

TOOLS for Teaching Social Skills in SCHOOL

Grades K - 12

Lesson Plans, Activities, and

Blended Teaching Techniques

to Help Your Students Succeed

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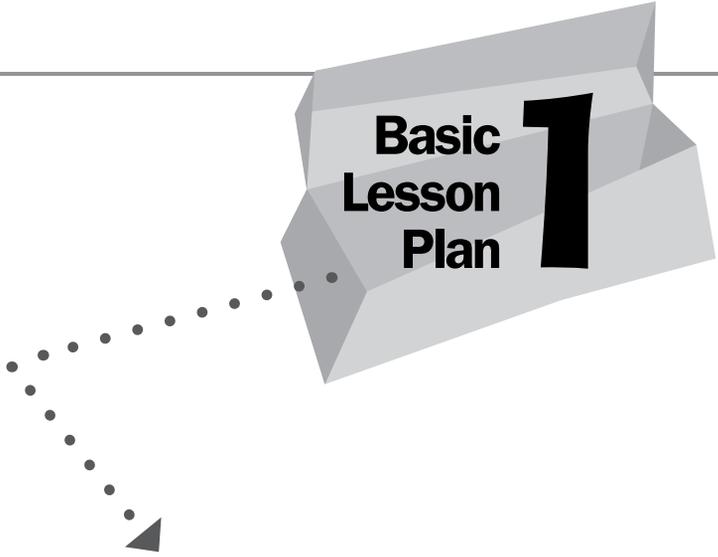
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Basic Lesson Plan

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Following Instructions

“Following Instructions” is probably the most important basic skill students need in the classroom. In fact, when you think about it, most of a teacher’s statements to his or her students in the course of a school day are instructions. If students cannot follow a teacher’s instructions to do even a simple task, not much is going to get done.

The goal of the lesson is to teach students the proper way to follow instructions and to explain the importance of being able to use this skill correctly.

The objectives of the lesson for students include:

- learning the steps of the skill of “Following Instructions.”
- practicing the skill.
- generalizing the use of the skill to different situations and different people.

Pre-Work

1. Make “King” and “Queen” ribbons for the winners of the “Simon Says” game, if you choose to use that activity.

Materials

Overhead projector, blackboard, poster of skill steps

Introduce the Skill

Ask the students to raise their hands and give examples of all the different instructions they have to follow during the day. As the students respond, write down their examples on chart paper or on the blackboard.

ASK: “Is it hard to follow all of those instructions sometimes?”

Allow students the opportunity to answer the question. The students may want to share stories. You can allow as much time as you want for student responses.

SAY: “We’re going to make a plan for ‘Following Instructions’ so that no matter how difficult it is, you are going to know what to do.”

Describe the Appropriate Behavior

Show the poster with the steps of the skill of “Following Instructions” or write the steps on the blackboard or chart paper.

SAY: “Here are the steps of the skill of ‘Following Instructions.’”

1. Look at the person.

2. Say “Okay.”

ASK: “How should you say ‘Okay’ when someone gives you an instruction? Are there any times when you should think ‘Okay’ but not say it out loud?” (When teacher gives instruction to the whole class.)

NOTE: Discuss the importance of using an appropriate voice tone. You might consider modeling or having the students model the right and wrong ways to say “Okay.”

3. Do what you’ve been asked right away.

ASK: “What does ‘right away’ mean?”

NOTE: Discuss the importance of following an instruction within a few seconds of when someone gives one. Give students the opportunity to respond. Reinforce responses.

4. Check back.

ASK: “When might be a time when you have to check back after following instructions?”

Give students time to think about the question and provide several responses. Reinforce their responses.

NOTE: Responses might include when a student takes something to the office for you, or when you ask a student to pass out papers to the class.

SAY: “These are the steps we are going to use for the skill of ‘Following Instructions’ in this class and building.”

Give a Reason

Ask the students to provide some reasons for why it is important to follow instructions. As the students give you reasons, write them on chart paper and post the list next to the chart paper that has the steps of “Following Instructions.”

Here are some examples of reasons to use in case students have trouble thinking of ones on their own:

- So you get to go to recess.
- So you get your work done the right way.
- So the teacher doesn’t call your mom.

Practice

Choose one or more of the following activities to complete your lesson by allowing the students to practice the skill.

1. **Simon Says:** Play a game of “Simon Says” with the class, using instructions that would be practical in the classroom (e.g., “Everyone sit down in your chairs,” “Take out a pencil and lay it on your desk,” “Come up front and sit on the carpet,” etc.) Hand out a ribbon to the “King” or “Queen” of following instructions to wear for the day.
2. **Role-play:** Have students write and perform skits on ways to follow instructions. Have students form small groups (four to five people) to work on their skits. Be sure to give students enough time to plan, practice, and complete their skits.
3. **Use literature to lead a discussion on how to follow the instructions.** Possible books for younger children can include *Danny’s Big Moment*, *Winnie the Pooh: Oh Bother! No One’s Listening*, *Peter Rabbit*, *The Three Little Kittens*, *But Not the Hippopotamus*, *Do Not Open*, *Don’t Forget the Bacon*, *The Butter Battle Book*, etc.
 - Students could choose a scene from the book you read and rewrite the scene showing characters using the skill of “Following Instructions.” The students could also rewrite the end of the story to show what would have happened if the characters had followed instructions (e.g., How might the story *The Three Little Kittens* have changed if the kittens had followed their mother’s instructions?).
 - Have the students work together to write a new book about the skill. Include the title of the skill, its steps, an example of when someone might use the skill, and a reason why it is important to use the skill. Students can then illustrate the book.
4. **Write story problems for math that use the skill in a situation.** (For example: Twelve students got on the bus to go home. The bus driver asked

all the students to take their seats so the bus could leave. Four students did not sit down right away. How many students followed the bus driver's instructions?)

5. **Journaling ideas:** Have students write in their journal about a time when they followed instructions even though it was difficult. Create other journal topics related to the skill.
6. *(For older students)* **Discuss the importance of rules and laws in maintaining a “civil” society.** Ask students what they think would happen if people didn't follow traffic rules or ignored laws that are meant to protect us. As part of a history lesson, students could discuss how following instructions is related to issues like the U.S. Constitution, and how state legislatures and Congress create laws. There also could be a discussion on civil disobedience (Henry David Thoreau, Martin Luther King) and whether it is okay for people to ignore or disobey rules and laws.

SAY: “Thank you for completing the practice activity. We will continue to discuss the skill of ‘Following Instructions’ for the rest of the week.”

NOTE: Each day of the week, review the steps of the skill, discuss why it is important to use the skill, and practice when possible.

Preventive Prompt

There are many times during the course of the school day when you can prompt students that they are going to have to follow some instructions. Prompt students to repeat the steps to you or review the steps with them prior to them using the skill.

Other Ideas for Practice

NOTE: As you develop other ideas for practicing the skill, write them here and share them with other staff members in your building.

Following Instructions

- 1. Look at the person.**
- 2. Say “Okay.”**
- 3. Do what you’ve been asked right away.**
- 4. Check back.**