

Speak Up for Success

Class Reader # 2

Have you ever missed an important class, lost a homework assignment, or failed a test? Did you want to talk to your teacher, but didn't know what to say? Was it hard to speak up for yourself without feeling awkward or shy?

To succeed in middle school and beyond, you will need to be able to talk to your teachers about your work. It is important to follow up on situations that affect your grade. If you plan what you are going to say, and practice beforehand with a friend or parent, you'll be more clear and confident.

Tips for Clear Communication

- Think about your tone of voice—sometimes it's not *what* you say but *how* you say it!
- Be polite—say “please” and “thank you.”
- Plan what you are going to say.
- If you are upset, try to calm down before approaching your teacher. Take several deep breaths.
- Take responsibility for your own actions. Don't shift blame to someone else.

In each of the following scenarios, a student has a problem he or she needs to discuss with the teacher. Role play these scenarios with your teammates. Make sure you remember the tips for clear communication.

- You missed class because of a doctor's appointment, and the teacher distributed a study sheet for an upcoming test. Ask for a copy of the study sheet.
- You performed poorly on your last quiz in math class. You need someone to help you understand some of the concepts. You also want to retake the test.
- You missed an important lab in science class because you were out of town with your family. You don't want to get an “F” for that lab, and would like to do something for extra credit.
- You have four missing homework assignments. You know you should have done those assignments, but got sidetracked doing other things. Now this is affecting your grade. You want to know if you can turn in the missing assignments over the next week or two.
- When checking over your last social studies test, you noticed that the teacher made a scoring error. You'd like the teacher to correct his mistake, as this will give you a better grade.
- You lost your textbook. What should you do about it?

George Washington's Rules of Civility

Class Reader # 3

Before he was 16 years old, George Washington (1732-1799), our first president, copied by hand the 110 *Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior* into his notebook. These rules were often taught to well-educated youth of Washington's day. The language and capitalization may seem old-fashioned and too formal to us today, but the rules stress the importance of good manners and respect for others.



Read some of the rules below and write them in your own words on a separate piece of paper. Words with an asterisk * are defined below.

- Show Nothing to your Friend that may affright* him.
- In the Presence of Others Sing not to yourself with a humming Noise, nor Drum with your Fingers or Feet.
- If You Cough, Sneeze, Sigh, or Yawn, do it not Loud but Privately; and Speak not in your Yawning, but put Your handkerchief* or Hand before your face and turn aside.
- Every Action done in Company*, ought to be with some Sign of Respect, to those that are Present.
- Use no Reproachful* Language against any one neither Curse nor Revile*.
- Do not express Joy before one sick or in pain for that contrary Passion* will aggravate* his Misery*.
- Wear not your Cloths*, foul, ripped or Dusty but See they be Brushed once every day at least and take heed* that you approach not to any Uncleaness.
- While you are talking, Point not with your Finger at him of Whom you Discourse* nor Approach too near him to whom you talk especially to his face.
- Speak not Evil of the absent for it is unjust.
- Drink not nor talk with your mouth full; neither gaze about you while you are drink.



Affright – to frighten
Handkerchief - cloth tissue
In company – in the presence of other people
Reproachful – full of scolding
Revile – to speak rudely
Contrary Passion- opposite feeling
Aggravate – to make worse
Misery – deep unhappiness
Cloths – old-fashioned spelling of clothes
Take heed – be careful
Discourse – speech