



## Getting the Teacher's Attention

Students want the teacher to pay attention to them, especially when they need help or want to actively participate in a discussion or an activity. Many students get frustrated if they don't understand something and need help, or they get excited when they want to share information. They might try to get the teacher's attention by either calling out, shouting the teacher's name, or yelling out answers or opinions in response to questions or class discussion.

Teaching students specific behaviors for getting the teacher's attention when they are participating in a discussion, need extra help when working on individual assignments, or need help in the cafeteria or on the playground helps them learn different strategies for different situations.

**The goal of the lesson is to teach students the appropriate behavioral expectations for the skill of "Getting the Teacher's Attention."**

The objectives of the lesson for students include:

- learning the steps of the skill of "Getting the Teacher's Attention."
- practicing the skill.
- generalizing the use of the skill to different places and different people.

### **Introduce the Skill**

Ask students to explain how to work a math problem that's on the blackboard. Do not provide any instructions for raising their hands to speak, answering one at a time, etc., but do prompt students to stay in their desks while working on the problem.

**NOTE:** Use a math problem that might be a little difficult or that will require several steps to solve so that more than one or two students will have to participate in finding the solution.

Some students will call out their answers, while others might start to disagree with each other about how the problem should be solved. Ask the class to be quiet and discuss the importance of getting the teacher's attention when this situation occurs.

### **Describe the Appropriate Behavior**

Provide students with the behavioral steps for the skill of "Getting the Teacher's Attention."

**NOTE:** Steps can be posted on a bulletin board or shown on an overhead, etc. Please adapt the steps to fit your expectations and the needs of your students.

**SAY:** "Here are the steps of the skill of 'Getting the Teacher's Attention.'"

1. **Look at the teacher.**
2. **Raise your hand and stay calm.**
3. **Wait until the teacher says your name.**
4. **Ask your question.**

**SAY:** "These are the steps we are going to use for the skill of 'Getting the Teacher's Attention' in this class and building."

### **Give a Reason**

Ask the students to provide reasons for why they think it might be important to get the teacher's attention using these steps. Here are some examples of reasons to use in case students have difficulty thinking of ones on their own:

- A student might get his or her question answered more quickly.
- The teacher is more likely to call on you to answer if your hand is raised.
- You don't interrupt others who are involved in a discussion or are trying to answer a question.

### **Practice**

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

1. Have students tell their partner the steps of the skill.

## 2. Journaling ideas

- Ask students to write about a time when someone kept calling out for the teacher while the teacher was working with them on an assignment. How did they feel? Did it bother them that the student kept interrupting the teacher as the teacher tried to work with them?
- Ask students to write about a time when a student called out answers to questions while other students were raising their hands to answer a question. How did it make them feel?

3. **Consider making a preventive prompt sign that reads “FORMAL” on the front and “INFORMAL” on the back.** Explain to the students that during “FORMAL” time, they must raise their hands and wait for you to call on them to answer questions, read aloud, or engage in some other classroom activity. During “INFORMAL” time, the students can call out answers and have discussions without raising their hands.

**NOTE:** Informal time also might occur when students are working in groups or centers, or when they are having “inside recess.”

4. **Class discussion and role-play:** Talk with students about different situations where they may have to get the teacher’s attention in a different way than raising their hands. Using the following role-play scenarios, have students model the appropriate way to get the teacher’s attention in each situation.

- The teacher is covering material on a new topic.
- The students are out on the playground and one gets hurt on the swings.
- The students are doing a lab activity. While the teacher is helping one group find cells using the microscope, another group needs the teacher’s help.
- A student needs help in the cafeteria getting his or her tray to the lunch table.

**SAY:** “Thank you for completing the practice activity. We will continue to discuss the skill of ‘Getting the Teacher’s Attention’ 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.

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## Lesson Plan

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## Teacher Notes

Similar to the skill of “Greeting Others,” teaching students how to get your attention in an appropriate way is a basic skill that should be taught at the start of the academic year and reviewed often.

One frustration teachers experience in the classroom is when students blurt out comments or answers, interrupting instruction time. Research suggests that it takes, on average, 18 to 24 months for students to internalize a skill. In other words, they make the skill part of their routine and can use it consistently. Although students can learn the steps of a skill quickly, patience is required. Some students will struggle to remember to use a skill, especially when stressed or excited. It's important to keep in mind that learning is a process, not a singular event.

## Proactive Teaching Interaction

### Introduce the Skill

You can teach and reinforce this skill in the classroom throughout the school day, if necessary. Have students practice the skill by raising their hands, waiting their turns to be called on and asking questions or making statements in a calm manner.

Have students brainstorm reasons why it is important to know how to get a teacher's attention appropriately. Reasons can include:

- Decreases noise level
- Shows respect to others

- Helps keep others on task
- Limits disruptions during lessons and activities

## **Describe the Appropriate Behavior or Skill Steps**

### **Getting the Teacher's Attention**

- 1. Look at the teacher.**
  - Maintain eye contact.
- 2. Raise your hand calmly.**
  - Do not pump your fist in the air or frantically wave your arm back and forth.
- 3. Wait to be acknowledged by the teacher.**
  - Don't assume the teacher is coming to you first; wait to speak until spoken to.
- 4. Ask questions or make requests in a calm voice.**
  - Don't whine or scream; use a quiet voice.

### **Give a Reason or Rationale**

Knowing how to get a teacher's attention appropriately helps create an orderly and well-managed classroom. The less chaotic the classroom, the more opportunities you and your classmates will have to ask questions, get help and learn. Other benefits of knowing how to get a teacher's attention include:

- You show respect to your teacher and others in the classroom.
- You contribute to a positive, orderly classroom environment.
- You are more likely to get quicker answers to your questions and requests.
- You help the teacher know that you have a problem or need help.

### **Suggested Activities**

**Language Arts:** Have students reflect on experiences from their own lives to write a fictional short story about people going to extraordinary lengths to get attention for themselves or a cause they are supporting. Ask for volunteers to read their stories aloud, and then discuss whether the actions described in the story were appropriate or not, and why.

**Social Studies:** Lead a discussion about how organizations and individuals sometimes use controversial tactics to bring attention to themselves or their

causes. Have students find examples of protests or campaigns that were done to create public awareness, and then debate their effectiveness. Examples can include civil rights marches, PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) demonstrations, street protests or acts of civil disobedience (environmentalists chaining themselves to trees, consumers boycotting genetically engineered foods, etc.).

These students select one of the following scenarios to role-play in class.

1. You do not understand the instructions on your worksheet. Following the steps of the skill, show how you would gain the teacher's attention and ask for help.
2. Your teacher told everyone to raise their hands when they finished their exams, and she would pick them up. You are not finished with your test, but you need help with one of the essay questions. Show how you would handle this situation.
3. Your teacher is verbally quizzing your class about a reading assignment. You know the answers to many of the questions. Show how to properly get the teacher's attention.
4. To leave your seat during study hall, you need to get permission from the teacher. Show how to get the teacher's attention, show how to get the monitor's attention, and then ask for a hall pass so you can go to the restroom.

# Getting the Teacher's Attention

## Suggested Role-Plays

### Teacher Note:

Have students select one of the following scenarios to role-play in class.

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2. Your teacher told everyone to raise their hands when they finished their exams, and she would pick them up. You are not finished with your test, but you need help with one of the essay questions. Show how you would handle this situation.
3. Your teacher is verbally quizzing your class about a reading assignment. You know the answers to many of the questions. Show how to properly get the teacher's attention.
4. To leave your seat during study hall, you need to get permission from the study hall monitor. Following the steps of the skill, show how to get the monitor's attention, and then ask for a hall pass so you can go to the restroom.

### Suggested Activities

**Language Arts:** Have students reflect on experiences from their own lives to write a fictional short story about people going to extraordinary lengths to get attention for themselves or a cause they are supporting. Ask for volunteers to read their stories aloud and then discuss whether the actions described in the story were appropriate or not, and why.

**Social Studies:** Lead a discussion about how organizations and individuals sometimes use controversial tactics to bring attention to themselves or their



# Getting the Teacher's Attention Think Sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Why is it important to know how to get a teacher's attention without being loud or distracting?

1. Look at the teacher.

2. Raise your hand calmly.

3. Wait to be acknowledged.

How does the skill of **Getting the Teacher's Attention** help you in the classroom?

4. Ask questions or make requests in a calm voice.

List some times when the skill of **Getting the Teacher's Attention** is very important:

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How can the skill of **Getting the Teacher's Attention** be used in situations that involve other adults outside of school? How would you change this skill to fit this new setting?

1. Your teacher told everyone to raise their hands when they finished their exams, and she would pick them up. You are not finished with your test, but you need help with one of the tricky questions. Show how you would handle this situation.
2. Your teacher is verbally quizzing your class about a reading assignment. You know the answers to many of the questions. Show how to properly get the teacher's attention.
3. To leave your room during study hall, you need to get permission from the monitor. Show how to get the monitor's attention in the classroom.
4. To leave your room during study hall, you need to get permission from the monitor. Show how to get the monitor's attention and then ask for a hall pass so you can go to the restroom.

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