



ATTENTION GETTERS



Purposeful cues used to capture attention, signal transitions, and refocus students on the learning. Effective attention getters are taught, practiced, and used consistently until they become automatic classroom routines.

Tips for Success:

1. Teach it
2. Practice it
3. Use it consistently
4. Reinforce it
5. Start small-add gradually



SILENT SIGNALS

Best when...

- Students are already working quietly.
- You need to settle the room without adding more noise.
- A few students need a subtle reminder.
- The class needs a calm reset.

Ideas to try...

- Hand in the air
- Peace Sign (2 eyes 2 ears)
- Silent 'Simon Says'
- Sideways Thumb
- Hold up a specific object



TEACHER MOVES

Best when...

- One or a few students need redirection.
- You don't want to interrupt instruction
- A quiet correction is enough
- You need to capture attention or narrate success.

Ideas to try...

- Move closer to interruption
- Eye contact & pause
- Begin to whisper
- Change your accent
- Positive Narration



RHYTHMIC CUES

Best when...

- Students are working collaboratively
- The room has high noise level
- You need a fun whole group reset

Ideas to try...

- Use patterns by clapping, snapping, ssshhhing
- Desk Tap Pattern
- A combo of clap & snap
- A consistent musical timer to signal something



COUNTDOWNS

Best when...

- Transitioning from one activity to another
- Wrapping up student discourse time
- Giving students processing or wait time before regrouping
- Narrate success criteria

Ideas to try...

- In 5 (start to finish your sentence...)In 4 (put your book away...)
- Use visual timers
- Chant your facts for fact fluency
- Use a song



CALL & RESPONSE

Best when...

- Students are spread around the room
- Energy is high
- You need immediate whole group attention
- You need undivided attention for an announcement, adjusting a misconception, etc.

Ideas to try...

- Class? → Yes?
- Get it? → Got it?
- If you can hear my voice--> **clap** "one time"/ **say** "woohoo"/ **do** "stand up"
- Six? → Seven!



FOCUS WORDS

Best when...

- You're actively teaching
- You need to quickly sharpen focus to the next point
- You need to keep up your instructional pace
- A few minds are wandering

Ideas to try...

- Check
- Focus
- Track
- Zone
- Freeze
- Goat



ENVIRONMENTAL CUES

Best when...

- You want a certain cue to signal a specific routine.
- You want to reduce teacher talk
- Your class benefits from visual/auditory cues.

Ideas to try...

- Flicker the lights
- Use a bell/ chime
- Turn music off
- A sign put in a specific area with expectations



Do: Be strategic about the ones you use and use them consistently. Balance novelty with consistency.



Avoid: Changing cues too often, yelling over students, waiting until behavior escalates before using them, and giving up because they are 'not working.'

CHOOSING THE RIGHT ATTENTION GETTERS



Purposeful attention cues match the instructional moment.



Choose the least intrusive strategy that matches your instructional purpose.

IF...	YOUR GOAL	BEST CHOICE	AVOID...
 Students are quietly working.	Redirect without interrupting everyone.	 Silent Signals Nonverbal cues to refocus attentively.	Loud call & response.
 One or two students are off task.	Quiet redirection.	 Teacher Moves Intentional actions to redirect individuals.	Stopping the entire class.
 Partner groups are getting loud.	Regain whole-group attention.	 Rhythmic Cues Patterns of sound to quickly gain attention.	Whispering or individual reminders.
 A transition is coming.	Prepare students to shift.	 Countdowns Predictable time cues that build readiness.	Abruptly saying, "Okay, stop!"
 Students need an immediate whole-class reset.	Quickly regain everyone's attention.	 Call & Response Teacher prompts with practiced responses.	Redirecting students one at a time.
 Students are drifting during instruction.	Refocus thinking on the learning.	 Focus Words Brief cue words to bring attention back.	Starting a brand new attention routine.
 You want the room itself to cue expectations.	Build predictable routines.	 Environmental Cues Signals in the room that communicate expectations.	Verbal reminders every time.

1. DURING DIRECT INSTRUCTION



Teacher Moves



Focus Words



Silent Signals

These strategies maintain instructional flow without repeatedly stopping learning.

2. DURING INDEPENDENT WORK



Silent Signals



Teacher Moves



Environmental Cues

Students remain engaged while receiving subtle redirection.

3. DURING COLLABORATIVE LEARNING



Rhythmic Cues



Call & Response



Countdowns

These strategies cut through productive noise and quickly bring the class back together.

4. DURING TRANSITIONS



Countdowns



Environmental Cues



Silent Signals

Students know what's coming before the transition occurs, reducing downtime.

