

Six Components of an Effective First Day

Your first day of class is crucial for setting the tone for the entire semester. The first day is a time to get your students excited about the content of the course, and an opportunity for you to show them that your class is going to be a supportive and exciting place for them to learn. Use the components below as inspiration for a first day of class that reflects your unique teaching style and goals.

1. Create a Comfortable Class Climate.

- Learn students names.**
- Use an icebreaker.**
- Establish a balance between **professionalism and rapport.**
- Share contact information among students.

2. Tell Students Where They are Going.

- Present at least one of the big questions your course will answer.
- Share the flow and/or structure of your course.
- Present the course outcomes as per AAU syllabus.
- Explain how the course fits into the major and profession.
- Debunk myths—if any—about the course.
- Model the teaching style and expectations you plan to use throughout the semester. Examples: Start and end on time. Use group work.

3. Find out what your students already know.

- What do your students expect?
- Attempt to assess any tangled knowledge or mistaken beliefs about the topic.
- Assess students' existing skills and interests.

4. Generate interest in what the students will learn in your class.

- Present some student work from previous semesters.
- Show some examples from your industry that employ techniques or tools that students are going to be learning in your class.
- Present some of your own work.

5. Complete Essential Administration Only.

- Address enrollment issues and the details of the syllabus for week two.
- Indicate materials students will need for week two: (course reader, supplies, etc.).

6. Assign homework.

- Engage students with at least one of the topics you've presented.
- Clarify your expectations for homework and other assignments.