

# How to draw students' attention

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**Annotation:** One of the biggest challenges teachers face is getting and maintaining the attention of their students. Effective teaching requires this skill but it takes time and practice to learn. Whether you are just starting out or have been teaching for decades it is hard to keep students focused on task especially young learners get easily distracted and it can be challenging to come up with ways of keeping them engaged. Moreover young learners have relatively short attention spans. Since the students have various interests and levels of knowledge it is impossible to have the whole class fully –engaged in something for a long period of time, so it is highly recommended to work out a number of activities beforehand for per lesson as well

One of the biggest challenges teachers face is getting and maintaining the attention of their students. Effective teaching requires this skill but it takes time and practice to learn. Whether you are just starting out or have been teaching for decades it is hard to keep students focused on task especially young learners get easily distracted and it can be challenging to come up with ways of keeping them engaged. Moreover young learners have relatively short attention spans. Since the students have various interests and levels of knowledge it is impossible to have the whole class fully –engaged in something for a long period of time, so it is highly recommended to work out a number of activities beforehand for per lesson as well

From my own experience it is difficult to grab young learners' attentiveness, in order to get engaged students teachers need to be knowledgeable, encourageable, flexible and full of energy. I have been teaching young students for 20 years and I strongly believe that exercises for kids should be entertaining instead of "working out" think of it, as "exercise play" and also ESL warm-up activities are essential in English classroom. Students may be tired or have distracted minds and diving straight into a textbook or grammar explanation can be quite jarring. With a good warmer you can put your students into English mode: attentive, interested, and ready to participate. A warmer can also serve to review language of a previous lesson or set the class for a new topic. Verbal, visual, and palpable cues from you can refocus your students while helping you maintain control and holding your young learners' awareness. It is highly suggestible to use best ways to grab your students' attention while teaching them according to these cues: Firstly, Reach out rather calling to a child across the room, stop what you are doing and go to the child. Position your body at the child's level and ask him to look at you before you begin your discussion, speak in a firm but nonthreatening voice. Secondly, use attention grabbers appealing to children's senses with motivational devices that have varied colors, textures, shapes, movements, smells, or sounds to help them focus. It is a good idea to use warm, soft colors and provide an orderly environment for children who may become overly stimulated. Thirdly, it is highly recommended to be playful as well. Obtaining children's awareness with a dramatic voice by putting on a sensational hat, or playing a clapping game. Also it is accomplishable to try holding up a secret hand sign for children to duplicate or rolling a ball to different children to keep them alert.

Another practicable approach is to be welcoming by using children's names to get their attention easily or engaging children with facial expressions such smiling and making eye contact. It is easy to use your body language to convey warmth and acceptance. You can also get their attention by describing what you see by labeling objects or activities and pointing out similarities and differences and asking them question to get them to look at item and focus on activities. It is also substantial to be clear and specific as children are more likely to hear your requests and pay attention when it is clear what you want them to do by keeping directions short and simple. Giving timely tips are also considered essential and workable allowing children to

process your request for their attention and follow the direction given. One should consider that afternoons are low energy times for many children and it may take longer to process attention – getting techniques. Being aware of temperament is one of the main features to evaluate while teaching because some children can be easily distracted and exhibit impulsive behavior when this is the case, speak calmly, use one-step directions and give them gentle touches. Other children are more reflective and may need a five minute warning before they can attend to the next project. One should look at learning styles being alert to which attention – getting signals work best for children’s learning patterns. It is suggested for visual learners to try blinking the lights or raising your hand while singing a song to begin cleanup for auditory children, in addition it is a good proposition to squeeze a child’s hand or pass a stuffed animal around the circle especially for tactile students.

One of the promising motion is to keep groups as possible as small which provides you an opportunity obtaining students’ concentration. If you have difficulty gaining children’s focus, try working with a small group or one- one giving a child your undivided consciousness lets him know you care and that he is saying is important

When planning a lesson you should consistently consider the material and aids needed and whether they are appropriate for the classes and ages you are teaching, remember lessons should be educational but also entertaining and compelling to keep students focus whilst making it an enjoyable experience for both students and teachers alike and the following should be considered for the lesson planning; know who your students are; know ability levels, background, interest levels; attention span; ability to work together in groups; prior knowledge and learning experiences; special needs or accommodations; learning preferences.

One of the most effective way drawing young learners’ concentration is using 20 fun call-and-responses while having a lesson with them:

1. One, two. Eyes on you.
2. Eyes. Open. Ears. Listening.
3. Flat tire! Shhh
4. Hear ye, hear ye! All eyes on the crier!
5. Give me five (Students raise their hands)
6. Tomato (tuh-may-toe), tomato (tuh-may-toe) Potato ( puh-tay-toe)
7. Peanut butter (Students say their favorite kind of jelly or jam)
8. Ready to rock? Ready to roll!!
9. Are you listening? Yes we are.
10. Marco. Polo. Let’s go. Slow mo ( Students move in slow motion, perhaps towards the carpet)
11. One fish, two fish. Red fish, blue fish.
12. Break it down (Students dance around)
13. Hocus pocus. Time to focus.
14. Macaroni and cheese! Everybody freeze!
15. Salami ( Stop and Look at me immediately)
16. All set? You bet?
17. Hands on top. That means stop ( students place hands on head)
18. Chicka chicka. Boom boom.
19. If you can hear my voice, clap once/twice/( students clap)
20. Guitar solo ( Students mime playing the guitar)

Experienced and knowledgeable teachers invariably practice attention signals. Clearly explain how students are supposed to respond to each one and allow plenty of opportunities to try them out, then find out which ones they most enjoy and stick with those. You should also practice nonverbal strategies with your students so they learn to pay attention to visual cues as well

I strongly believe that expecting students to sit quietly and listen to you for several hours out of every day is not fair. If you find that they desperately need to refocus before you try to engage them wiggle it out. Often it is more productive to allow students some time to be wild than try prevent them from feeling fidgety or restless

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