

► It's Your First Day of Classes

You've probably spent the last few weeks getting your classroom set up; you've mapped out key spots like the parking lot and the restrooms; you've purchased and organized classroom materials and you've planned enough lessons to last well beyond the first day.

And now it's your first day as a teacher! Consider incorporating these activities into your first day's lesson plan:

- Get to school early on the first morning. Leave time to ask any last-minute questions, review your plans and just simply catch your breath before students arrive.
- Greet your students. Whether you're standing at the classroom door or in the room, greet students with a smile and a "Good morning!" Write your name on the chalkboard. Encourage students to take their seats and be ready for their first class.
- Make a good impression. Let the class see that you are well-organized, prepared and you know what you're doing.
- Introduce yourself: Give students an idea of who you are that goes beyond your resume. You never know when a student may find something that the two of you have in common. Such a positive start can contribute to a positive learning experience.
- Go over the rules. Start off by establishing class rules or norms from the beginning. Don't set more than five rules and let students have a part in establishing how the class will function. Write down the rules and post them in the classroom.
- Start the learning. Make the first day of school a real one. Accomplish some constructive learning with your students.
- Your first open house may coincide with your first day. As an assignment, consider having students write a letter to parents and leave it on their desks for them to read at Open House. Parents can write an "I'm proud of you" note for their child to read the next day.
- Even though you may find the first day of school intimidating, don't be discouraged. While first impressions are important, you have an entire school year to develop and polish your professional image.