

Quick Guide for the First Day of Class



Get students actively involved!

Have students introduce themselves or each other. Add a low-stakes reflective question that gets students connecting with the subject in a creative way. Use an [icebreaker](#) or read on for other ideas.

Frame the subject

What is the subject? Why is it important? What parts of the subject will be covered? How do they relate to what students may have done in other courses?

Set and clearly communicate expectations

- ✚ How much time should they spend on this class per week? What activities do you especially recommend? (see list of activities under #2 in [Bowen's Cognitive Wrapper](#))
- ✚ Your policies for late work, attendance, and in-class (and/or online) behavior •What should they bring to class each day?
- ✚ How and when will you communicate with them?
- ✚ What you will (and will not) provide, such as PowerPoint slides in the LMS, study guides, etc. Be able to explain how this supports their learning.
- ✚ Your desire to see them succeed and their ability to succeed if they put in the effort.

Learn about each other

Share your prior relevant experience (in teaching, research, industry) to establish credibility. Find out:

- ✚ What are their expectations for the course? What are they hoping to learn? Collect their answers so you can process them and address them as needed and as appropriate during the semester.
- ✚ What do they already know? Partner in establishing a positive climate. If time permits, use an activity to help students see how you and [they are both responsible for establishing a positive climate for learning](#). Highlight key syllabus information.
- ✚ Use a short active learning segment in which students must engage with the syllabus.
- ✚ Consider a short open-syllabus quiz in the next class. It only takes 5-10 minutes, reinforces importance of the information, and helps students see how you word questions.

Reference:

University Center for Teaching (n.d.). First day of class. Retrieved from <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/first-day-of-class/>