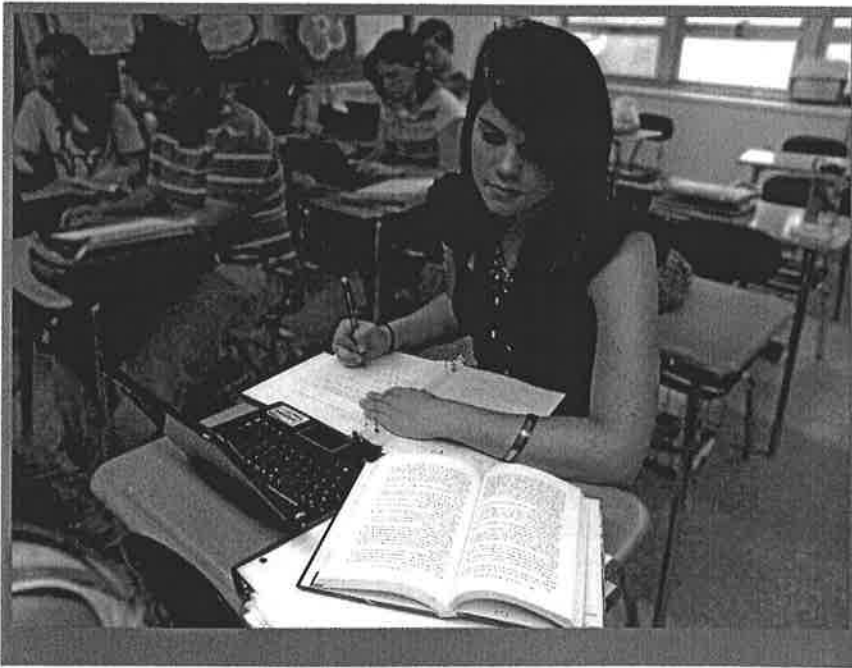


# 29

## THE PROCEDURE

### Note Taking

Students who master the skill of effective note taking learn how to identify important information and gain a better understanding of concepts.



## THE SOLUTION

**A**pplying the Cornell Note-Taking Method eliminates disorganization in students' lesson notes. This method aids in capturing important information that can be used in preparation for tests. It helps to focus students' attention on the relevant content and minimizes distractions.

This procedure provides these opportunities:

1. Ensuring students take notes that are accurate, complete, and relevant
2. Teaching students to condense concepts into key words, phrases, or sentences
3. Transforming the passive student into an active learner

## THE BACKGROUND

Research shows that students who take notes in class perform better on assessments than students who do not take notes. However, most students interpret note-taking as transcription—they madly scribble down every word the teacher says. As a result, their notes lack structure, are difficult to reference, and hard to study. Worse, students who are frantically transcribing a lesson tend to disengage from the lesson—they are no longer paying attention, thinking, asking questions, and learning.

Students need to be taught how to identify and organize essential information while note taking without disengaging from the lesson. **Students who understand how to efficiently take meaningful notes are transformed from passive listeners into active learners.**

## THE PROCEDURE STEPS

The Cornell system for note taking helps students efficiently record important information. Once the ideas are recorded, they are further reduced by condensing the concepts into key words or phrases. Then these notes are summarized in one or two sentences for review.

To eliminate disorganization, the Cornell Note-Taking Method organizes notes into three specific sections: **Record, Reduce, and Review.**

1. **Record**, where students record notes on the important information.
2. **Reduce**, where the notes are reduced to a descriptive word or key point.
3. **Review**, where the notes are summarized to a concept and where questions that remain unanswered for further research are stated.

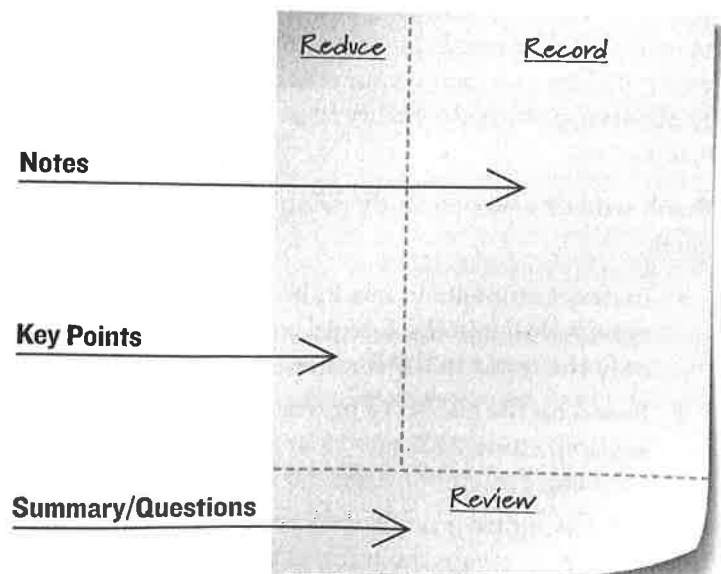
### 1. RECORD

Show students how to divide a sheet of note paper into the three sections with these dimensions:

- 2½-inch section from the left side of the page
- 6-inch section from the right side of the page
- 2-inch section at the bottom of the page



Show students how to label each section with Record, Reduce, and Review.



Teach students to take notes by recording meaningful information in the section labeled Record. Emphasize that organization is important for effective note taking. Help students record notes with these tips:

- Omit information that is unnecessary for understanding the material.
- Eliminate repeated information.
- Use abbreviations.
- Write brief phrases.
- Leave spaces between thoughts.

### 2. REDUCE

In the Reduce section, teach students to write a simple phrase, cue word, or key point based on the notes taken. Brevity and simplicity are important.

Words written in the Reduce section are cue words for reviewing and reflecting on the material that is being taught.

### 3. REVIEW

Review the information in the Review and Reduce sections to write a one- or two-sentence summary of the concept in the Review section. Students can also use this space to write points for clarification, questions unanswered, or an Aha for further research.

Students who have difficulty writing this summary have not fully grasped the material and need to revisit it. You can gauge your teaching effectiveness by observing students' ability to produce coherent summaries.

Teach students how to study using their organized notes.

- Instruct students to use index cards to cover the notes written in the Record section. This leaves only the notes in the Reduce section exposed.
- Based on the cue word or words in the Reduce section, students recite as much information as they can remember from the Record section.
- Reviewing their organized notes in this way will help them retain the information learned when test time comes around.

## TEACH

Explain how the Cornell Note-Taking Method works and why it is more effective than writing down the lecture word for word.

Teach a lesson and use the white board, LCD projector, or document camera to walk students through the process of taking notes using the Cornell method.

Highlight relevant information from the lesson and note it in the Record section. Allow students to copy this for reference.

Suggest cue words and write them in the Reduce section.

Reread the information in both sections and write a one- or two-sentence summary in the Review section. Point out that this section can also be used to write unanswered questions, points that need further clarification, and suggestions for further research.

## REHEARSE

The next day, review the Cornell Note-Taking Method with the class.

While teaching the lesson, stop and ask students to identify important information that needs to be recorded in the Record section.

Ask for volunteers to suggest cue words for the Reduce section.

Invite students to share the summary they have written in the Review section.

Show how using the notes can increase retention of information. With a piece of paper, cover the notes in the Record section. This leaves only the notes in the Reduce and Review sections exposed.

Based on the cue word or summaries in the Reduce and Review sections, ask students to recite as much information as they can remember from the Record section.

Ask for questions throughout the lesson as students practice taking notes.

## REINFORCE

Regularly review the Cornell Note-Taking Method with the class. Take the time to occasionally walk students through the note-taking process.

Emphasize that by being organized now, students save themselves future work. Also emphasize that the Cornell Note-Taking Method makes studying for tests far more efficient.

### Note-Taking Guide

Help younger students learn how to take notes. Create a Note-Taking Guide—a prepared set of notes with strategically-placed blanks. Students will not be overwhelmed by the responsibility of having to organize information and listen for the important information.

A Note-Taking Guide looks like this:

The teacher says, "Class, when the Constitution was written, the framers wanted to make sure that no government group had too much power. They divided the government into three different branches, the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial, each with its own duties. The Legislative branch makes the laws, the Executive branch carries out the laws, and the Judicial branch decides whether or not a law has been broken or misinterpreted."

As the lecture is delivered, a PowerPoint slide recaps the information.

#### The 3 Branches of Government

Legislative = Makes laws

Executive = Carries out laws

Judicial = Determines if the laws have been followed

This is how the student's Note-Taking Guide reads:

There are \_\_\_\_\_ branches of government. The Legislative branch \_\_\_\_\_ laws. The Executive branch carries out \_\_\_\_\_. The Judicial branch decides if laws have been \_\_\_\_\_.

The teacher briefly pauses for students to fill in the missing words before moving on.

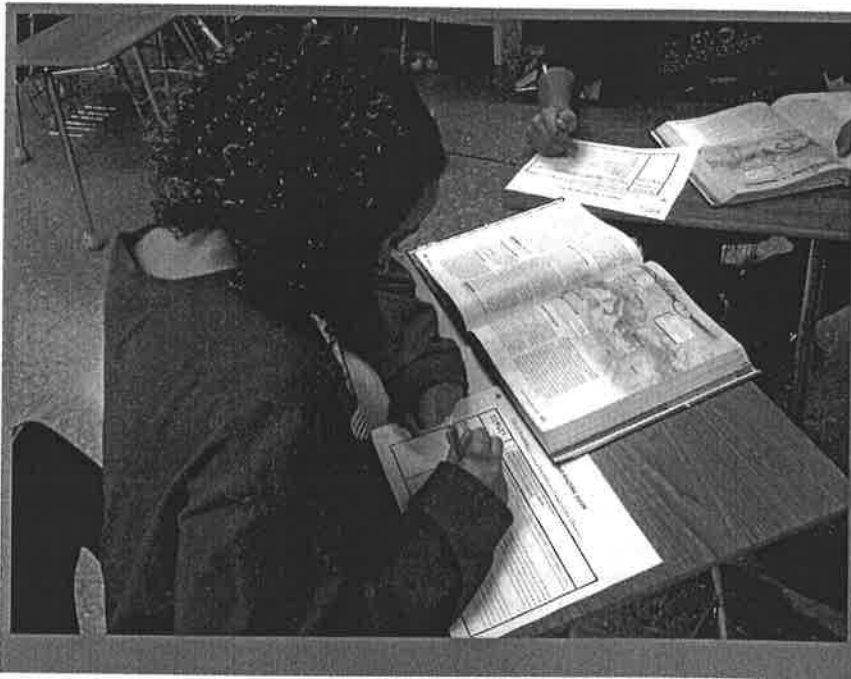
As students progress in school, a Note-Taking Guide will become the Cornell Note-Taking Method where the students become responsible for all of the content.

# 30

## THE PROCEDURE

### Reading a Textbook

Showing your students how to use the SQ4R technique (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review, Reflect) helps them gain a deeper understanding of the material and allows them to use the method in all of their classes.



## THE SOLUTION

**T**he “SQ4R” method requires students to invest a significant portion of their time, but it helps students learn, recall, and use information. **Teach students how to read a textbook to help them navigate through all of the detailed information presented in it.**

**A plan of attack for reading will solve these problems:**

1. Poor comprehension of the information presented
2. Low retention of the facts

## THE BACKGROUND

Most students read a textbook the same way they read a novel in an English class. They start at the beginning of the book and continue reading until they finish the last page. Although this method is appropriate for reading fiction, it is not the best way to read a textbook.

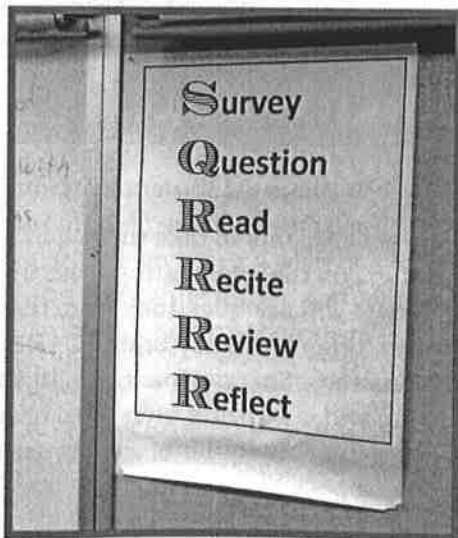
Highlighting is a commonly used method to emphasize text. However, this technique usually boils down to coloring a page, rather than critically thinking about the information and selecting the salient facts for recall.

**The “SQ4R” method reduces the textbook information to bullet points for future study.**

## THE PROCEDURE STEPS

Teach students the SQ4R process for reading textbooks to help them better understand textbook material and retain the information. Prepare a wall chart with the steps for reading a textbook. Keep the chart posted throughout the school year.

1. Survey
2. Question
3. Read
4. Recite
5. Review
6. Reflect



*The poster serves as a visual reminder of the steps in the process.*

## TEACH

1. Introduce students to the SQ4R method and discuss how it helps them gain and retain information.

### 1) SURVEY

- Briefly look through the chapter to gather information about the content.
- Read the title of the chapter to get an idea of the topic being presented.
- Read the chapter's introduction or summary. This introduces the reader to the chapter's main points.
- Read all section headings. These headings help the student understand how the material is organized.
- Read all boldfaced, italicized, highlighted, and boxed text.
- Examine the visuals and read the captions. Visuals are used to call out specific material and aid understanding.
- Read all definitions, objectives, and study guide questions at the end of the chapter.

### 2) QUESTION

- Think about the material being surveyed.
- Think of the chapter headings as questions that give purpose to reading and increase comprehension.
- Create questions to be answered from the reading material.
- When readers are actively searching for answers, they are engaged in the reading process.

### 3) READ

Surveying and questioning builds a framework for understanding the material. This step, Reading, fills in the information around the framework the student has built.

Reading is like building a house. The walls of the house cannot be finished before the framework is complete. Students should not begin to read before they have surveyed and created questions for the chapter.

- Look for the answers to the questions created.
- Take notes of the answers in the student's own words.
- To avoid information overload, focus on the main idea of the reading rather than all of the minute details.

#### 4) RECITE

Encourage students to quiz themselves at the end of every chapter. Have them ask, out loud, the questions they created, and then have them answer the questions in their own words. When students can recite the material in their own words, they are more likely to understand and retain that information for later use.

#### 5) REVIEW

The last phase of building a house involves a final inspection by the city. Similarly, just because students have finished the chapter—surveyed, questioned, read, and recited the material—it does not mean they are done.

When students get to the end of the chapter, encourage them to review and inspect their notes for details left out and information misstated. Reviewing the material enables students to retain the information.

#### 6) REFLECT

- Encourage students to mentally manipulate the information they have gathered.
- Reflect on the questions created as a check for understanding.
- Look for relationships between the ideas and combine them for deeper understanding.

2. Choose a chapter from a textbook and use it to model the SQ4R method. Go through the steps as a class.
  - Read the chapter title and summary.
  - Show students the importance of reading the boldfaced, italicized, highlighted, and boxed text.
  - Take time to examine the visuals and read the captions.
  - Go over the definitions, objectives, and study guide questions.
3. Ask students what the chapter is about. Discuss questions that students should keep in mind when reading the text.
4. Ask students what the different sections are about. Discuss questions that students should keep in mind when reading each section.
5. Ask students to read the chapter with the appropriate questions in mind.
6. Ask for answers to the questions the students developed prior to reading.
7. Ask students to pause and think about the general concepts they just learned. Ask students to volunteer the information they gathered as a result of the SQ4R process.

## REHEARSE

Instruct students to take turns quizzing their seat partners on the information from the textbook. Some students will ask questions from the textbook, and other students will use their SQ4R notes to locate the answers. Seat partners should alternate between asking and answering questions based on the text. Emphasize that students should use their own words as much as possible.



Observe student pairs and redirect them if necessary. After quizzing themselves and reciting the material in their own words, students should review their chapter notes again. Emphasize that reviewing the information helps students retain what they have learned.

## REINFORCE

At the next class reading, pair students again and ask them to work together on the passage using the SQ4R process. Monitor the groups and give assistance as needed. Use the pairing technique until the students feel confident in using the process on their own.



28

Jeff Gulle shares his SQ4R template with you to use with your students.

## A SQ4R Guide

Prepare a SQ4R guide for students to use as they read their textbooks. **Jeff Gulle** of Danville, Kentucky, uses this guide to help his students record their thoughts.

Mr. Gulle  
SOCIAL STUDIES SQ4R READING GUIDE

Title of Reading \_\_\_\_\_

<input type="checkbox"/> SURVEY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look over the beginning sentences of each paragraph.</li> <li>Look at the illustrations and read the captions.</li> <li>Read the summary or last paragraph.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> QUESTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turn the title into a question.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HEADINGS                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What?</li> <li>When?</li> <li>Where?</li> <li>Who?</li> <li>Why?</li> <li>How?</li> </ul> </li> <li>ILLUSTRATIONS/GRAPHIC AIDS                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What?</li> <li>When?</li> <li>Where?</li> <li>Who?</li> <li>Why?</li> <li>How?</li> </ul> </li> <li>Write down any unfamiliar words.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write down any additional questions you have about the content of this reading.</li> </ul>

<input type="checkbox"/> READ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While reading, look for the answers to the questions in the previous section.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> RECITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put the reading away and think about what you read. How much do you remember?</li> <li>Recite the answers to your questions – aloud or by writing.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> REVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look at the reading again. Find any answers that are missing from the Question section above.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> REFLECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think about what you read. Were there any surprises?</li> <li>What do you now know that you didn't before?</li> </ul> <p>• BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THIS IN CLASS!</p>

With a guide, students are able to follow the process and focus on the important information from the textbook. Once students know the method and become familiar with the steps, the process becomes second nature to them.

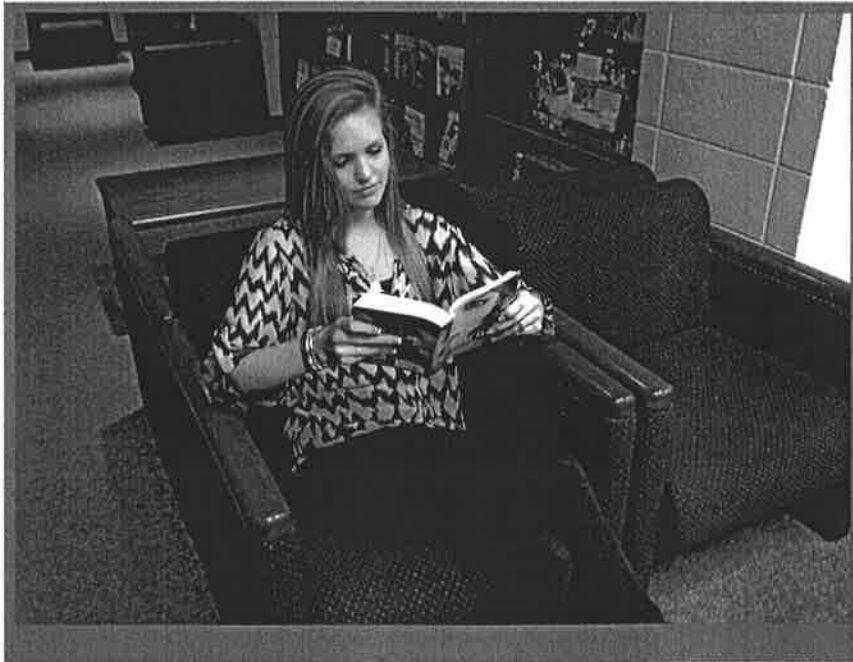


# 31

## THE PROCEDURE

### Read Any Place Time

Incorporating reading into the daily schedule gives students time to read for pleasure each day. The more students are exposed to reading, the more likely they are to be successful at it.



## THE SOLUTION

**R**eading is a skill useful in all subjects. It is also a skill that brings great enjoyment. Being a strong reader opens doors to learning. **Read Any Place (RAP) Time** encourages students to read.

This procedure provides these opportunities:

1. Encourages students to read for fun
2. Motivates students to read independently
3. Allows for book sharing to encourage others to read

## THE BACKGROUND

**E**ncouraging students to read as a hobby or for fun provides a welcome relief to a home life of television and video games.

During RAP Time, students are encouraged to read any type of age-appropriate book of their choice. They are allowed to read anywhere in the room, as long as they are following the RAP Time guidelines:



*RAP Time encourages independent reading.*

- Students must sit at arm's length from each other.
- Silent reading only—no talking with classmates.
- Students take turns to use the special chairs and cushions.
- Books must be returned to their correct places when RAP Time is over.

When students are finished early, encourage them to take out their RAP books and to enjoy reading it while waiting for the rest of the class.

## THE PROCEDURE STEPS

**R**AP Time requires a variety of reading materials and levels of books accessible to all students. Put together a class collection of children's magazines and newspapers, comic books, picture books, and chapter books. Students should feel comfortable picking up the book of their choice.

Set up an inviting reading area in the classroom with easy access to the class book collection. Carpet squares, cushions, fun chairs, and a sofa help make students feel comfortable and cozy and contribute to their enjoyment of RAP Time.



Categorize books by reading levels, genres, themes, and interests, and label the books and baskets or shelves to keep them organized. This way, students can easily find books that interest them, and it makes it easier for them to return the books to the correct places.

## TEACH

Create a poster with the RAP Time guidelines and post it where students can easily refer to it. Teach RAP Time during the first week of school.

1. Introduce students to the inviting spaces for reading in the classroom.
2. Designate a time during the school day for RAP Time. Tell students when they can expect RAP Time in the schedule. Depending on your class structure, RAP can be a daily activity or done on certain days of the week.
3. Discuss the RAP Time guidelines and what they achieve.
4. Tell students that you will be participating in RAP Time with them.
5. As the activity comes to an end, allow for brief sharing of anything exciting they've learned or read.

## REHEARSE

Model what RAP Time should look like. Show students how to choose reading materials and where to sit in the classroom. Remind them to sit at arm's length from one another. Ask a few students to model what RAP Time looks like.

As the class practices this procedure, remind students that RAP Time is for silent reading. Gently correct students who forget to read quietly and independently.

Announce a practice RAP Time, and allow half the students to stop their work and demonstrate how RAP Time works.

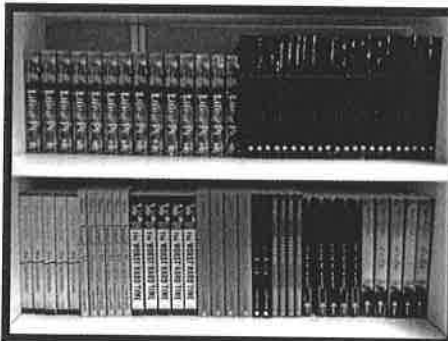
Ask the other half of the class to monitor their classmates and call out corrections to the procedure. Rehearse this procedure again, with the class reversing roles.

Ask for volunteers to share anything exciting they've learned from their reading.

## REINFORCE

Acknowledge the students for following the procedure. If the procedure is not being done correctly, simply ask, "What's the procedure for RAP Time, please?"

If a student is idly sitting waiting for the rest of the class to finish an activity, ask, "What is an activity you can do while waiting for the rest of the class?"



### Classroom and School Libraries

Research shows that having a wide range of quality books in the classroom contributes to students' academic success. Students who read also grow to be better writers, and students who write, learn to be better readers. Maintaining a **classroom library** is effortless once a procedure is in place.

**M**aintaining a classroom library gives students easy access to a wide variety of books. But, you'll need to establish some guidelines before the students can borrow books from the classroom library.

**1. Establish appropriate times for using the class library.**

- Before and after class
- Between classes
- At lunch
- At the start of RAP Time

**2. Develop a check-out and check-in system if the books are leaving the classroom.**

- Use check-out cards placed in adhesive pockets in the front of each book. Students are given the responsibility of removing the card, writing their name, date, and class period on the card, and placing the check-out card in an alphabetized card box. When the book is returned, the student finds the card in the card box and returns it to the pocket in the front of the book.

- Use an electronic log. Create a Word document or Excel spreadsheet that students can access on the class computer. When students check out a book, they enter their name, book title, date, and class period in the digital document. When students return books, they insert the date they returned the book to the classroom library and save the document.

### 3. Organize the books.

- Books can be organized by genres or simply as fiction and non-fiction. Allocate specific sections on the library shelves for each category.
- Put colored tape or dots on the book spines to indicate the books that are grouped together on a shelf.

### 4. Assign classroom jobs.

- The class library can be run on an honor system, where students take on the responsibility of ensuring that books are properly checked out, checked in, and returned to their places.
- Alternatively, assign classroom jobs such as Librarian and Assistant Librarian. The Librarian checks books in and out of the library, while the Assistant Librarian returns books to the shelves. These jobs can be rotated so that all students share the responsibility of maintaining the class library.

### 5. Keep the library open.

- Encourage students to come in before or after school to browse the class library's collection.
- Familiarize yourself with the books in your classroom library, so you can recommend books to students. Use every opportunity to promote literacy.

The procedures of a classroom library are similar to the operation of a school's media center. **Joanne Ladewig**, a Library Media Technician in Garden Grove, California, believes **kids do behave better when they know what is expected of them and how to do it.**

In her library she differentiates between policies, procedures, and rules.

**Policies** are general management statements concerning how the library is run.

- Books due in 2 weeks
- Books brought in for renewal
- Damaged books must be paid for
- Limit of 3 items per person at any time
- Push the chairs in
- Keep the library clean

**Procedures** cover how things are done. They usually involve physical action. There is no punishment for not doing a procedure correctly, but the student will have to go back and do it properly. For example, someone who runs into the library will have to go back to the doorway, stop, and then walk appropriately into the room.

- Come into the library in a quiet and orderly manner.
- Sit where assigned.
- Scan in books and return them to the proper shelf (or book cart).
- Use a shelf marker.
- Before checking out, look through books and magazines and report any damage.
- Bring your library pass.

**Rules** refer to physical behavior, and there are consequences if they are broken.

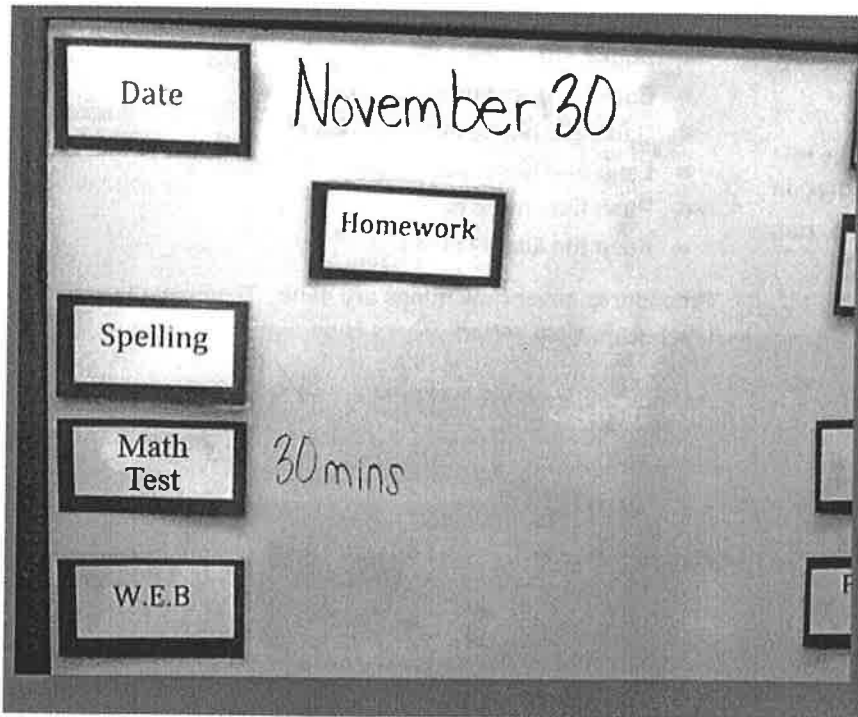
1. Respect the books and other library materials.
2. Respect the library furnishings.
3. Respect everyone in the library.
4. Use your time wisely.
5. Respect the library as a quiet place.

# 32

## THE PROCEDURE

### Taking a Test

Test day can be productive when the teacher plans ahead to minimize unnecessary loss of learning time.



## THE SOLUTION

Every minute is valuable in the classroom. Every day is a day for learning. Test day can be productive when students know what to do, and **the teacher is proactive about using every minute of classroom time effectively.**

This procedure resolves these issues:

1. Confusion on test day
2. Ineffective use of class time

## THE BACKGROUND

The lesson plan book displays, in large print, “Test today!” Teachers view test day as a mini holiday from instruction, while students consider test day to be a pass from learning.

Students who finish early will fidget and look around, trying to find others who are finished as well. Mobile devices are checked and grooming gadgets miraculously appear—seldom does learning take place while early finishers wait for their classmates to complete the test.

Every minute in the classroom is an opportunity to learn. This is made clear to students with a posted agenda—even on test day. **With an agenda, students will always know what they should be working on next.**

## THE PROCEDURE STEPS

Students have varied test-taking abilities, so plan ahead and post work or a silent reading assignment for students to begin as soon as they complete the test. By being proactive about not letting a single minute of class time go to waste, student learning is maximized.

Post an agenda with a schedule on test day. The schedule should show

- when the test will take place in the class period;
- how long the testing period will last; and
- what to begin working on upon completion of the test.

## TEACH

Explain your procedure for taking a test. Include some of these steps for your students to follow:

- Keep your eyes on your own paper.
- Remain quiet during test time.
- You may not return to the test once you have turned your papers face-down.
- When finished, turn your test over and place all papers on the top-right corner of your desk.
- The test will be collected as soon as everyone has indicated they have completed the test.
- Remain seated and begin assigned work immediately.
- Have materials at your desk to work on when you are finished with the test.

## REHEARSE

Tell students that on test day, all regular classroom procedures will be followed. On test day, students should enter the room quietly and begin their opening assignment as usual.

Model how students should indicate that they have completed the test by placing their papers face-down on the top-right corner of their desks. Remind students that once they have done this, they are not allowed to return to the test.

Emphasize that the agenda will be followed as usual. Students should remain in their seats and start on the assigned work as noted in the agenda.

## REINFORCE

On the day of the first class test, discuss the test-taking procedure again to eliminate any misunderstandings.

Remind students that they should remain silent even after they have completed the test because their classmates may still be working.

Highlight the assigned work posted on the agenda and remind students to start on it immediately after completing the test. Clarify any questions students may have about the assigned work.

### Creating a Personal Space

Students in **Beth Featherston's** classroom sit in clusters, with their desks touching each other. To create a personal space for students, without separating their desks, Beth glues the front of a file folder and the back of another folder together to form a three-paneled partition.

The students write their names on the folders and then write words of encouragement to personalize their folders.

Think smart

Do your best

Work hard

Focus

Check your work

Be positive

Beth laminates the folders to seal them together and then trims them.

The folders are stored in a special place in the classroom. On test day or with any activity that requires independent thinking, a student helper distributes the folders and students set up their partitions between themselves. Within a personal space, students are not easily distracted.



## “ Be Strong

This saying was posted on the door of **Susan Green**, principal at Alain L. Locke School in New York City: “Today’s struggles will bring tomorrow’s achievements.”

Students often complain, “This is so boring. Can we do something fun?” Their desire is to be entertained, not to work hard. Their attitude toward school is, “If I am not entertained, I don’t want to be here.” Working hard to get things done is a lost value among today’s youth.

The origin of this story is not known, but the message is universal for being successful and effective in life. A man found a butterfly cocoon. One day, a small opening appeared in the cocoon. He sat and watched the butterfly as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. For several hours, it struggled. Then, it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and could go no further.

So, the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped away the remaining cocoon.

The butterfly then emerged easily. The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, its wings would enlarge to support its body and its body would contract to size.

Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It was never able to fly.

What the man, in his kindness and haste, did not understand was that the restricting cocoon forced the butterfly to struggle and strengthen its wings. And emerging through the tiny opening was nature’s way of forcing fluid from the butterfly’s body into its wings. Only then, would the butterfly be ready for flight.

Obstacles and struggles are opportunities for everyone to grow and learn. The hard work to get through these difficulties strengthen us and boost our morale. An obstacle-free life might cripple us. We would not be as strong as we could have been. We would never learn to fly!

Be consistent, be strong, be vigilant in your efforts to teach children.

**Harry K. Wong** ■ Mountain View, California

”