It's a compendium of activities.”

**TES Teacher**

“Excellent, inspirational resource. Full of practical, easy to implement ideas that will motivate and engage the most reluctant of learners. Anti dote to the National Curriculum and genuinely innovative. Like the way it draws on Emotional Intelligence approaches in a way that will appeal to teams. Best book of its kind I have seen for a while.”

**Mark Edwards, Nurturing Potential**



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