



POLK
STATE
COLLEGE

First Day Strategies

First Day Strategies

Title: All on the Same Page

Time:	15 minutes
Activity Level:	Low
Purpose:	Understanding and defining academic expectations and experiences
Materials:	No Materials
Here's how:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructor introduces class to syllabus. 2. Instructor prompts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Write down five attributes of the best teacher you ever had. b. How old were you when you had him/her? c. Did you do well in the class? d. Now, list five attributes of a good student. e. Discuss similarities and differences between instructors' and students' attributes (you may want to write lists on board or let a student). f. Reinforce that learning is hard work and requires practice both independently and together. Use the attributes to reinforce classroom guidelines on the syllabus.
Example:	<p>Attributes of the best teacher: patient, friendly, knows the subject, fair, fun I was in the 4th grade; I did great in the class.</p> <p>Attributes of a good student: study hard, come to class, complete homework, participate, make good grades on tests.</p> <p>"One of the attributes of a good student that we all agreed on is that good students come to class. You will have an advantage to learning the material if you are here. The syllabus says that if you miss more than three classes, then you will be dropped from the class. So set a goal to come each class time so that you will have every advantage to pass this class and get closer to your degree."</p>
Tips:	See if students can come to a consensus on the best attributes of both instructor and students.
Variations:	
Contact Person:	Courtlan Thomas, ext. 6267 or cthomas@polk.edu
Activity Sheet:	None

First Day Strategies

Title: Birthday Line

Time:	You give the group a time limit – the shorter, the more fun!
Activity Level:	Low
Purpose:	Icebreaker
Materials:	No Materials
Here's how:	Have the group stand in a line. Then, have each person rearrange the line based on the month and day of their birth WITHOUT talking. You must give them a time limit to complete this task.
Example:	Line should start with folks born in January
Tips:	Have folks talk about their experience at the end.
Variations:	N/A
Contact Person:	Kim Pearsall, ext. 6111 or kpearsall@polk.edu
Activity Sheet:	NONE

First Day Strategies

Title: Class Interview

Time:	15 minutes
Activity Level:	Medium
Purpose:	Everyone knows everyone else's name and some interesting things about each other.
Materials:	Class Interview Sheet
Here's how:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have students complete prompts: Name, job, degree goals, my dream vacation, If I had a million dollars, I would, and I'm most proud of. 2. Fold paper in half and collect papers and place in a box. 3. Have students begin selecting a paper at random out of the box. Ask each student to introduce the students whose sheet they selected. 4. Once everyone has been introduced, redistribute papers and have students complete the bottom portion of the prompts that only you will see: Other courses, 1st time in college, phone number, e-mail, class list.
Example:	<p>Name: Jackie Jacobson Job: Hostess at Applebee's Degree Goals: Associate of Arts Dream vacation: Europe especially Spain If I had a million dollars, I would: Buy a new house and pay off all my student loans. I'm most proud of: Being the first in my family to go to college.</p>
Tips:	Personally complete the class interview sheet and share it as an example of how you would like the class to complete the information.
Variations:	You may modify or add information that you want to collect about your students by changing the prompts.
Contact Person:	Courtlan Thomas, ext. 6267 or cthomas@polk.edu
Activity Sheet:	Attached to photocopy

Class Interview

Name: _____

Job: _____

Degree Goals: _____

My dream vacation: _____

If I had a million dollars, I would _____

I'm most proud
of: _____

Other Courses I am taking this term:

_____ 1st time in college: ___yes ___no

(After each student is introduced by a peer; then return the sheet to the original owner and complete the following information for the Professor)

Phone number: _____

Polk State Email: _____

Alternative Email: _____

Check *may* or *may not* in the below sentence.

(*Professor's name*) ___may or ___may not add my email to a class list.

First Day Strategies

Title: Do You Fit?

Time:	15 minutes
Activity Level:	Medium
Purpose:	Help students get to know each other
Materials:	Activity Sheet
Here's how:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have students mill around and try to locate a person that fits one of the different descriptions listed on the activity sheet.2. Have students record the student's name beside the description.3. Use each student twice at the most.
Example:	
Tips:	You may add or subtract to the information listed. Make sure that you do not have more questions than twice the number of students in the class.
Variations:	(For Math) Create several different math problem sheets and distribute randomly to class. Have students work in pairs to complete the math sheets. Once the sheets have been completed, create a master sheet that has a least one question from each of the practice sheets. Have students circulate to find others that completed the problems correctly.
Contact Person:	Matina Wagner, ext. 5244 or mwagner@polk.edu
Activity Sheet:	Attached

First Day Strategies

Title: Dream Concert

Time:	20 minutes (for a class of 30)
Activity Level:	Low
Purpose:	To make the students feel that class might be fun while introducing themselves to the class and professor. Also, this takes roll on the first day and distributes the course documents.
Materials:	Class roster, index cards, course documents
Here's how:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hand out index cards to the students and tell them to write their name, contact info, and three things about themselves on the cards. 2. Tell the class a little about yourself and put all the course documents on the table in front of you. 3. Tell the students that you will call their names off the roster. When their names are called, ask them to stand up and tell the class one thing about themselves. Also, they should say if they could bring back one musician or singer from the dead along with his or her band for a concert tonight, which one would it be and why. 4. Next, have the students bring the cards up to you and take the course documents. 5. Keep the cards (which should be in alphabetical order) so that you can contact a student and read the cards to learn about them.
Example:	
Tips:	Some students might say that they do not know who to bring back. For these students, ask them a silly question like, "What is your favorite planet or dinosaur, or who is your favorite Ninja Turtle or Nintendo character?"
Variations:	
Contact Person:	Richard Decker, ext. 6252, LLC 2247, rdecker@polk.edu
Activity Sheet:	

First Day Strategies

Title: Have You Ever...

Time:	5 minutes
Activity Level:	Low to Medium (stand up/sit down at desk/table)
Purpose:	Learn about each other; get energy circulating
Materials:	Have you ever sheet (attached)
Here's how:	Instructor reads, "Have you ever" and then completes the sentence with the various statements on the sheet. If it applies to the student, then the student stands beside desk. Instructor reads the next statement, and if it applies, the student remains standing; if not then he/she sits down.
Example:	"Have you ever taken a math course before this one at Polk State College?"
Tips:	You can use this half way through the class to help students refocus.
Variations:	You can ask questions that are content related. True-stand; False- sit: "It is true that a negative multiplied by another negative equals a positive?" Do you fit?
Contact Person:	Kim DeRonda, ext. 6256 or kderonda@polk.edu
Activity Sheet:	Activity sheet attached.

Have You Ever...

Lived overseas

Ridden a horse

Gone skydiving or bungee jumping

Sung karaoke

Broken a bone

Played an organized sport

Won a radio contest

Been to a concert

Can you speak more than one language

Been ice-skating

Do you have a child/children

Been on TV

Eaten goat

Fallen down the stairs

Milked a cow

Experienced an earthquake

Hitchhiked

Changed clothes in a car

Ridden a mechanical bull

Lived alone

Been in a play

Do you have brothers/sisters

Been in a mosh pit or crowd surfed

Dyed your hair

Played an instrument

Seen snow

Fist fight

Seen a play on Broadway

Fallen asleep at the movies

Met a celebrity

Tried to skateboard

Shaken hands with a monkey

First Day Strategies

Title: Introductions

Time:	10 minutes
Activity Level:	Low
Purpose:	Learning names through repetition
Materials:	No materials
Here's how:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have first student introduce him/herself.2. Second person introduces him/herself and then reintroduces the first person by name.3. The third student introduces self and then reintroduces the second student. .. and so it goes.... Until everyone has introduced him/herself and the person prior to him/her.
Example:	First student: "Hi, my name is Lisa." Second student, "I'm Nancy, this is Lisa." (points to Lisa or has Lisa stand) Third student, "Hi, I'm Matt, and this is Nancy."
Tips:	Instructor may want to be second to introduce him/herself so that he/she can model progression.
Variations:	You may modify or add information that you want to collect about your students by asking for additional information.
Contact Person:	Courtlan Thomas, ext. 6267 or cthomas@polk.edu
Activity Sheet:	

First Day Strategies

Title: Leave Them Alone

Time:	15-20 minutes
Activity Level:	Low to high depending on the students
Purpose:	Students learn each others' names. This activity reinforces active learning as well as accountability for learning.
Materials:	None
Here's how:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tell students that you are leaving the classroom for 5 or 10 minutes.2. Tell them that during that time they each need to figure out a way to learn 5 or more of their classmates' names.3. Do not give instructions on how they are going to proceed—let the students figure it out.4. Instructor leaves the classroom for the allotted amount of time.5. When instructor returns, ask for volunteers to introduce 5 peers.6. As each individual is introduced, instructor repeats name and welcomes them to class.7. Ask additional volunteers until everyone has been introduced and instructor has repeated the name and greeted every student in class.
Example:	
Tips:	Students will use various methods to get the information; some will write down names, others will memorize names and some will not participate. The point is to get them active and have them decide at what level they will participate. Another "carrot" is to give each successful (5 or more names) volunteer something, such as pencil or chocolate. This will help motivate additional engagement.
Variations:	
Contact Person:	Courtlan Thomas, ext. 6267 or cthomas@polk.edu
Activity Sheet:	None

First Day Strategies

Title: Little Known Secret

Time:	10 minutes
Activity Level:	Low- medium
Purpose:	Instructor and students learn each other's names.
Materials:	Name Roster; 3 x 5 cards
Here's how:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask each student to write one thing about him/herself that no one or very few people know on a 3 x 5 card.2. Take submissions and create a chart.3. Have the group find the student for each unique item (little known secret).
Example:	Attached
Tips:	Ask students to submit information that they are comfortable sharing with the group, nothing too personal or embarrassing.
Variations:	If using video source, then have student speak name.
Contact Person:	Kim Pearsall, ext. 6111 or kpearsall@polk.edu
Activity Sheet:	None

Example --

Little Known Secret Submissions:

Secret	Name
I've been skydiving twice.	
I hate carrots and green beans.	
I have twelve sisters and brothers.	
I've seen the "Last Supper" in person.	
This morning I ate my favorite candy bar for breakfast, Milky Way.	
My mom was born in China.	
I didn't buy any textbooks last term and made straight A's.	
I like to fix cars.	
My children graduated from college; now it's my turn.	
I like to ballroom dance.	
I own a horse and work on a ranch.	
I used to cook and sell boiled peanuts.	
I was born and raised in Florida, and I hate orange juice.	
I've swallowed a goldfish.	
I have 29 tattoos.	
I'm the only one in my family that has gone to college.	
My first job was working at a carwash.	
I love to sing Karaoke.	

First Day Strategies

Title: M&M Game

Time:	5 – 10 minutes
Activity Level:	Low – small groups of 4 -6
Purpose:	Team building activity - Introduce students to each other - Chocolate lovers
Materials:	Bowl full of M&M candy
Here's how:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student selects a couple of M&M's from a candy bowl 2. Instructor has students divided into small groups 3. Instructor will call out an M&M color/question or will have color/question on overhead or board for students to see 4. Students will go around the table/ group (4-6) and answer question 5. Instructor repeats a different color/question until all colors are selected
	<p>Red candy: favorite hobbies Green candy: favorite foods Yellow candy: favorite movies Orange candy: favorite places to travel Brown candy: most memorable or embarrassing moment Blue candy: wild cards (they can share anything they choose)</p>
Example:	Instructor calls out red M&M and students that have a red M&M share their favorite hobbies with their group.
Tips:	Tell students to not eat candy until after the activity.
Variations:	You can be creative and select any questions that you think would be fitting for your group. You could also use skittles, jelly beans, or other colored candy. You might have to change the color names/questions according to candy color.
Contact Person:	Beverly Woolery, ext. 5403 or bwoolery@polk.edu

First Day Strategies

Title: Me, too

Time:	5 - 10 minutes
Activity Level:	Low – small groups
Purpose:	Team building
Materials:	Box of paperclips
Here's how:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Everyone in group gets 3 - 5 paperclips.2. The first student states something he/she has done.3. Everyone that has done the same thing admits it and puts a paperclip in the middle of the table.4. Continue around the group until someone has run out of paperclips.
Example:	Examples of things students would say <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Eaten frog legs2. Visited another country
Tips:	If students are sitting at individual desks, have them turn desks inward to have groups of four.
Variations:	Could use toothpicks, pennies, small pieces of candy, etc. Could use more paperclips for extended time.
Contact Person:	Beverly Woolery, ext. 5403 or bwoolery@polk.edu

First Day Strategies

Title: My N.A.M.E.

Time:	10 minutes
Activity Level:	Medium
Purpose:	Everyone knows everyone else's name and some interesting things about each other.
Materials:	No Materials
Here's how:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Give students 5 minutes to think of interesting facts about themselves that correspond to the letters of their first name.2. Have each participant share his or her acronym.
Example:	"Hi, I'm Logan. L is for Led Zepplin, my favorite rock group; O is for Ohio, where I was born; G is for German, the only foreign language I know; A is for Aunt Wendy, my favorite aunt; and N is for Nice because I'm a nice guy.
Tips:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. If students get stuck, tell them they do not have to follow the rules strictly. L could stand for "loving chocolate."2. Be prepared to share your own acronym as an example for the class.
Variations:	Instead of acronyms about themselves, have students make acronyms corresponding to their work or a current project that they are working on.
Contact Person:	Kim Pearsall, ext. 6111 or kpearsall@polk.edu
Activity Sheet:	No

First Day Strategies

Title: Name Plates

Time:	15 minutes
Activity Level:	Medium
Purpose:	Everyone knows everyone else's name and some interesting things about each other.
Materials:	8.5 x11 Cardstock paper folded horizontally to make a "tent." I also take colored pencils and markers.
Here's how:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have students create a name plate.2. Have students draw 2 or 3 symbols that represent something about them or interests.3. Have each participant share his or her interests.
Example:	"My name is Jill." I drew an orchid because I raise orchids at home, and it's my favorite flower; the three little children represent my three children at home, ages 14,12, and 5; and I drew a mortar because eventually I'd like to be a pharmacist."
Tips:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. If students get stuck, tell them they can draw anything, such as their favorite candy bar.2. Be prepared to share your own name plate as an example for the class.3.
Variations:	Create specific instructions such as a symbol that represents their degree or advising track, current job, and hobby.
Contact Person:	Richard Decker, ext 6252 or rdecker@polk.edu
Activity Sheet:	No

Perpetual Calendar

Instructions:

1. Find the column for the year and the row for the century to the corresponding letter.
2. From the month, read across to the letter above (second chart).
3. From that column and the row of the date, read the day of the week.

Example: February 15, 1992: century digit = 19, year 92 = letter B (this is a leap year)

Leap February letter B = column 6, column 6 with 15 = SA (Saturday)

Numbers in **bold** are leap years.

Centuries divisible by 400
are also leap years.

That is: 2000 was a leap year,
1900 was not.

00	01	02	03		04	05
06	07		08	09	10	11
	12	13	14	15		16
17	18	19		20	21	22
23		24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	31		32	33
34	35		36	37	38	39
	40	41	42	43		44
45	46	47		48	49	50
51		52	53	54	55	
56	57	58	59		60	61
62	63		64	65	66	67
	68	69	70	71		72
73	74	75		76	77	78
79		80	81	82	83	
84	85	86	87		88	89
90	91		92	93	94	95
	96	97	98	99		

Century Digits									
26	22	18	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
25	21	17	c	d	e	f	g	a	b
24	20	16	e	f	g	a	b	c	d
23	19	15	f	g	a	b	c	d	e

Leap Year January	g	a	b	c	d	e	f				
Leap Year February	d	e	f	g	a	b	c				
January	f	g	a	b	c	d	e				
February	c	d	e	f	g	a	b				
March	c	d	e	f	g	a	b				
April	g	a	b	c	d	e	f				
May	e	f	g	a	b	c	d				
June	b	c	d	e	f	g	a				
July	g	a	b	c	d	e	f				
August	d	e	f	g	a	b	c				
September	a	b	c	d	e	f	g				
October	f	g	a	b	c	d	e				
November	c	d	e	f	g	a	b				
December	a	b	c	d	e	f	g				
1	8	15	22	29	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
2	9	16	23	30	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M
3	10	17	24	31	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu
4	11	18	25		Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W
5	12	19	26		F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th
6	13	20	27		Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F
7	14	21	28		Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa

First Day Strategies

Title: Ready, Set, Reorganize

Time:	15 minutes
Activity Level:	Medium
Purpose:	Everyone knows everyone else's name and some interesting things about each other.
Materials:	No Materials
Here's how:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Divide group in half; lines face each other.2. Announce category (first name).3. Both teams reorganize themselves alphabetically by first name as quickly as possible.4. Repeat for different categories (favorites foods, chronological birthdays, pet's name, alphabetically by degree, etc.)
Example:	
Tips:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Think of more categories than you will use.2. Stop the game when the energy or enthusiasm starts to fade.
Variations:	If group is larger, separate students into three groups instead of two. Give small prizes for the fastest team. After teams sort by name, have class sort by name as one team.
Contact Person:	Kim Pearsall, ext. 6111 or kpearsall@polk.edu
Activity Sheet:	No