
GETTING ATTENTION

Teaching this procedure is essential. Students need to be able to talk to one another at times and to move around the classroom; it helps their brains to learn and remember! Active learning is, just that, active! But they also need to be taught the procedure for returning their attention to the teacher at an agreed upon signal – a bell or chime, a musical cue, anything except you yelling! Teach it and practice it. Time them and have them do it again as a challenge. “It took you 42 seconds that time to return to your places; let’s do it again in 16 seconds!” Below, find two sample lesson plans for teaching quiet and getting attention signals and some more information on different types of attention and quiet signals.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN #1 on Quiet Signal

Teacher: Chrissy T.

Grade: 5th Grade

Procedure: Getting Student Attention

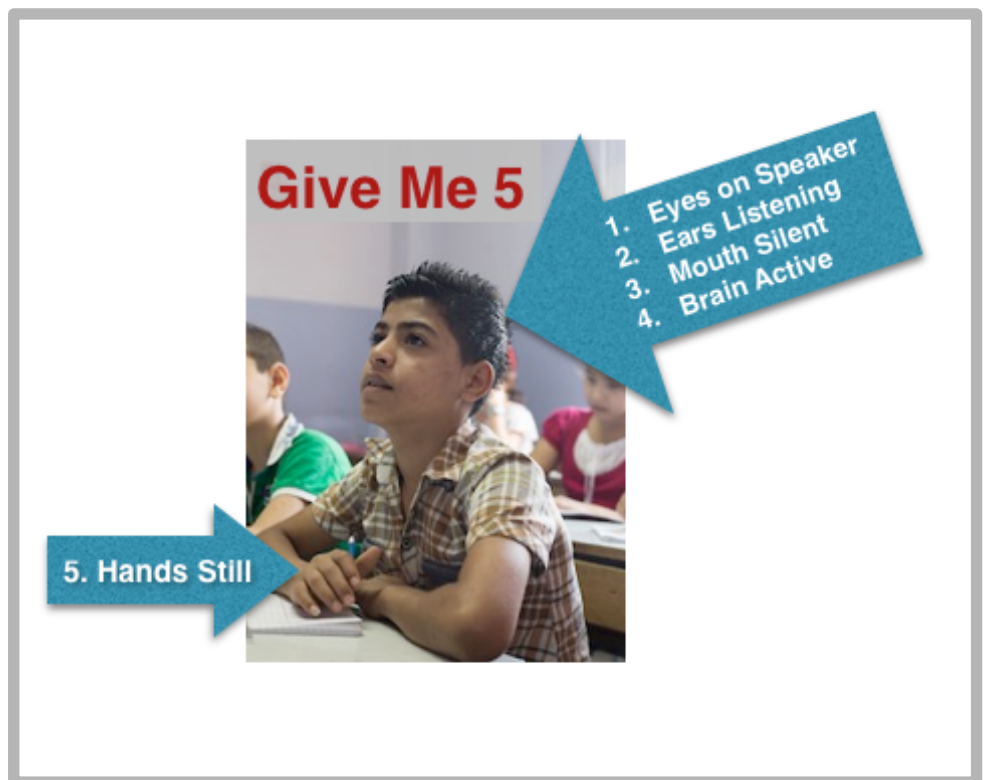
Learning Objective:

The students will learn to quickly become quiet and attentive through the use of the “Give Me 5” procedure.

Lesson Plan:

1. The students will listen to a whole group instruction and understand the expectations of the “Give Me Five” procedure. The expectation is that when I put my hand up and say “Give Me 5,” they will quickly stop talking, look at the speaker (which in this case is me), have hands empty and still, be engaged, and be ready to listen. I will also show them a visual that shows what it looks like to “Give Me 5.” (See below at bottom of lesson plan)
2. I will model this on the first day of school by chatting with a volunteer at the front of the room and having the class say “Give Me 5.” Then the volunteer student and I will quickly get quiet, empty our hands, look at the class, and be ready to listen.
3. The class will practice using the procedure. I will instruct them to turn and talk to someone near them about their summer vacation. I will interrupt them after 1 minute and say “Give Me 5” while holding my hand up with all 5 fingers spread. I will time how long it takes them to do it. Then I will tell them how long it took and how long it should take.

4. I will read them the story “We The Kids,” a short story on the Preamble of the Constitution, as we lead up to the development of class rules in conjunction with learning about the rules in the United States Constitution.
5. After reading the story, I will ask the students to pair up in teams of two or three and come up with 5-6 rules they think should be used in the classroom, just as explained in the read-aloud.
6. After 1 minute of discussion time in teams, I will say “Give Me 5,” hold up my hand and time them on how long it takes to get quiet and attentive.
7. Each team will stand and present one of their rules. The class will discuss whether they agree or disagree with the rule. When each team is done presenting and discussing, they will say “Give Me 5,” and wait for their classmates to become quiet. I will time how long it takes. Then they will choose a different team to share. We will repeat this until all teams have shared.
8. After all teams have shared, I will write on the board, or project on the overhead, how long it took them to get quiet each time they were asked. Teams will then be asked to calculate the average amount of time it took by adding all the numbers and dividing the sum by the number of times listed.
9. We will discuss what the average time was and what it needs to be. I will tell students that they will have the rest of today and tomorrow to practice. But on day three of school if the average time is not down to 10 seconds or less, those students who are not getting quiet quickly enough will be coming in at lunch on Friday to practice with me individually until they get it.



SAMPLE LESSON PLAN #2 on Quiet Signal

Teacher: Rachel J.

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Lesson: Getting and Maintaining Quiet

Lesson Plan:

1. **Connection/model:** I have noticed so many times that I ask us to quiet our voices and our voices are still loud. We want to work independently, and most of us get easily distracted when the volume in the classroom goes up. I have been thinking and thinking, and boom, it came to me, I decided that we are no longer going to listen to Miss Rachel tell us to lower our voices, but we are going to use a new cool strategy. This is going to be a picture that you are all going to get to know. Do you see this child with her finger on her lip? (Show visual aid- below) If I walk around and notice that your voice is on when it shouldn't be, I will flash this photo at you. Your job is to immediately quiet your voice.
2. **Practice:** Let's try this together now. Look at the board and begin to read the short poem I have written. I will be walking around. If your voice is too loud, I will show you this fantastic picture. Your job is to immediately be quiet. Let's try this and see how we do
3. **Consequences include:** warning, loss of 10 minutes from choice time/ loss of choice time/ discussion with teacher/ phone call home. This standard procedure will be put into effect. It will be consistent and used on a regular basis. Children will have the opportunity to fix themselves and earn back their choice time throughout the day, but there will be a step by step process to follow. First is a reminder, second is a warning, third is brief time out, fourth is loss of 10 minutes of choice time and review of procedure with me, fifth is phone call home.
4. I will be using the **visual aid** or image of the child with her finger over her lip to help kids remember to be quiet. I will have this image on a laminated card that I can carry with me to show to students as they need reminding. I will also create a chart with the consequences clearly written out for them. They will have images next to 1,2,3,4,5 and a few words to describe what happens when they get these consequences. This chart will be on the wall so students can always refer to it and I can be consistent with my work.



Getting Student Attention

Getting the attention of an entire class can be done in numerous ways using sounds, gestures, verbal cues, physical actions, or a combination of these. Below are examples of each. The most important thing to remember about using an attention getting signal, is to choose one you are comfortable practicing and enforcing with your students. Any one of the ideas presented here can be effective.

Effectiveness is ultimately not about which procedure you choose. It's about how you introduce, model, practice, and reinforce it.

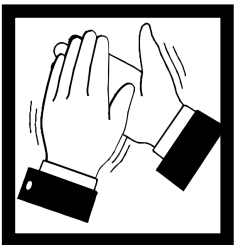
Call and Response: Verbal

Call and response cues are a common way to get attention. At the elementary level, a teacher's "1,2,3 eyes on me" is responded to by students with "1, 2, eyes on you." The advantage of verbal call and response is that students have to stop talking to their peers in order to respond. Other examples are things like "A hush came over the crowd" to which students respond "hushhhhh."

At the secondary level, whole brain teaching uses "class, class" to which students respond "yes, yes." But the "yes, yes" has to be in the same verbal style as the "class class." For example, if the teacher says "class-ity class" students respond "yes-ity yes." If the teacher draws out the words "classsssss, classssss" students respond "yesssssss, yessssss." Another variation is to use a two word name, such as the name of your school. For example, the teacher calls out "Pleasant" and the students respond "Valley." With verbal call and response remember that you may have to repeat the cue twice in order to get 100% compliance, and that's ok. Some students won't hear you the first time, but by the second round everyone will be with you.



Call and Response: Non-Verbal



Clapping rhythms are often used as non-verbal call and response attention getting cues. The students might repeat a rhythm the teacher claps first or they might have a specific response rhythm that goes with it. Either way, the advantage of this is that students have to put down their pencils and other materials to respond. In addition, the response is physical, which increases circulation and attention in general. Be ready to repeat the rhythm twice to get all kids with you.

Call and Response: Combination

Teacher gives a verbal cue, and students give a non-verbal response. For example, teacher states "If you can hear my voice, clap once" (students clap), then teacher says "if you can hear my voice clap twice" (students clap, clap), then teacher says "if you can hear my voice clap three times" (students clap, clap clap). Variation: Teacher states "eyes" (students clap), "ears" (students clap clap), "mouths" (students clap, clap, clap).

Getting Student Attention

Sound Signals

Bells, chimes, whistles, squeaky toys, and other noise makers can be used to alert students that you need their attention. Choose something that is loud enough to be heard over student voices but quiet enough to not startle them. And choose something that can be repeated 3 times or played over approximately 3 seconds. Hitting a chime once, for example, will only register in the brains of a few students. But playing it three times gives all brains an opportunity to process and respond to the cue for quiet.

Another possible sound-related technique is to use a short song, such as a tv commercial jingle, tv show theme song or just the last 20 seconds of a pop song. When you need students' attention, put the song on. Teach students that they have the length of that song to finish their conversation and be sitting quietly with eyes on teacher.



Visuals and Gestures



Pictures or signs can be held up when you need quiet. Kids match the picture or sign. Gestures such as counting down from 5 using fingers in the air can be added to this technique so students know how long they have to get quiet. This can also be combined with a quick sound signal. For example, play a quick sound, like hitting a hotel bell, to indicate it's time to get quiet and then count down from 5 on fingers to convey how long they have to comply.



Teaching a procedure effectively requires more than just telling students what we want and how we want it. As Mark Twain once famously remarked, "If teaching were the same as telling, we'd all be so smart we could hardly stand it." When we take the time to not only explain it, but also to show it, model it, have students practice it multiple times in a row, debriefing after each time, then we see the magic happen.