

OECTA Daily Occasional Teacher Survival Guide



A Professional Development
Steering Committee Project

ONTARIO ENGLISH
Catholic
Teachers
ASSOCIATION

OECTA Daily Occasional Teacher Survival Guide

Thank you for all that you do for Catholic students in Ontario. Occasional teaching is a rewarding and respected profession. We hope that you find the Daily Occasional Teacher Survival Guide useful and that it permits you to do what you do best – teach!

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2010

OECTA DAILY OCCASIONAL TEACHER Survival Guide

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INTRODUCTION

The Daily Occasional Teacher Survival Guide is intended as a resource for all occasional teachers. Written by occasional teachers and regular classroom teachers, this document will provide you with useful knowledge, hand-on techniques for classroom management, and answers to some of the most common problems that arise for the occasional teacher.

You may be just starting your teaching career. Occasional teaching will give you insights that many people do not have. You will see different ways of doing things in the classroom and you will meet many teachers and administrators who have unique methods of dealing with students and handling problems that occur. If you decide to accept a long term occasional (LTO) assignment you will have a better idea of where you would best fit.

You may have decided to be a career occasional teacher. The flexibility of the work is a great benefit. The job is finished each day when school is over which gives you more time to focus on other interests.

You may have taught for many years and now find yourself retired but still wanting the satisfaction that you found in the teaching profession with the added flexibility that comes with occasional teaching.

Whatever your circumstances, you will find this guide useful. It contains practical advice on preparing for the day, how to handle the first five minutes, and what to do after the students leave. Classroom management is different for occasional teachers: they do not have the continued relationship with the students to rely on, nor as much information about students as the regular classroom teacher may have. Included are classroom management strategies as well as ideas on communicating with administration, teaching staff, and parents.

With occasional teaching, every day is different. You may be faced with being unable to locate a day plan or noticing students finishing their work early with nothing else to do. Bring this guide with you. The activity suggestions will help you out of these sticky situations and make your day, and the student's day, go smoothly.

PREPARING FOR YOUR TEACHING DAY

The following section contains many hints and tips to help you be successful as a daily occasional teacher. A lot of the material in Preparing for your Teaching Day has been adapted from Tried and True...What Works for You workshop presented by Connie Zoet. (Material used with permission.)

BEFORE CLASS BEGINS

Working as an occasional teacher is a demanding job. Make sure that you're ready to meet the challenge. Here are some simple recommendations to help you succeed:

Getting Off to a Good Start

- Be well rested. This job will require lots of energy and your full attention.
- Make sure you eat well. Bring a good lunch as well as snacks and water to keep you going.
- Wear comfortable yet professional-looking attire. Dress for the weather and remember that you may have yard duty. Bring a pair of running shoes in case part of your assignment takes place in the gym.
- Know the location of the school you're going to. (Most boards have school information available on their web sites or can provide you with a copy of this information.)
- Know when your assignment starts. Leave early enough to avoid "kiss and ride" line-ups and to allow for delays due to traffic and weather.
- Arrive at the school at least fifteen minutes prior to the start of the school day, which is a duty of a teacher under the Education Act. There may be tasks that may need to be completed prior to the start of the school day.
- Know your board's procedure regarding inclement weather where school bus transportation is cancelled yet schools remain open. Do not assume your assignment is cancelled.
- Have the school's phone number with you. If you are delayed unexpectedly, you should contact the school with your estimated arrival time.
- Bring an appropriate book or magazine to read during the directed reading period. You are a role model and should "practice what you preach".
- Bring grade-appropriate teaching materials with you in case you need them. (See page 58 of the Resources section of this document for some examples.)
- See a great idea? Write it down, make a copy or note the source/resource.
- REGISTER FOR OECTA's website: Full-time, part-time, occasional and continuing education statutory OECTA members have access to the Members' Centre on OECTA's website where resources and information are posted for teachers that is not available to the public. Members need to create an account for this website. Visit www.oecta.on.ca Look for the Members tab, and follow the instructions.

Before you begin, you will need to locate your OECTA ID number, that can be found on your OECTA membership card, which is also your Edvantage card. You received the card when you became an OECTA member. If you do not have a card, or have lost it, contact OECTA membership administrator, 1-800-268-7230, or email: membership@oecta.on.ca

The Essential "Bag of Tricks"

Your teaching bag should contain items you routinely bring with you to support your daily teaching. It might include:

- a whistle
- pencils
- pens
- lined paper
- a clipboard
- an eraser
- a calculator
- pencil sharpener
- paper clips
- running shoes
- post-it notes
- emergency teaching material
e.g. simple games, cards
- lessons for a variety of situations and subjects
- chalk and a chalk holder
- white-board markers
- favourite story books (primary)
- high-interest stories (older students)
- Kleenex
- wet wipes
- Tylenol/Advil
- hand sanitizer
- a copy of your collective agreement

Arrival and Check-In

Arriving early (at least fifteen minutes before the start of classes) will give you the opportunity to familiarize yourself with the school, school facilities, the classroom(s), and the teacher's plans. It will also allow sufficient time to find out additional information, perform any necessary tasks needed for the start of the day, and to have your questions answered. Always start your day by checking in at the school office.

At the Office

- Introduce yourself and state whom you're replacing that day. Sign in, if required, and obtain ID badges, if necessary.
- If you've parked a car in the school parking lot, check whether you need a parking pass.
- If you don't know this already, ask for the names of the secretary (or secretaries), principal, and vice-principal(s).
- Find out the classroom number and its location. Ask if the room is open. If not, get the key or request that the door be unlocked. For secondary assignments, you may be teaching in different classrooms throughout the day. Make sure you know where they are located to avoid being late.
- Locate the staff room, staff washroom, gym, library, and photocopy room.
- Make sure you check the teacher's mailbox for plans, attendance book, etc. before going to the classroom. There may be appointment slips and information for students that must be distributed on that day. Only remove materials from the mailbox that are needed for the day.

- Check the regular teacher's supervision schedule to ensure you don't miss any scheduled duties. Also check the inclement weather supervision schedule in case you have additional duties to perform should the weather be uncooperative.
- Find out about any responsibilities you may have during planning/preparation time. In secondary schools you may be expected to do an "on-call" (fill in for an absent teacher for part of a period).
- If you're unsure about anything, ask one of the office staff.

In the Classroom

- Choose a safe place to put your belongings (coat, purse, keys, etc.). Do not bring any valuables that are not required for the day. Personal electronic devices may be subject to theft if left unattended even for a short period of time. As there may be a policy regarding the use of personal electronic devices in effect, be sure to be familiar with any rules in this regard.
- Locate the teacher's plan, the seating plan and the school handbook. If you can't find the daily plan, check with the office in case it has been faxed or e-mailed in. Sometimes, you may be required to use an "emergency plan" if nothing else is available.
- Determine when each teaching period begins and ends and where you need to be for yard/hall/lunchroom duties.
- Familiarize yourself with the material you will be teaching. Use the Teacher's Guide, prepare samples, see what the assigned work involves and check for an answer sheet. Perform any necessary task, such as photocopying, that will help you execute the lessons to be taught.
- Be organized: locate all teaching materials such as texts, handouts, paper, etc. If you can't find what you need, ask neighbouring teachers or reliable students. If necessary, alter the lesson to suit what you do have on hand.
- You may be assigned to teach a subject outside of your qualifications area or beyond your knowledge or ability. Use your professional judgment and do not get yourself into a situation that you feel ill-equipped to handle. If you change any material from the day plan, make sure to leave an explanation for the regular teacher with a brief explanation as to why. Always have alternative activities available to fill your teaching time.
- Introduce yourself to neighbouring teachers. They can help you find things, will offer advice about handling certain students and can give you background on potentially tricky situations. Teachers assigned the same grade(s)/subject may also be able to help interpret lesson plans when needed. In secondary schools, the department head may also be of assistance.
- Put the day's/period's agenda on the board regardless of the grade level. Just as we like to know the agenda for a meeting, students appreciate knowing what will happen during class.
- List other activities on the board that students can work on after they have completed assignments.
- Have grade appropriate activity on the board, on an overhead, on each student's desk or ready to hand out as the students come into the room.
- You may want to use a class list to track student work, behaviour, participation, or other information for the regular teacher.

FOLLOW THE RULES!

- Always keep the safety of your students under your care in mind.
- Where possible, attend to any personal matters (washroom breaks, phone calls, etc.) outside of instructional time (before/after school, recess, lunch).
- Make your best effort to follow all routines, rules, and expectations established by the regular teacher e.g. those dealing with discipline, prayers, classroom helpers, pencil sharpening, washroom use, snacks, computer use, etc.
- Understand how to contact the office from the classroom. Some intercom systems require extension codes: check to see where these codes are posted.
- Learn about lunch and dismissal/bus procedures.
- Know the evacuation/fire drill procedures and exits as well as the internal and external lockdown procedures.
- If you cannot find the outline of specific procedures upon arrival at the school or classroom, ask a neighbouring teacher, or if you are still unable to locate this information, inquire at the office.

CREATING A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE

THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES

Many students believe that having an occasional teacher in their class means a day off from everything – schoolwork, behaviour, routines – and immediately go into a “Yeah! We have a sub today!” mode. The well-prepared and confident occasional teacher who is in charge from the start of the day will have fewer problems to handle.

Meeting Your Students

Greet each student as they enter the classroom. (You may find a correlation between how many students respond to your greeting and the kind of day you will have.)

After the students have settled, thank them for their response: “When you were coming in, I greeted you with a ‘good morning’ or a ‘hello’. Thank you to those students who answered back with a similar greeting. You’ve made me feel welcome as a guest teacher in your school and in your classroom. I appreciate that.” (You may find an increase in the responses in the afternoon.)

Place yourself in the classroom where you can see and be seen until the class has settled down. This establishes you as the person in charge and is crucial in setting the tone for the day. Then get the students’ attention quickly, and wait for them to listen actively before speaking.

Introduce yourself. Write your name on the board. If students ask if they may call you by your initial: e.g., “Mr. S?” you should discourage this even if your name is difficult for students to pronounce. Addressing you correctly establishes respect. Briefly tell the students something about yourself (background, education, career path/duration). However, avoid disclosing information that is too personal.

Use students’ names frequently. Listen when students first come in and learn a few names right away. They will be less inclined to misbehave and they will be impressed if you already know names.

Make use of the seating plan. Being able to call students by name is helpful in controlling behaviour. If a seating plan is not available, prepare one using the template in the Managing the Day Plan Delivery section of this document. With younger students, you can add the names yourself. With older students, ask a student who is quiet and does not appear to be in the “in” crowd to do this for you or have him or her tell you the names as you write them down.

Administrative Management

Take attendance once the students are busy with bell work or quietly reading when they are less likely to create problems. Call out all the students' names and thank them for their response. It has a calming effect, probably because students like to hear their names. Ask for help before trying names that are difficult to pronounce. This will also confirm the seating plan. It's a good idea to count heads as well in order to guard against attendance errors.

Be sure you know the attendance procedure. Different schools and schools boards may use different methods of taking attendance, especially at the beginning of the day, such as attendance lists, computer bubble-cards, or direct online attendance entry.

In the event that attendance is recorded directly on a classroom computer, an occasional teacher may not have access to the computer so an alternative method of taking attendance must be available. Be sure to check with the office if the attendance procedure is unclear.

Avoid, where possible, having the students write their names on a blank sheet of paper. If no attendance list is provided, circulate through the class and record each student's name, preferably on your seating plan. Crosscheck to make sure the number of names on the seating plan corresponds to the number of students in the class.

Students may have notes from parents, permission forms or other correspondence. Unless it is required for the day you are assigned, leave any of this material for the regular teacher when they return. These notes should best be placed in an envelope/folder clearly marked and left with the materials/plans in the teacher's mailbox or on the teacher's desk.

You may be expected to collect money for field trips or other school activities. Money brought in by a student should be in an individual sealed envelope with the student's name and the purpose for the money written on it. Individual envelopes should be placed in a large envelope clearly marked with the absent teacher's name. It should be given to the office secretary with clear instructions that this is collected money and should be left in a safe place for the teacher upon return. Do not make a student responsible for taking money to the office. Do not leave the money in the teacher's desk. Note that there may be different local practices for occasional teachers' handling money. Consult your local OECTA representative if you have any questions or concerns.

Throughout the Day

As an occasional teacher, it is important to use positive feedback to maintain appropriate student behaviour. Celebrate the good things that happen in the classroom. Focus on the positive and constantly recognize student effort and improvement, no matter how small.

Strategies that Work

Take the opportunity to verbally acknowledge good work habits: "The ladies in this group have been working very well. I appreciate your efforts!" or "The boys and girls at this table are doing a great job with their assignment. And you're working so quietly, too." Try to have at least one positive interaction with each student each day.

Vary your expressions of praise. Instead of saying, “Very good,” try instead:

- “Now you’ve figured it out!”
- “That’s the best ever!”
- “You’ve got that down pat!”
- “Good thinking!”
- “Sensational!”
- “You outdid yourself today!”
- “Nice going!”

Always move around the room during a work period. You’re more likely to prevent disruptive behaviour if you circulate through the room rather than sit at the teacher’s desk. This is especially important if the class is writing a test. However, be aware that many students feel uncomfortable when a teacher hovers over their shoulders or interrupts them during work time. As you circulate, assist students in completing their assignments and re-teach concepts as necessary.

Do not use treats (food, candy, toys) to motivate students. If you want to reward good behaviour, use a small award or certificate on which you can quickly write the student’s name, the date, and a brief description of the achievement. Communicate such rewards with the absent teacher. Alternatively, leave a hard working student a note at recess, such as “I really liked the way you got right down to work on that Math assignment.”

For elementary students in particular, consider drawing an empty box on the board before the class arrives. Give the box a grade-specific title such as “Wonderful 1’s”, “Fabulous 4’s”, “Super 6/s”, “Awesome Intermediates”. Once the students are seated, explain that this section of the board will not be erased at the end of the day, but left on for their regular teacher to see when they return. Reserve a special piece of chalk or dry-erase marker. No need to go over the criteria – students will know very quickly! When a student is behaving in a great way, place a piece of chalk on his/her desk. The student may go up to the board and write his/her name. The chalk/marker is then returned to you. At the end of the day, add a note for the teacher. This is an amazingly simple and effective idea.



WONDERFUL 1's

TERRIFIC 2's

AMAZING 3's

FABULOUS 4's

SUPER 6's

SPLENDID 7's

GREAT 8's

AWESOME INTERMEDIATES

Students with Special Needs

Regardless of the grade, subject, or school, any classroom will have one or more students with special needs. It is a good idea to identify these students as soon as they enter the classroom. Remember that any information you receive about them should be treated as confidential.

Information regarding health concerns (such as severe allergies or asthma) should be posted in the staffroom or kept in a binder in the office. Teachers are not expected to perform any medical/physical procedures, such as toileting, dispensing medication, etc. Specially trained educational assistants are responsible for these duties. It is important to know your local collective agreement and expectations with respect to such procedures. If you are uncertain, contact your local OECTA representative or the Provincial Office.

Familiarize yourself with any procedures and behaviour plans that exist to maintain consistency for the students involved. Review the in-school support program and identify those who require special education and ESL support. Ensure that you know when these students are being withdrawn or when additional support will be available in the classroom

Accommodations, Modifications, and Differentiated Instruction

As an occasional teacher, it is important to be respectful of the absent teacher's instructions and to strive to deliver any program accommodations and/or modifications indicated to the best of your ability. These may include any or all of the following:

- more time to complete assignments and tests
- alternative assignments and types of evaluation
- use of special equipment (calculator, computer, assistive technology)
- working with an educational assistant/special needs assistant
- working in a resource room or some other form of student withdrawal

The absent teacher may also have left instructions for differentiated lessons for specific students. Differentiated instruction is a means of delivering curriculum to meet an individual student's needs so that learning can take place regardless of the student's ability or learning style. Treat such instructions in the same manner as the accommodations and modifications, and strive to deliver them to the best of your ability.

OTHER INDIVIDUALS IN THE CLASSROOM

School or Board Employees

On any given school day, one or more adults, in addition to the teacher, may be found in the classroom or may have duties related to one or more student. Such adults may include: educational assistants/special needs assistants, teacher-librarians, healthcare professionals, volunteers, parents, administrators, guidance counsellors, social workers/child and youth counsellors, specialist teachers (for music, art, Phys. Ed., French), other preparation/planning teachers, speech pathologists, programming/assessment personnel.

The classroom teacher may take the comings and goings of these adults for granted. As a daily occasional teacher, however, it is extremely important to know what adults will be entering your room to work with students and who may be withdrawing students from your classroom.

The first fifteen minutes of the school day will be the most important in this regard. Review all the instructions and related documents the absent teacher has left you. If these instructions lack detail regarding other staff members who may be involved with your class, consult with one of the school administrators to determine if and when any other adults will be working with your students either in the classroom or in another area.

Parents

Parents should not come into the classroom without notice. All visitors should check in with the school office before going elsewhere in the school. However, over the course of the day, particularly during arrival and dismissal, you may encounter parents in your classroom. Especially in the younger grades, parents are extremely curious regarding who is teaching their children.

If parents arrive in your classroom:

- Smile and be welcoming.
- Introduce yourself (e.g. Hello I'm Mrs. Gibbs and I'm replacing name of absent teacher] for the day).
- Be aware of different family groups (e.g. single parents, blended families, same-sex families).
- Thank any parent volunteer for his/her time.
- Refer specific questions or other non-routine matters to the regular teacher or administration.

Student Helpers

Many schools use student helpers (e.g., reading buddies, monitors, etc.) especially at the elementary level. If students arrive at your classroom unexpectedly, and if there were no instructions regarding their involvement, ask them what they will be doing. Supervise them or ensure that there is teacher supervision during the activity. Consult with one of the other teachers in a neighbouring classroom or with the office, if you have concerns.

*Adapted from “Tried and True...What Works for You” Workshop presented by Connie Zoet.
Material used with permission.*

MANAGING THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

All school board employees are expected to know their rights under the prevailing laws, their collective agreement(s), and school board policy. All of this information should be readily available to employees.

Take the time to know your rights before a problem occurs. In many cases this will help prevent a few problems as well.

If you have any questions, contact your local OECTA representative.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

At the start of the day, review your expectations with the students. Follow regular classroom routines as much as possible. If you need to make new rules, briefly state your wishes regarding behaviour with some “Just for Today” rules using clear and concise directives. Fuzzy rules like “Be responsible” or “Be respectful” are confusing for students. State what you want or don’t want - students respond better to clear specific instructions.

You may want to ask for clarification about specific rules: e.g. “Raise your hand if you can tell me the rule about going to the washroom.” If you are not comfortable with a rule (for example, the students may leave the room whenever they wish to go to the washroom), tell the class what you wish them to do for the day and why: “I want you to sign out and back in each time so I know where each of you is throughout the day.” Before they protest, add, “I know you are mature enough to handle the rule this way for today.”

Be polite – model courtesy. Thank students for their answers and for the jobs they do: “Thank you for taking the attendance to the office. I really appreciate your help.” Students often seem surprised that they are thanked – and they do like it!

Remember that you do not have to give reasons for your requests. Students, especially older ones, already know. Ignore “Why?” questions. If they persist in demanding a reason, offer to discuss the matter at recess or after school.

QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

- Be specific when asking questions. Avoid “Who can tell me ...?” “How many people know ...?” “Could you tell me ...?” Instead use: “Raise your hand if you can tell me ...”
- Accept answers: “That was a good effort.” “You’re on the right track.” If a student gives a ridiculous answer, ignore it. Ask another student and praise that student for the answer. The message: You will only acknowledge on-task behaviour.
- If students don’t seem to understand the question, reword it with different vocabulary or in less complex terms.
- Allow students to pass, to get a “bye”. It is not worth the struggle to “make” a student answer a question. Just ask, “Do you wish to pass on that question? I’ll come back to you later when you raise your hand to let me know you’d like to give an answer.”

CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

OECA website www.oeca.on.ca (in particular several documents in the Member’s section, under Contracts + Rights/Counselling, including “Relationships Appropriate and Professional”, “Positive Professional Parent Teacher Relationships” and “Be Wary, Be Wise”).

OECA Dufferin-Peel Occasional Teachers website
<http://www.dpeel-ot.org/> (in particular, the links under “Professionalism”)

Rules, especially those relating to behaviour, must be enforced in a consistent manner with consequences that are clear and specific. They should also be reasonable, logical, and proportionate to the student violation. Inconsistency in enforcing rules causes doubt and feelings of injustice among the students. They need to feel and believe they are being treated fairly.

Expect to be tested by some students who want to determine the boundaries of behaviour acceptable to you and your competency to respond. While such tests are usually minor infractions, (e.g., whispering, changing seats, etc.), they do challenge your classroom control. It is essential to react immediately, calmly and appropriately, but it is vital not to overreact.

Do not engage in verbal battles. Students love to argue, just to create a situation, to have power over you, or to gain attention/status with classmates. The student is not interested in your explanation or reasoning. You will not win in these situations. If a student persists, tell him/her you will be happy to discuss the matter at recess or after school and then return to your lesson. Deal with disruptive students privately. They will be easier to talk with away from their audience and consequences may be more readily accepted. Younger students can be called to the teacher's desk, but make sure they are not facing the class.

In a disruptive situation, focus on the one student causing the problem. Do not let other students become involved - they should mind their own business. Do not in any way acknowledge students who are interfering. If a student repeatedly interferes, take him/her aside and quietly tell him/her not to do so – do not accept any reasons given.

Do not interrupt your lesson to deal with an inattentive or mildly disruptive student. Rather, use proximity, touch the student's desk lightly, use a clear gesture or look, pause in the middle of speaking or use the student's name in your sentence: "... and in 1500's, Bob, the fur traders were known as..."

Sometimes, it is helpful to have students go back and repeat a particular behaviour but in the appropriate manner, e.g., have a student who comes into the classroom noisily go out into the hall and enter again quietly. If he/she repeats the inappropriate behaviour, privately ask the student, "Do you know the correct way to enter the classroom?" Most will acknowledge they do. Tell the student you expect them to make a good choice.

Generally speaking, administrators do not want students sent to them. Try if you can to handle everything in the classroom. You should, however, call for assistance with serious or persistent misbehaviour (e.g., students who harm or threaten to harm others, students who are out of control or severely disruptive.) If you send a student to the office, contact the office first. Some schools have a procedure that must be followed (for example, the completion of a Conduct Report). In all cases, make sure the administrator is aware of the reason(s) the student has been sent and what your expectation is regarding that student (e.g. whether the student should return to that class later in the day/period).

In really difficult situations, it may be risky to attempt to remove a student from a classroom. It may be better to contact the office for assistance with the violent student and move the rest of the class (e.g. go to the library) once help has arrived.

Document and keep a copy of any incidents that transpire during the day that seem even slightly out of the ordinary. Keep your notations to the facts and write down the essential W's: who, what, when, where, why, and witnesses.

Remind yourself that there are bad classes out there that resist all efforts to be managed. Don't worry about it! Instead, write the assignments on the board, hand out work, and assist those students who do want to work.

Checklist for Keeping Order in the Classroom

- Say what you mean and mean what you say. Do what you said you would do.
- Avoid identifying consequences which you will have difficulty enforcing. Don't back yourself into a corner. A student just may decide to test your words.
- Use a soft, low voice. Sometimes lowering the volume of your voice will do more to get the attention of students than raising your voice.
- Be calm – especially with older students. It is very empowering for them to push the teacher to a negative reaction – anger, annoyance, and exasperation. Say “No” with a smile. Keep your own “buttons” well hidden.
- Use humour. It may defuse an escalating situation. However, don't use sarcasm or embarrass, humiliate, or criticize students.
- Use “I” statements: “I need you to...” Express such statements quietly, standing near the student. The student may not comply as readily if he/she thinks others have heard; they may feel compelled to resist and entertain the crowd.
- Avoid using: “You must...” “You need to...” Use instead the word “understand”:
“I understand, but...”
- If you see that a student is upset, ask him or her why. Repeat the student's concern back to him/her with “I understand that...” or “I hear you saying...” or “I see you are upset about...” This may be calming and give you time to sort out the problem.
- DO NOT, IN ANY WAY, USE FORCE OR TOUCH A STUDENT AT ANY TIME.
- Do not punish the whole class for the behaviour of a few.
- Ignore mild behaviours if they don't bother you, but attend to them if they persist or become disruptive.
- Pay special attention to effecting smooth, orderly transitions. Many discipline problems occur during periods of change – from one lesson to another, a change of activity, a change of location, PA announcements, a knock on the door, etc.
- Divide and conquer – separate students who sit next to each other and collude to disrupt the classroom.
- Don't always feel the need to have the last word. Sometimes students need to save face among their classmates.
- Don't try to automatically solve disagreements between students. Try to teach them problem-solving skills: have each student write down what the problem is, who is involved, what happened and two ways to solve the problem.
- Enlist the help of a neighbouring teacher with very difficult students. It may be possible for such students to go to another classroom for the period.
- And remember: YOU ARE THE TEACHER – ACT AS IF THIS IS YOUR CLASS!

*Adapted from “Tried and True...What Works for You” Workshop presented by Connie Zoet.
Material used with permission.*

IMPORTANT NOTE

On February 1, 2010, new legislation took effect requiring school staff (including occasional teachers) who become aware that a student at a school within the board may have engaged in an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered, shall report the matter to the principal as soon as reasonably possible.

Each school board is required to have a policy and procedure in place for reporting incidents of this nature. The school board is responsible for providing in-service regarding the policy and procedure for reporting, including providing a list of activities where suspension or expulsion may be considered.

Contact your local OECTA representative to find out more about information and training that is available in this area.

TROUBLESHOOTING WITH ADULTS

With Colleagues

Your colleagues deserve the same respect as professionals that you do. At school, the relationship between colleagues should always be a professional one. Seek to resolve conflicts with colleagues personally, privately, and directly before seeking third-party assistance within the school or board. If you feel the obligation to make an adverse report, the Regulations made under 18(1)(b) the *Teaching Profession Act* require you to furnish your colleague with a “written statement of the report at the earliest possible time and not later than three days after making the report.”

WITH ADMINISTRATION

Be wary, be wise.
Be professional.
Be respectful.

With Parents

Often any situations arising with parents will be due to incidents that occurred under the regular teacher’s supervision. However there may be cases where an occasional teacher is on the second or third day of replacement and will have to speak to a parent regarding an incident that occurred under the occasional teacher’s supervision.

In these situations...

- Be respectful.
- Understand the parent’s perspective.
- Advocate for what is best for the student and all students in the class.
- Never lose your temper.
- If the discussion becomes heated, or potentially threatening, calmly call the meeting to an end with a promise to consider the concerns and that the teacher or administrator will get back to the parent. This is more effective prior to a confrontation rather than when emotions are high.

USEFUL PHRASES TO USE WITH PARENTS

“I would not discuss your child with another parent so I think you can understand that I can’t discuss another child’s situation with you.”

“I will relay your message to the principal/teacher.”

“I am here replacing the teacher for the day; please see the principal for assistance.”

WORKPLACE SAFETY

As a general rule:

- work safely
- be familiar with school board and school policies and procedures regarding Injuries and Illness, Lockdown/Fire Drills, Safe Arrival/Dismissal
- work in compliance with the law
- report all Health and Safety hazards
- use protective equipment/devices required by your employer
- supervise students at all times
- seek assistance from the office if circumstances make proper supervision of students difficult
- do not perform a workplace task likely to endanger yourself or your students
- do not put students in imminent danger

The school board should provide all occasional teachers with general policies and procedures regarding safety. Procedures specific to a school should be available at the office. Do not hesitate to ask if you do not receive this information.

ONTARIO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT (SECTION 28)

Duties of workers

28. (1) A worker shall,

- a) work in compliance with the provisions of this Act and the regulations;
- b) use or wear the equipment, protective devices or clothing that the worker's employer requires to be used or worn;
- c) report to his or her employer or supervisor the absence of or defect in any equipment or protective device of which the worker is aware and which may endanger himself, herself or another worker; and
- d) report to his or her employer or supervisor any contravention of this Act or the regulations or the existence of any hazard of which he or she knows.

Idem

(2) No worker shall,

- a) remove or make ineffective any protective device required by the regulations or by his or her employer, without providing an adequate temporary protective device and when the need for removing or making ineffective the protective device has ceased, the protective device shall be replaced immediately;
- b) use or operate any equipment, machine, device or thing or work in a manner that may endanger himself, herself or any other worker;
- c) or engage in any prank, contest, feat of strength, unnecessary running or rough and boisterous conduct.

All workers have the right to refuse unsafe work under Section 43 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. If, as an occasional teacher, you are assigned to a classroom or teaching area that is unsafe, move your students to a safe area and contact an administrator immediately.

The school/work site OECTA representative must be contacted as well. If the OECTA representative is not available, contact the local OECTA office. When an investigation into the unsafe working environment is being conducted, it is likely that you will be moved to another classroom or teaching area. Make an effort to continue teaching, where possible.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Should an injury occur to a student or to you, contact the office immediately. School administration must ensure that the appropriate Workplace Safety and Insurance Board forms are completed in the event that a teacher suffers a work-related injury. The local OECTA representative should be notified as soon as possible. An injured teacher should receive medical attention as soon as possible.

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Personal electronic devices have become commonplace, even with elementary students. There is a wide range of electronic devices that students and staff have access to.

These include:

- cell/mobile phones/Smart Phones
- personal audio/video devices (iPods/MP3 players)
- digital audio/video recorders
- laptop computers

Many school boards and schools have specific policies and procedures regarding the use of electronic devices on school property. Schools do not allow students to use cell phones or other electronic communications devices during class, and in many cases, such devices are not to be used at any time at school.

As an occasional teacher it is important that you be familiar with school board and individual school policies regarding individual electronic devices and the procedures in cases where students violate these policies. Any questions or concerns you have should be directed to school administration.

Personal electronic device policies may also outline expectations for staff with regard to the use of these devices. Abide by these policies.

A teacher should never allow students to use their own personal electronic devices. In addition, you should not use a personal electronic device during class time, except in the case of an emergency when the normal school communication system is not available.

During breaks (recess), lunch and preparation time, use of personal electronic devices should be in accordance with board/school policy. Conducting personal phone calls in staff workrooms while colleagues are attempting to get work done during preparation and planning time is poor etiquette. The school should have an area to make phone calls in the staff room.

FOOD IN THE CLASSROOM

Occasional teachers should be aware of board and school policies related to consuming food in the classroom. With the prevalence of food allergies, as well as for the sake of hygiene, there are rules regarding the times and places that food can be consumed in school as well as restrictions on the kinds of food that can be consumed.

Some students may have specific medical needs regarding food. Such information should be provided to the occasional teacher. If a student approaches you claiming they must eat due to a medical need and the absent teacher did not leave specific instructions, discretely contact the office, where the information is kept on file.

Generally students should not be allowed to go to the water fountain during class. The school may have specific rules regarding bringing bottled water into the classroom. Such information should be provided at the office. Refer any other food-related questions to the office.

Adapted from “Tried and True...What Works for You” Workshop presented by Connie Zoet. Material used with permission.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

When a teacher notifies the school or central dispatch system regarding an absence, special instructions should be given regarding non-standard events such as field trips, activity days, and play days. Unfortunately, sometimes these instructions do not get passed on to the occasional teacher. In the event that you arrive at a school to discover that a special event has been scheduled for the class(es) you are covering, it is particularly important to get as much information as possible regarding the event from the school office and/or other teaching staff involved in the event.

Many of the classroom management tips offered in this document also apply to situations beyond the walls of the school. Be sure to make your expectations for behaviour clear to students if you are in an on-site situation.

FIELD TRIPS AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Field Trips

Adequate supervision is the most important aspect of a field trip. As an occasional teacher, you should never be placed in the position of being the sole teacher supervisor on a field trip, regardless of the number of parent volunteers or the size of the class(es). Do not hesitate to ask an administrator to assist you if you have any concerns. Another staff member/administrator could be assigned to take on some of the responsibility, or if this is impossible, the event could be rescheduled.

Have a list of students under your care at all times and check it frequently to make sure that all students are accounted for, especially for activities that occur off of school property.

Make sure that you have access to a telephone or cell phone at all times in case of emergency. Have the school phone number and emergency contact information at hand for all students who are with you. Often during trips, students are split into smaller groups, so ensure that you know where students are at all times so that any emergency can be dealt with quickly.

The teacher in charge of the trip should also have copies of the permissions forms for the students attending the trip. Check that this information is available and complete, and that any health concerns have been attended to prior to departing on the trip. For example, if a student in the class you are assigned to has a severe allergy you should have an Epi-pen® readily available.

Make sure that you have a method of recording incidents outside of the classroom, such as jotting them in a small notebook.

Outdoor Activities on School Property

Part of the day plan may involve activities that take place outside but still on the school grounds. Keeping all students in sight and accounted for throughout any outdoor activity is crucial. Be aware of any potential safety hazards on or near the schoolyard. Once again, keep a class list on hand and a small notebook to make a record of any concerns that may arise. Account for all students at all times. Inform the school office any time you take the students outside during the instructional day.

On days when the weather is nice, students may suggest that they can complete part of their lessons outside. Often, the students will claim that their regular teacher always takes them outside on nice days. Unless clearly indicated in the lesson plan, an occasional teacher should avoid outside activities since they create supervision concerns. Inform the students that their regular teacher did not leave instructions to go outside. If conditions in the classroom become uncomfortable on warm weather days, consult the office with regard to options.

Assemblies and Mass

School assemblies generally occur on school property. It is important to briefly review your expectations regarding student conduct prior to escorting the students to the auditorium or gymnasium for an assembly.

Escort the students in your class to and from the assembly as a group. If students are left to proceed to an assembly without direct supervision, some may decide not to attend, especially at the secondary level.

Be sure that the students in the class you are responsible for sit together. Some schools may have a pre-determined seating plan for classes. In this case, adhere to this plan.

Sit with or close to the students in your class and monitor behaviour closely. It will make a bad impression on the other teachers and the administrators of the school if the class you are responsible for is unruly during an assembly.

Avoid confrontational situations at an assembly. Manage behaviour quickly and quietly without disturbing the assembly and follow up on any concerns after the assembly has concluded.

School masses may take the form of a liturgy done in conjunction with a school assembly, or off-site at a nearby church. During mass, students are expected to be on their best behaviour, as they would be during a school assembly, as described above.

Where the school mass is off-site, then the same guidelines that apply to field trips should be followed.

OTHER TEACHING DUTIES

Itinerant Teachers

At times, an occasional teacher may be assigned to replace an itinerant teacher. An itinerant teacher is a teacher who has duties at two or more schools, usually with the responsibility to deliver a specialized program. There is an expectation with such assignments that the occasional teacher will have access to transportation from one school to another. In most school boards, the dispatcher will clearly indicate whether an assignment is to replace an itinerant teacher.

Itinerant teachers are normally paid a travel allowance for use of their personal vehicle between schools, but not for the initial trip to the first school of the day or the trip home from the final school at the end of the day. Information regarding the travel allowance should be detailed in your collective agreement and should also be made available to you by the school board. Contact your local occasional teacher OECTA representative if you have any questions about travel allowances.

Preparation/Planning Time Teachers

An occasional teacher may be contacted to replace a preparation/planning time teacher in an elementary school. These teachers move from class to class within a school to allow the regular classroom teacher to receive his/her preparation and planning time.

Unfortunately, the dispatcher may only indicate that the assignment is to replace a preparation/planning teacher, and will not provide details regarding the nature of the program(s) to be delivered. The exception to this is if specific qualifications or circumstances need to be addressed, e.g. replacing a French teacher or a Physical Education teacher.

In some cases, a preparation/planning time teacher may also be an itinerant teacher.

REMINDERS FOR SPECIALIZED TEACHERS

When assigned the duties of an itinerant teacher or preparation/planning teacher, there are some important things to know prior to beginning the day:

Travel Time

An occasional teacher in either kind of assignment will be expected to move from class to class or school to school. The schedule of the teacher being replaced should allow for adequate time between teaching periods to get from room to room, or from one school to the other. Such time should be in addition to time you are entitled to for lunch.

The scheduled time between classes/schools will not allow for getting delayed or lost. Do your best to know your schedule and where you're expected to be at each period of the day. In the case of travelling from school to school, you should contact the school you are travelling to in the event that you are delayed and may arrive late.

An occasional teacher must understand that the classroom teachers are expecting the schedule to be strictly adhered to in order that they can receive their contractually guaranteed preparation and planning time.

Organization

In addition to staying on schedule, it is particularly important that you be highly organized when replacing an itinerant and/or preparation/planning time teacher.

Since such an assignment will require you to teach multiple classes and very likely multiple grades throughout the day, it is important to be as prepared as possible. The period of time prior to the school day will be critical for reviewing multiple lesson plans and for ensuring that any books and/or materials you may need are available.

Where materials and/or books are not available, you may need to rely on your “bag of tricks” to teach the class using materials appropriate to the various grade and subject area(s). Also consult other teachers in the school for assistance in locating suitable books and materials.

SUPERVISION, LUNCH DUTY AND BUS DUTY

Managing the day plan delivery

It is likely that supervision duties will be assigned for a portion of your daily teaching assignment. Practices vary from school board to school board, but generally an occasional teacher will not be assigned to early morning supervision on the first day he or she replaces a particular teacher. Often this duty will be rescheduled to another time of the day.

Be prompt for all assigned supervision duties. If the teacher who is supposed to take over from you does not arrive, do not leave your assigned supervision area without informing the office. Do not leave students unsupervised, even if your assigned supervision time has elapsed. Contact the office for support if this situation occurs.

If one or more other teachers or members of staff are assigned to supervision, introduce yourself and do not hesitate to ask a staff member any questions you may have about the supervision assignment (for example, whether there are any areas of the school yard that students of particular grades are not allowed to enter). It is impossible to know all the intricacies of a school, so while on supervision keep your eyes open, do your best, and direct any questions to other staff members who are also on duty.

If you are the only teacher supervising at any given time, be sure that you have a way of contacting the school office quickly if you need assistance.

In all cases of supervision, be visible and circulate throughout the supervision area. Be especially aware of hazardous areas and locations where students can be out of sight.

MANAGING THE DAY PLAN DELIVERY

FOLLOWING THE PLAN

The lesson or day plan is a tool to assist you in performing your occasional teaching assignment as effectively as possible. Use it as a guide. On the regular teacher's desk there may also be a folder/binder for occasional teachers. This typically includes helpful information on classroom routines, behaviour management strategies, teaching partners, and sometimes information on specific students.

Sample Lesson/Day Plans

Classroom Teacher's Name:	Date:
Room:	Grade:
Yard Duty:	
<p>School Schedule:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8:40 – School Begins 10:15 – 10:30 – Morning Recess 11:30 – 12:30 – Lunch (11:45 – Lunch Recess) 12:30 – Afternoon Classes Begin 2:00 – 2:15 – Afternoon Recess 3:10 – Bus Bell 3:15 – Dismissal Time</p>	
<p>Welcome to _____ Catholic School. I hope you have an enjoyable experience teaching at our school today. This package has been compiled to assist you during your time here. Regards, _____</p>	
<p>Special Needs Students in Class:</p> <p>1. I have one student with _____, his/her name is _____. He/she has an EA to assist him/her with his learning for most of the day.</p>	
<p>Educational Assistants:</p> <p>1. _____ - in the morning & rotary part of the afternoon. 2. _____ - the last period of the day</p>	
<p>Dismissal Procedure:</p> <p>1. At 3:10 – ONLY THE BUS STUDENTS are to be dismissed to get the bus. Those students are: _____.</p> <p>2. At 3:15 – all other students are dismissed (please keep an eye on _____, as he/she tends to leave before the dismissal bell rings if no one is watching.)</p>	
<p>Washroom Break Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one male and one female are allowed out of the classroom for bathroom and/or drinks at a time. There is a sign out book by the door for students to record the time they left and returned to class. • NO WASHROOM or DRINK breaks are allowed during instructional times. <p>(Staff washrooms are found in the staff lunch room & main office.)</p>	

<p>8:00 - 9:00</p>	<p>This class is a chatty bunch! We are working on less talking during class time. Please enforce the sections where independent work has been assigned and let me know who challenged you on this. Thanks!</p> <p>If individuals cause too many problems, please send them to the office. If the entire class gets out of hand, please buzz the office if need be.</p> <p>IF _____ cause(s) problems, send them to the office with their work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please have the hall monitor check the shoes/boots in the hallway after recess. • There is Mass at 1:00 p.m. It was not stated last week whether we are walking to St. _____ or whether Fr. _____ is coming to school. <p>BELL WORK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please write on the blackboard for students to begin reading "When Television Ate My Best Friend" on pages 168-171 of their Sightlines 7 textbook. <p>OPENING EXERCISES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance (please use sheet provided – the Leader of the Day will take the sheet to the office for you) • O'Canada (the Leader of the Day will hold the Canada flag for O'Canada at the front of the class). All other students are to stand with their hands behind their backs for the duration of the song. Please enforce this. • Please ask the hall monitor to check the shoes in the hallway after announcements. • While students are completing their Bell Work and listening to announcements, the teacher will place a sticker in each child's agenda ONLY if the parent has initialed it. If they did not get their Agenda signed, please write 'Pls. initial' in their agenda. <p>RELIGION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once announcements are over, the Leader of the Day will go over to the prayer table to begin Morning Prayers. All students are to turn their chairs to face the prayer table and have their hands free of distracting objects (pens, pencils, etc...) • Please light the candle on the prayer table. The lighter can be found in the top left drawer of the teacher's desk. Please ensure that you put the lighter away after you use it as there is a student who (if the opportunity presents itself) may take it to use for a dangerous purpose. • The Leader of the Day will lead the class in the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the sign of the cross • Morning Prayer • Intentions (any student who has their hand over their heart will be asked to state their intention(s) with the class for us to pray for.) • Glory Be To the Father • Sign of the Cross to end Prayers • Please have the Leader of the Day blow out the prayer candle.
<p>9:00 - 10:05</p>	<p>LANGUAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please read as a class, "When Television Ate My Best Friend" on pages 168-171 of their Sightlines 7 textbook. More of these textbooks can be found on the back ledge. • As a class, please answer question # 1 and 3 from page 171 on chart paper. Students do not have to write this information into their notebooks. (I will be continuing with this lesson tomorrow). Chart paper is under the counter where the construction paper is. • For homework, students are to think of five of their favourite television shows and why they watch them. (e.g., for entertainment, for educational value, to be informed about what's going on in the world, etc.). Please show students the attached sheet that they will be completing tomorrow that will depict their favourite television shows. • There are three math sheets for _____ to do with Mrs. _____ at this time attached.
<p>10:05 - 10:15</p>	<p>SNACK TIME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I normally read to students during snack time. The class book that I'm reading is called "FEATHERS" by Jacqueline Woodside. It's on my desk. If you cannot find it, please ask _____ or _____ to assist you. Please ask students to tell you a little about the story thus far. (It's a novel based around the 1970's)
<p>10:05 - 10:15</p>	<p>R E C E S S</p> <p>10:15 – 10:30 – Intermediate Field Duty</p>
<p>10:30 - 11:10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please have the hall monitor check the shoes in the hallway after recess. <p>FRENCH – Prep</p> <p>** Please ensure that _____ goes to the reading room at this time. He knows where to go, but sometimes needs a little help getting his shoes on and reading books out of his backpack. His reading books are always in a big zip lock bag.</p>

<p>11:10 - 11:30</p>	<p>LANGUAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to Mass this afternoon, students will do D.E.A.R at this time. • Students know that every day after lunch is D.E.A.R time for 20 uninterrupted minutes – please just let them know it's in the A.M. today. • Students SHOULD NOT BE FINISHING OTHER WORK at this time. • Please give _____ his basket of D.E.A.R books for him to select which book he wants to read. The basket is located on the second shelf of the filing cabinet. It is labeled, '_____ D.E.A.R Books' • The Leader of the Day will lead lunch time prayers. <p>** Please get the attendance sheet from my mailbox to take attendance in the P.M.</p>
<p>11:30 - 12:30</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">L U N C H</p>
<p>12:30 - 2:00</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please take attendance • There is Mass at 1:00 p.m. It was not stated last week whether we are walking to St. _____ or whether Fr. _____ is coming to school. • IF we are walking, please assign a “buddy” to _____. • IF we are having Mass in the gym, please do not allow _____ to sit near _____ . Please have him stay with _____. <p>Please write the following information on the homework board.</p> <p>HOMEWORK BOARD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math: Boxes for Math for Tuesday • Language: 5 of your favourite television shows and why • \$2.50 for art <p>STUDENTS CAN ENGAGE IN D.E.A.R UNTIL IT IS TIME TO BEIGN TO WALK TO THE CHURCH OR UNTIL WE ARE CALLED DOWN AS A CLASS FOR MASS.</p> <p>HISTORY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is History rotary today due to Mass being cancelled, please read and discuss pages 128-129 of their history textbook as a class.
<p>2:00 - 2:15</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">R E C E S S</p>
<p>2:15 - 2:40</p>	<p>2:15 – 2:40</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students usually have a Finishing Period on Mondays prior to heading down to Library. Since there was not much assigned today, please read together pages 45-49 of Believe in Me (Religion textbook) and briefly discuss.
<p>2:40 - 3:15</p>	<p>LIBRARY Book Exchange</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be dismissed from the library. They know that they are not to leave the class until it is completely clean. All scraps, pencils, papers, pencil shavings, erasers, etc ARE TO BE PICKED UP. • Initial each student's Agenda as they leave the class to pack up their bags. PLEASE MAKE SURE you initial _____, _____ agendas. • PLEASE MAKE SURE ALL OF THE CHAIRS ARE ON THE DESKS FOR THE CUSTODIAN. • Please state to students, prior to heading down to the library, that your expectation is that students will find a book and sit quietly in the library. • Computer time is optional << Depending how they have been for you today. <p>3:05 - Afternoon Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leader of the Day will lead the afternoon prayers. <p>BUS STUDENTS – Dismiss (_____)</p>
<p>3:15</p>	<p>CLASS DISMISSAL— All other students are to line up INSIDE THE LIBRARY until the dismissal bell rings.</p>
	<p>Please let me know how the day went:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Regards,</p> <p>_____</p>

SAMPLE SECONDARY LESSON PLAN

PERIOD 3BC

CHC 4—CANADIAN HISTORY—APPLIED

General Instructions:

1. Let Student C take down the attendance if no one comes for the attendance sheet.
2. **NO ONE** is to touch the computer in the classroom for any reason.
3. **NO ONE**, besides the person above, leaves the room for any reason. **This is imperative!** They are coming from lunch so there is no reason to be late or have to go to the washroom or go get a drink. **Please write down the names of anyone who is late, absent, or misbehaving.**
4. Students are permitted to:
 - a) listen to Walkman players
 - b) chat **while they work** - they are applied students

They will not sit quietly unless you wish to spend a lot of energy to make them. As long as they are working, they can talk. You will need to keep prompting a few to keep working.

Please write the name of the group that is best behaved and most productive in the space on the next page.

5. Take some time and please watch that they do the work accurately. Please make sure all scraps of paper end up in the recycling or garbage and not on the floor. The students are responsible for keeping their workspace clean. Make sure to tell them to put workboxes away properly and leave notebooks standing up properly.
6. Please leave these instructions with the notes at the end of the period with the information filled out at the bottom in this purple folder in the top drawer of my desk in Room 222.

Thank you for attention to these details. It is much appreciated and makes my job easier when I return.

Absent:

Late:

Misbehaving:

Group of the day:

Lesson Plan:

1. Please have students use the booklet provided in the folder to answer the questions already written on the board. Students will need to copy the questions on a fresh page in the Causes of the War section of their notebooks.
2. Please remind them not to write on the booklets. Collect the booklets back at the end of class.
3. As an encouragement, tell them that anyone who finishes the questions before the end of the period will receive a bonus star and if a whole group finishes, the group gets the check mark for the day. For those who finish the work, please make a note of it on the bottom of this page. Likewise, please note anyone not working or misbehaving.
4. Those who finish, depending on how much time is left, give them a copy of the word search provided in this folder.

Acknowledgement: Gillian Vivona, Toronto Secondary Unit

SEATING PLAN TEMPLATE

FRONT OF THE CLASSROOM

Student 1	Student 7		Student 13	Student 19
Student 2	Student 8		Student 14	Student 20
Student 3	Student 9		Student 15	Student 21
Student 4	Student 10		Student 16	Student 22
Student 5	Student 11		Student 17	Student 23
Student 6	Student 12		Student 18	Student 24
	Student 25	Student 26	Student 27	

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Photocopying

Many school photocopiers require a code to use the photocopier. If you are not provided with a code, speak to the office secretary.

Do not leave photocopying you need for the day to the last minute. Photocopier line-ups and technical difficulties are frequent occurrences that may make you late for the start of your class.

Distributing/Collecting Resource Materials

Many teachers take the distribution of materials for granted. A photocopied worksheet can be easily replaced if a student misplaces it; however, textbooks and other materials can just as easily go missing. A student might claim that he/she never received the materials in the first place.

At the start of the day, make some copies of the attendance list(s) for the class(es) you are assigned to. These copies may then be used to track materials distributed to students, especially materials that are not easily replaced such as textbooks.

Classroom materials such as textbooks, reusable workbooks, calculators, rulers, etc. should be numbered. Write down an identification number for the item given out next to the name of the student who receives it. Then place a check mark next to the name of the student when that material is returned. Although this process takes a little longer to complete, it saves considerable time and stress when the students have been dismissed and you realize you are one textbook short.

This process is also very effective when students are handing in work. It is not uncommon for students to claim that they handed in work and the “occasional teacher lost it” when in fact the work was never handed in to begin with. Placing a check next to the name of the student when work is handed in provides a ready report for the absent teacher regarding who handed in work and who did not. Take adequate time to distribute and collect materials and never leave it for dismissal time.

Audio–visual Equipment

When the teacher’s lesson plan calls for the use of specialized equipment such as an overhead projector or a VCR/DVD player, it is important to make sure that the equipment is available and that you will be able to get the equipment into the classroom.

In addition, occasional teachers have to be particularly careful of safety considerations. Sending students to move an audio-visual cart from one room to another may result in an accident or injury, especially when younger students are involved. Planning ahead will ensure that the equipment can be moved by an adult or under adult supervision without leaving the class unattended.

An occasional teacher should be generally familiar with the operation of the most common audio-visual equipment. The absent teacher may have left the name of a helpful student in the class, or perhaps a neighbouring teacher, who may help you operate the equipment. If you have any concerns regarding operating audio-visual equipment safely, speak to an administrator prior to class for assistance.

SPECIALIZED TEACHING AREAS

As an occasional teacher, there are several specialized areas that you may be expected to teach in. In some cases, especially at a secondary school, you will be notified about these assignments. However, in other cases, you may not know that you have been assigned to a specialized classroom area until you walk into the door.

Specialized school areas may include:

- Library
- Science Lab
- Family Studies Lab (kitchen, sewing room, etc.)
- Technical Room (containing shop/industrial equipment)
- Computer Lab
- Arts Room (music, visual arts, drama room, dance studio)
- Gymnasium

As a general rule, students should not be permitted to use any specialized equipment or materials. In many of these cases, there are serious safety issues, and even if an occasional teacher holds qualifications in the specific subject area for a specialized room, unfamiliarity poses an additional risk to the teacher and to students.

If you are asked to teach in an area that you feel is unsafe because of unsecured equipment or any other concerns, you should contact the office and ask to be assigned to another room if possible. The room should also be conducive to the nature of the work assigned. For example, if students are left with instructions to work out of a textbook where the only areas for students to sit and work are near dangerous equipment, you, as the occasional teacher, should request an appropriate room for the students to complete their work.

Rooms such as computer labs can also be problematic because of security issues. Students should be restricted from using any school computer unless there are specific instructions regarding security protocols. They may have their own individual passwords to access computers in a computer lab, and many school computers block a lot of inappropriate sites. However, students are extremely adept at getting around computer security protocols and should be monitored closely.

Only allow students computer access under the express instructions of the absent teacher, and only for machines designated for student use. Even in such cases, student use of computers should be restricted to computers that require an individual student password.

Do not grant students access to staff-designated computers. Any inappropriate use must be addressed immediately and followed up in accordance with school policy. If computer use is part of the lesson plan left by the absent teacher, an occasional teacher may wish to speak to an administrator to clarify what actions should be taken if a student is using a computer inappropriately.

Assessment and Evaluation

If an assignment or test is to be handed in, do not arbitrarily give students extensions. It is important to stick to the time frame indicated in the daily lesson plan. Collect what you can and leave a note for the teacher regarding who did not hand in the assignment.

If you are provided with a marking scheme, use it, and mark work done during your assignment where time permits. Make sure that any work handed in is left in a secure location for the absent teacher (preferably his/her mail box).

Preparation/Planning Time

The absent teacher may have left instructions regarding teaching-related duties (photocopying, returning library books) to be completed during your prep time. Always remain on site during this time in case the administration wishes to contact you.

Some occasional teacher collective agreements allow for some limited teaching duties to be assigned during the absent teacher's planning and preparation time. Duties could include covering for another absent teacher (often called an "on-call"), and providing remedial support to students. Contact your local OECTA representative if you have any questions about duties assigned during scheduled preparation/planning time.

It is important to be professional: Always return on time once your planning time is over as the prep time teacher has to move on to another class.

At the End of the Period/Day

Leave each room in which you teach in the condition you found it and return all supplies to their original location. If it has not been noted in the day plan, ask a neighbouring teacher or the students themselves regarding end of day clean up (chairs stacked or on desks, windows closed, etc.).

Leave sufficient time for students to collect all their materials and possessions. Primary students, in particular, need additional time to get winter gear on. (Student helpers may be assigned to assist in this area.) Be aware of differing dismissal times for bussed students, those on trips, or those involved in extracurricular activities.

After writing a note for the absent teacher (see next section), take a final look around the classroom to make sure that everything is in order and to lock up if you've been given a key. Check in with the office before leaving the school to drop off the key and to follow up on any issues that may have arisen during the day, or to at least say "good night."

COMMUNICATING WITH THE ABSENT TEACHER

LEAVE A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF YOUR DAY

It is a good practice to leave a note for the absent teacher at the end of the day. This ensures that any concerns that may have arisen during his/her absence may be addressed upon return. It also demonstrates to the students that the presence of an occasional teacher is not “a day off”. In your letter, be honest but tactful and be specific about your successes and challenges.

Record/collect the following for the regular teacher:

- names of absent students
- names of visitors
- information on important parental contact
- money collected and accounted for
- notes from home
- names of helpful students
- names of students whose work was incomplete, a good effort, or required extra help
- names of staff members who were of particular assistance (e.g. educational assistant, custodian, school representative, bus driver etc.)
- supervision duties assigned and covered
- concerns about behaviour, illness or injury (be sure to ensure privacy regarding students)
- brief comments on each subject or class taught

SAMPLE LETTERS AND COMMENTS

Specific forms designed for feedback often appear as part of a lesson plan package from the absent teacher. If these are unavailable, either place your comments on the lesson plan with stick-it notes or create a separate letter. (See examples that follow.)

Date:

While you were away...

Dear:

Thank you for:

The children were:

Absent students:

Helpful students:

Who:

For What:

Important Notes:

Teacher Name: _____

ID #: _____

Date: January 27, 2009

While you were away...

Dear: Mrs. O'Sullivan,

Thank you for:

- the opportunity to cover your class today
- your detailed lesson plans
- up to date seating plan

The children were:

- on task and completed all assignments
- chatty but a great bunch

Absent students:

Sean, Alice, and Aisha

Helpful students:

Who:

For What:

Susan and Peter

- helpful in getting materials

Important Notes:

- We were not able to complete the language lesson as there was an assembly called at that time.
- We could not do the art with water colour as the paints were being used by another teacher.

Teacher Name: Jane McMann

ID #: 123654

September 19, 2010

- attendance - 2 absences (Jorge S. and Chantal B.)
- milk \$ collected and recorded - left in office for safe keeping
- speech instructor saw Lina W. and Bryan D.
- Raven L. picked up by grandmother at 2:30

Dear Mr. Jones,

Thank you for the detailed day plan, readily available name tags, and up- to-date class list. Bob W. and Robin M. were very helpful today. The educational assistant, Ms. Brown, was a great help and the day went smoothly.

The journals were marked as well as the math drill page. Bus supervision was fine and on time. Cathy T. was not picked up at dismissal. The office was notified, and she waited there for her family.

The class was a little chatty but for the most part well behaved and all assignments were covered. The morning was shortened a bit due to lengthy announcements.

I enjoyed my time in your classroom would be happy to return.

Yours truly,
B. McQueen

ID # 23456

Alternative Sample Feedback Note

Mathematics — lesson was straight forward – everyone understood and finished in time given

Language — marked spelling and returned for student correction – two students, Mary O. and Jason A. did not finish journal writing – Luke B. needed additional help

Phys. Ed. — followed outline left – met most safety and changing routines – a few students required reminders about changing promptly

Music — class was postponed to another day – continued to work on day's assignment – early finishers given a choice of two other activities

SCENARIOS FROM THE FIELD

Occasional teachers face a wide range of challenges in the classroom. Having an appropriate reaction to an unexpected situation can make any situation more manageable and reduce the potential for problems to occur later on. Since a daily occasional teacher is often not present on the day following a situation that arises, timely responses are necessary.

Although it is impossible to be prepared for every situation that may occur in the role of an occasional teacher, spending some time thinking about different scenarios and the appropriate response will reduce the chance of a “knee-jerk” reaction that may create more of a problem than the original situation.

In all situations that may result in discipline or dismissal, make contact with the local OECTA representative as soon as possible.

SCENARIO 1: SUDDEN CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENT

An occasional teacher arrives at a school to replace a Grade 3 teacher. Upon arrival, she is told that she is now going to be replacing the preparation/planning time teacher in the junior/intermediate division (Grades 4-8).

Questions:

1. Is a school allowed to change a daily occasional teacher’s assignment at the last minute?
2. Should the occasional teacher refuse to take the new assignment?

Discussion:

An occasional teacher should expect to carry out the duties of the teacher he or she is called by the dispatch system to replace. In rare cases, an assignment may be switched under particular circumstances. For example, a teacher qualified in French who was called in to cover a Grade 3 class may be asked to switch schedules with an unqualified occasional teacher called in to replace a French teacher.

Procedures and rights regarding last-minute changes in assignment should be outlined in the occasional teacher’s collective agreement. Such changes may only be made if the occasional teacher agrees.

In the absence of language in the collective agreement, an occasional teacher should not be expected to take an assignment for which he or she is not qualified or willing to teach. However, this also means, conversely, that an occasional teacher should be expected to fill an assignment he or she is qualified to teach, if the collective agreement allows such a last-minute change to occur.

Every occasional teacher fills out an availability profile indicating what grades and subjects he/she is qualified and willing to teach. These availability forms may be amended and updated by the occasional teacher according to specific collective agreement language. An occasional teacher is advised not to indicate willingness to teach outside of his/her qualifications area or grade/subject specialty. If there are grades/subject areas within an occasional teacher's qualification area(s) that he/she is uncomfortable teaching, the occasional teacher should check his/her collective agreement to exclude the grade/subject area(s) from his/her availability profile.

The local occasional teacher bargaining unit representative will be able to provide an occasional teacher with more information in this regard.

SCENARIO 2: DEALING WITH A CONFRONTATIONAL STUDENT

An occasional teacher has been assigned to deliver the music teacher's classes. The job includes six classes of vocal music in Grades 2-8. The classroom teacher has advised her that the first class, Grade 8's, can be quite a "handful". During the 40-minute period, these students are generally unruly and uncooperative regarding assigned work. One male student is out of his seat and disrupting others. Upon the third request to return to his seat, this student shouts out that the teacher is racist.

Questions:

1. How is the teacher to respond to this allegation?
2. Is this a comment that can be ignored?
3. Can this situation be defused in some manner?

Discussion:

The occasional teacher should not try not to engage in a debate with the student over this allegation. In the short term, she should try to de-escalate the confrontation without overlooking the student's behaviour. If the student continues to be belligerent, the office must be contacted for assistance. In the event that the student does calm down, the occasional teacher should ask him to speak with her during the next school break (recess, lunch or immediately after school). It may be appropriate for the teacher to have the discussion with the student in the main office. If this discussion does take place in the classroom, she should be sure to leave the classroom door open and to speak to the student in plain sight of those passing by the classroom.

The occasional teacher should also make note of the incident or complete an incident report that may be available at the school. In addition, she should keep her own notes of the facts of the incident.

In the event that a more formal investigation is launched, the occasional teacher should consult with her local OECTA Unit President regarding the situation.

SCENARIO 3: TWO HALF-DAY ASSIGNMENTS

An occasional teacher is contacted by the dispatcher and accepts a daily occasional teaching assignment for the morning only at an elementary school. A few minutes later, the dispatcher contacts him again with an afternoon assignment to replace a different teacher at another elementary school on the other side of town. Work has been slow this past month, and this is an opportunity for him to get a full day's work.

Questions:

1. Should this teacher accept the second job?
2. What considerations must be made prior to making his decision?
3. His collective agreement states that when replacing a teacher who travels between two schools that adequate travel time must be granted in addition to a 40-minute uninterrupted lunch. Does this provision apply here?

Discussion:

Generally, provisions for the payment of a travel allowance only apply to an occasional teacher in the cases where the teacher being replaced qualifies for a travel allowance. In some cases, where the school board dispatcher makes a full-day assignment where the occasional teacher is required to travel, adequate time to travel and a travel allowance must be provided.

However, in many cases where an occasional teacher accepts two half-day assignments independent of each other, travel allowance and adequate time to travel is not provided.

In this case study, each half-day assignment must be treated as a separate assignment, and the second assignment must only be accepted if it is possible to make it from one school to the other in the time available.

Some collective agreements have language regarding the assignment of lunch supervision to occasional teachers on a half-day assignment. If there is an expectation that the occasional teacher covers lunch supervision for 20 minutes immediately following the morning assignment and is then expected to cover 20 minutes of yard supervision prior to the start of the afternoon assignment at the other school, then there will only be 20 minutes to travel from one school to the other where the lunch period is one hour long. However, if no duties can be assigned during the lunch period, a teacher will have the entire one hour lunch period to travel from one school to the other.

Other factors such as traffic, road conditions, and weather must be taken into account. Unexpected delays may also occur. In all cases, an occasional teacher must be realistic when considering two separate half-day assignments at two different schools.

Occasional teachers are expected, under normal circumstances, to be present in the school fifteen minutes prior to the start of morning classes and five minutes prior to the start of afternoon classes, where applicable. Being late simply because you did not give yourself adequate time to travel from one school to the other will not be viewed favourably by school administrators and teacher colleagues.

SCENARIO 4: PESTICIDE USE

An occasional teacher is called to replace a teacher on a warm Monday in September. He arrives at the school prior to the start of the day to get settled in and to review the day's lesson plans left by the absent teacher. He discovers that his class is in a portable. On the folder he finds in the absent teacher's mailbox is a sticky note with a handwritten note saying "watch out for wasps – office notified."

Warily, the occasional teacher walks out to the portable and enters. Although he does not see wasps around the portable, he is greeted by the acrid smell of a chemical that immediately makes his eyes water. Students, seeing the portable opening, begin to congregate outside and the morning bell promptly rings.

Questions:

1. What should the occasional teacher's immediate action be?
2. If the principal tells the occasional teacher to just open the windows and that the pesticide used is not harmful, should he return to the portable to teach?
3. Is this a valid situation to refuse work under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*?

Discussion:

The occasional teacher should not allow the students to enter the class and should immediately contact the office. The students should be moved to another classroom, such as the library, or another teaching area that is safe and free of pesticides.

The school OECTA representative should be notified immediately while the principal or vice principal investigates. In addition to bringing the principal's attention to the smell of the pesticide, the occasional teacher should also inform the principal about his own reaction when he entered the portable, as this could suggest a sensitivity to the chemicals used.

The school OECTA representative should contact the unit president or health and safety officer regarding the situation. This is a problem for all teachers at the work site. It is within the teacher's rights to request another room or teaching area free of the smell of pesticide. If such a room is not available, and the occasional teacher is instructed to bring the students into the classroom, he should inform the principal that the room is not a safe workplace. He should also request reassignment and the opportunity to inform the local occasional teacher bargaining unit representative and/or the Unit president. This is called a Work Refusal under section 43 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

School boards have policies and procedures regarding work refusals that have been developed by the joint board/union health and safety committee. OECTA will provide advice and support in this regard.

The occasional teacher is expected to remain at the school site pending the results of the investigation, which should be conducted jointly by the school administration and the local OECTA representative.

Under no circumstances should a teacher be coerced or threatened to expose himself/herself to an unsafe environment. A teacher should contact OECTA immediately should this occur.

The section of the related to Work Refusal does not apply to a teacher where the circumstances are such that the life, health or safety of a pupil is in imminent jeopardy.

SCENARIO 5: INADEQUATE SUPERVISION ON A FIELD TRIP

An occasional teacher accepts an assignment from the dispatcher that will require her to replace a teacher who is supposed to be going on a field trip with a Grade 1 class to a local farm. Upon arrival at the school, she discovers that she is the only teacher going on the trip with two educational assistants and two parent volunteers.

Questions:

1. Is this adequate supervision for Grade 1 students on a field trip?
2. What should the occasional teacher's actions be?
3. Can the occasional teacher cancel the field trip?

Discussion:

It is the responsibility of school administration to ensure that students are adequately supervised. In this case, the principal may have approved the field trip without anticipating the possibility that the sole teacher supervisor might be absent. An occasional teacher who is unfamiliar with the students should not risk taking on this responsibility. In addition, she should not accept an assignment that involves supervising a field trip that extends outside of the school day.

An occasional teacher does NOT have the authority to cancel a field trip.

In this situation, the occasional teacher should speak to the principal immediately. She can ask to be reassigned at the school in order for another teacher from the regular teaching staff to accompany the students. Alternatively, the principal (or vice-principal) may accompany the students on the field trip.

The principal must ensure that all the appropriate permission and health forms have been completed by all students who will be attending the field trip and that the information is available for the teachers on the trip. The principal should also provide the teacher/supervisors on the trip with the appropriate emergency contact numbers to be used should an incident occur.

Under no circumstances should an occasional teacher be coerced or threatened to take on the responsibility of accepting an assignment that could potentially put students at risk. A teacher should contact OECTA immediately should this occur.

SCENARIO 6: AN ADVERSE REPORT

An occasional teacher receives a phone call from a principal regarding an assignment four days earlier when he had replaced a secondary school math teacher. The principal informs him that she will be drafting a “letter of concern” to be placed in his personnel file. This letter was prompted by a report from the absent teacher that none of the lessons plans left had been carried out and that students had reported that he was using his cell phone and reading the newspaper during class time.

In reality, the instructions left by the absent teacher were simply page numbers and questions to be completed with no indication as to whether the work was to be handed in. The students in all the classes had been quite unruly and disruptive; however, the occasional teacher had managed to at least get them to stay in their seats and work relatively quietly in each of the three classes. He did, however, have to ask some students to change seats who continued to talk while working.

Also, although the occasional teacher did carry a newspaper into class with him, he had placed it on top of his briefcase on the desk, and did not read it during class time. At no time did he use a cell phone, though he did have to request that one student put away her cell phone two or three times.

Questions:

1. What steps should the occasional teacher take regarding the disciplinary letter?
2. The occasional teacher feels that one of the real problems regarding that day was the fact that the absent teacher left very vague instructions. Should he inform the principal of this?
3. What could be done in the future to avoid this sort of situation?

Discussion:

As an occasional teacher, it is important to be engaged and teach students to the best of one’s ability. The absent teacher may have left bare-bones instructions for a legitimate reason, possibly due to an unplanned absence. The role of an occasional teacher is to teach students, not simply supervise them as they do seatwork left for them. If asked to teach subjects or topics outside of one’s subject area, it is the responsibility of the occasional teacher to problem solve and to enhance his/her time with the students with activities from a personal “bag of tricks”. This will help add variety and interest to the class period. It is very rare when students are able to remain seated doing work for lengthy periods of time without needing a change in pace.

Nonetheless, an absent teacher has a professional obligation (member to fellow member) to inform an occasional teacher in writing within three days if an adverse report is being made about him or her, as long as the allegation is not related to sexual misconduct.

Likewise, written notification must be provided regarding any adverse report that an occasional teacher makes against any colleague (teacher or occasional teacher). Such notification must also be delivered not later than three days after making the report.

Considering that the principal has already decided to proceed with a disciplinary letter without any investigation to determine whether or not the allegations are true, the occasional teacher should not engage in debate with the principal other than to state that the allegations were not true, and that he will respond to the principal after consulting OECTA.

Duties of a Member to Fellow Members

18. (1) A member shall,

- (a) avoid interfering in an unwarranted manner between other teachers and pupils;**
- (b) on making an adverse report on another member, furnish him with a written statement of the report at the earliest possible time and not later than three days after making the report;**
- (c) notwithstanding section 18 (1) (b), a member who makes an adverse report about another member respecting suspected sexual abuse of a student by that other member need not provide him or her with a copy of the report or with any information about the report. (WB02)**

(From 2: Regulation Made Under the Teaching Profession Act, 18 (1) (b) and (c) in the document We the Teachers of Ontario on the Ontario Teachers' Federation website <http://www.otffeo.on.ca>)

In this case, the teacher should contact the local OECTA occasional teacher bargaining unit representative regarding the disciplinary letter. His representative will assist him in trying to remove the letter from his file and to respond to the adverse report that was made about him without written notification.

In the future, it would be appropriate for this teacher to keep a copy of the instructions left for him by the teacher he is replacing, and to document exactly what was done during class in a brief report back to an absent teacher. In addition, if it is unclear whether assigned work is to be handed in or not, it is best to make the assumption that it is, since that will provide greater motivation for students to work more diligently to complete the work assigned.

SCENARIO 7: THE CLEAN-UP CREW

When assigned to replace a grade 6 teacher, an occasional teacher realizes that the last period of the day is art and the planned activity is painting. Concerned about time, the occasional teacher informs the class that painting will stop 15 minutes before the end of the day in order to ensure that everything is cleaned up for dismissal. A group of eager students in the class informs the occasional teacher that they're the "Clean-Up Crew" and it's their job to stay after class to clean up after an art lesson. Unfortunately, the occasional teacher cannot remain at the school for more than a few minutes after dismissal due to a prior commitment.

Questions:

1. Does the occasional teacher have to stay after dismissal to supervise the Clean-Up Crew?
2. Can the Clean-Up Crew be left to clean up the classroom without supervision?
3. What is the recommended course of action?

Discussion:

There is no requirement for teachers to remain in class or at school once students have been safely dismissed except in the case where supervision has been assigned in accordance with the collective agreement. Similarly, an absent teacher cannot expect an occasional teacher to remain after dismissal to oversee an extra-curricular activity or to carry out duties that would normally be considered voluntary.

Similarly, the occasional teacher should ensure that students are safely dismissed from the classroom and do not remain behind, even with the good intentions of cleaning up. A teacher should keep student safety in mind while under his/her supervision.

Therefore, it is within the rights of the occasional teacher to end the art lesson early to provide adequate time for clean up. The Clean-Up Crew can be given the responsibility to ensure the clean up is completed prior to dismissal.

The occasional teacher could write a complimentary note to the absent teacher commending the Clean-Up Crew for their community spirit. Copies of the note could be made for each of the students in the Clean-Up Crew.

Important Note: Some parents are sensitive to notes and letters going home to other parents with their child's full name on them. If writing a note to parents with several students' names on it, use only their first name and last initial, if concerned.

SCENARIO 8: EXTRA DUTY

Upon arrival at school in the morning of the first day of an assignment, an occasional teacher finds out that the supervision the absent teacher would normally be assigned prior to the start of the day has been switched to lunch supervision to allow the occasional teacher to prepare for the day. This is in accordance with the occasional teacher collective agreement.

When the occasional teacher reports for lunch duty, he is told to supervise the hallways for the first ten minutes of the one hour lunch period and then the yard for a second ten minutes. He is then to proceed to his forty minute uninterrupted lunch prior to the start of afternoon classes.

At the end of the yard supervision portion of his duty, the occasional teacher notices the other teacher on yard duty entering the school. However no other teachers are coming out to the yard as replacements for either himself or the other teacher.

Questions:

1. Can the occasional teacher just enter the school and have his lunch, trusting that the supervisors for the remainder of the lunch period will report to the yard for duty?
2. Should the occasional teacher remain alone in the yard until a replacement shows up?
3. Should the occasional teacher go to the school office to report that no one is on yard duty?

Discussion:

Most occasional teacher collective agreements ensure a forty minute uninterrupted lunch, and that is a right that should be respected by administrators and school staff. However, unexpected circumstances occur from time-to-time that place teachers in a situation where they must ensure their contractual right is respected but at the same time guarantee that students are not left unsupervised in the yard.

It is the principal's duty to ensure students are safely supervised during the school day. The office must be contacted immediately and informed that the occasional teacher's duty has ended and that no one has reported to replace him. If an administrator requires the occasional teacher to wait for a replacement, the occasional teacher must inform the principal that he has not had his lunch period yet. The principal is obliged to ensure that the teacher receives a full forty minute uninterrupted lunch even if the principal must cover the occasional teacher's class for the extra times spent in the yard.

If the students are left unattended in the yard and there is an injury, the occasional teacher runs the risk of being accused of negligence in his duty of care for the students. Although the legal obligation falls to the principal to ensure students are safely supervised, it is always better to be safe and inform the office immediately rather than just leave the yard unsupervised.

ON-THE-JOB RESOURCES

If the principal denies an occasional teacher a forty minute uninterrupted lunch, the occasional teacher should contact his or her local OECTA occasional teacher representative.

ICEBREAKERS AND OTHER “BRAIN BENDERS” (various grades)

Idle time is fertile ground for classroom management problems. In some cases, there is the need to engage students with something a little bit different at the beginning of class. At other times, the lesson plan(s) left by the absent teacher may be completed with time to spare.

Here are some sample activities that you can include in your “Bag of Tricks” for use when you have time in class that needs filling.

A SECRET IDENTITY

This can be conducted as a whole class or small group activity. One or more students receive a post-it (or paper with tape) on which the name of a celebrity (will vary according to the grade level of the students) is recorded (e.g. J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter, Santa Claus, Jesus, Will Smith, Sidney Crosby, Miley Cyrus, Anne Frank) and affixed to his/her back or forehead. The student is to ask his/her peers questions which can be answered with “yes” or “no” in an attempt to identify the celebrity.

FUN WITH PALINDROMES

A palindrome is a word or phrase which can be read both backwards and forwards (e.g., “straw” read backwards is “warts”) After sharing a few palindromes with students and informing them of the term used to label this type of word or phrase, challenge small groups of students to come up with their own list. (Other examples of palindromes are rats/star, pets/step, leg/gel, “Do geese see God?”)

ACROSTIC POETRY

Students can create an acrostic poem using a variety of words, including their name, school, an activity they enjoy, a season, etc. The letters of the selected word that are written vertically down a page can be designed artistically so they stand out while the letters or words written horizontally across the page can be in simple or plain script.

NEWSPAPER POEMS

Students select and read an article in a newspaper. They then respond to the article through a poem, using various letters and words clipped from anywhere in the newspaper. The arrangement and choice of letters and words enhances and clarifies for the reader the students' reaction to the article.

CREATING A SHAPE POEM

Students write a poem that, when arranged on a page, physically takes the shape of the topic it describes. For example, a concrete poem about a ball would have its words written in such a way that they form the outline of the ball, or a poem about Egypt might be shaped like a pyramid.

PATTERNING WITH THE IMPORTANT BOOK BY MARGARET WISE BROWN

Using the pattern in this picture book, students create their own version of *The Important Book* based on the people/places/things they find important. They can illustrate their work if time allows.

The teacher can begin by reading this picture book to the children to help them understand the pattern of the verses. As a class, they can then create a teacher-directed version together before writing a verse on their own. For example, if they choose to write about a person, the teacher might say, "the important thing about Maureen is that she is a good friend. She has red hair and she is tall. She loves to sing and dance. But the important thing about Maureen is that she is a good friend." Students should be reminded that their first and final sentence are repeated and should be the most important point they want to make. They should then think of three or four additional sentences to add in between.

WORDS WITHIN WORDS

Supply students with a word or phrase, such as the name of their school, the name of a holiday, the name of a city or country etc. Then challenge them to record as many words as they can, using only the letters within the word or phrase.

SILLY SIMILES

Provide students with examples of a particular figure of speech, such as a simile, and have students record and illustrate their own (e.g. “as big as a whale”, “they ate like pigs”, “more stubborn than a mule”).

CAN YOU GUESS IT?

The teacher first models the process by selecting a number he/she keeps secret from the class. Individual students ask questions that require a “yes” or “no” response in an attempt to discover the secret number (e.g. “Is the number an odd number?”, “Is the number greater than 1000?”, “Is the number a prime number?”) Students, either individually or in small groups, can then select a secret number for others to identify. The same activity can be modified for use with geometric solids, with questions based on the number of edges, faces, types of angles, etc.

MY IDEAL ROOM

Students design, map out on graph paper, illustrate, and label their concept of an ideal room in their home (e.g. bedroom, home theatre, games room). Mapping skills can be incorporated into the activity by requiring the students to record the coordinates/location of various items in the room. The room could also be drawn to scale with a key explaining the measurement ratio.

A CHARACTER SUITCASE

Students select a favourite character from a book (could be from a book you decide to read to them) or a movie and make a packing list of items that this character might take on a trip. Students can also cut out pictures of these items from magazines or draw their own illustrations. Alternatively, students could make a list for a suitcase of their own, based on the concept that they would be living away from home for one year (or alternate amount of time) on a deserted island.

HOMONYMS WORD SEARCH (Junior/Intermediate)

Name: _____

Use the word list below to find each of these homonyms in the Word Search. Afterwards, write each homonym pair (s) beside it. When you're done, find the Secret Word by writing the unused letters from left to right, from the bottom to the top of the puzzle.

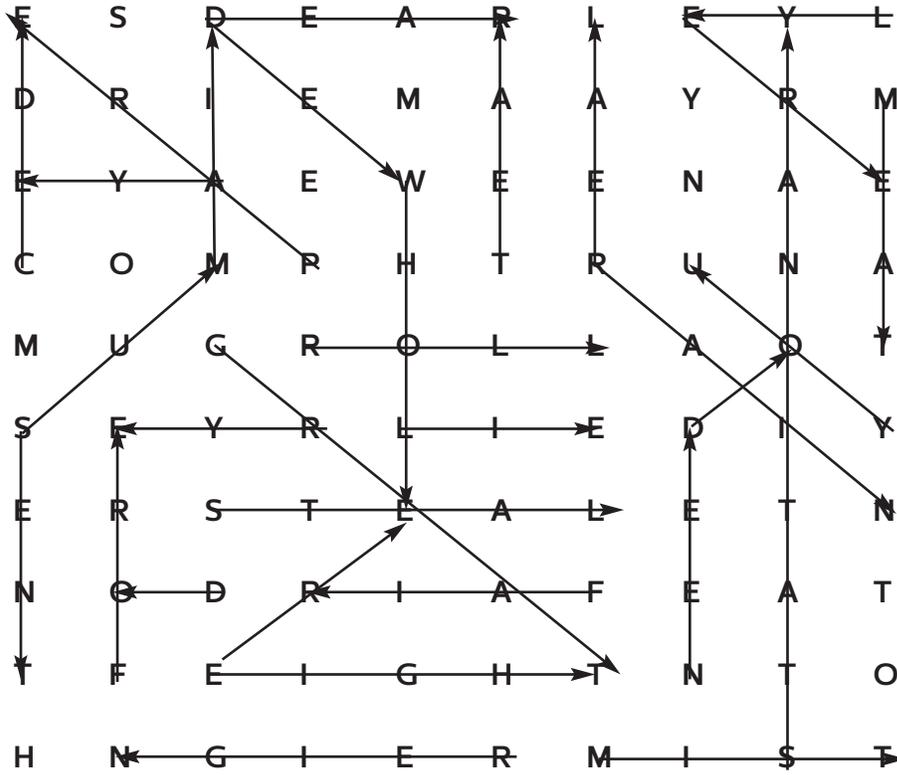
E	S	D	E	A	R	L	E	Y	L
D	R	I	E	M	A	A	Y	R	M
E	Y	A	E	W	E	E	N	A	E
C	O	M	P	H	T	R	U	N	A
M	U	G	R	O	L	L	A	O	T
S	E	Y	R	L	I	E	D	I	Y
E	R	S	T	E	A	L	E	T	N
N	O	D	R	I	A	F	E	A	T
T	F	E	I	G	H	T	N	T	O
H	N	G	I	E	R	M	I	S	T

SECRET WORD: _____

- | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|-----------|-------|----------------|-------|
| 1. AYE | _____ | 12. FORE | _____ | 23. REIGN | _____ |
| 2. CEDE | _____ | 13. GREAT | _____ | 24. ROLL | _____ |
| 3. DEAR | _____ | 14. LIE | _____ | 25. RYE | _____ |
| 4. DEW | _____ | 15. LYE | _____ | 26. SENT | _____ |
| 5. DO | _____ | 16. MAID | _____ | 27. STATIONARY | _____ |
| 6. DO | _____ | 17. MEAT | _____ | 28. STEAL | _____ |
| 7. EIGHT | _____ | 18. MIST | _____ | 29. SUM | _____ |
| 8. ERE | _____ | 19. NEED | _____ | 30. TEAR | _____ |
| 9. EWE | _____ | 20. PARE | _____ | 31. WHOLE | _____ |
| 10. FAIR | _____ | 21. RAIN | _____ | 32. YOU | _____ |
| 11. FEAT | _____ | 22. REAL | _____ | | |

ANSWER KEY FOR HOMONYM WORD SEARCH

Secret Word: HOMONYMS



Homonyms Word Search Answer Key continued on following page.

HOMONYMS WORD SEARCH

Answer Key:

AYE	EYE	I
CEDE	SEED	
DEAR	DEER	
DEW	DUE	DO
DO	DUE	DEW
DO	DUE	DEW
EIGHT	ATE	
ERE	HEIR	AIR
EWE	YOU	
FAIR	FAR	
FEAT	FEET	
FORE	FOUR	FOR
GREAT	GRATE	
LIE	LYE	
LYE	LIE	
MAID	MADE	
MEAT	MEET	METE
MIST	MISSED	
NEED	KNEAD	
PARE	PEAR	
RAIN	REIGN	REIN
REAL	REEL	
REIGN	REIN	RAIN
ROLL	ROLE	
RYE	WRY	
SENT	SCENT	CENT
STATIONARY	STATIONERY	
STEAL	STEEL	
SUM	SOME	
TEAR	TIER	
WHOLE	HOLE	
YOU	EWE	

HOMONYMS WORD SEARCH (Intermediate/Senior)

Name: _____

Use the clues below to identify homonyms found in the Word Search to the right.

Hint: The homonyms are in alphabetical order. When you're done, find the Secret Word by writing the unused letters from left to right, from the bottom to the top of the puzzle.

BONUS: In the blank beside each clue, write the other homonym(s) of the word.

E	S	D	E	A	R	L	E	Y	L
D	R	I	E	M	A	A	Y	R	M
E	Y	A	E	W	E	E	N	A	E
C	O	M	P	H	T	R	U	N	A
M	U	G	R	O	L	L	A	O	T
S	E	Y	R	L	I	E	D	I	Y
E	R	S	T	E	A	L	E	T	N
N	O	D	R	I	A	F	E	A	T
T	F	E	I	G	H	T	N	T	O
H	N	G	I	E	R	M	I	S	T

SECRET WORD: _____

HOMONYMS WORD SEARCH CLUES

1. what a pirate says to his captain _____
2. when a country gives land to another _____
3. salutation that starts a friendly letter _____
4. water condensed on leaves and grass _____
5. what the bride says: "I ____."
6. what the groom says: "I ____."
7. square root of 64 _____
8. poetic abbreviation for 'before' _____
9. female sheep _____
10. even _____
11. act of strength _____
12. golfer warning _____
13. large, important _____
14. falsehood _____
15. pioneer soap ingredient _____
16. female servant _____
17. beef, chicken, pork _____
18. cloud by a waterfall _____
19. want _____
20. to peel an apple _____
21. liquid precipitation _____
22. actually existing or occurring _____
23. a king's era _____
24. a bun _____
25. type of bread _____
26. caused to go or be taken to a destination _____
27. in one place _____
28. to take without permission _____
29. solution to an addition question _____
30. evidence of crying _____
31. complete, entire _____
32. 2nd person pronoun _____

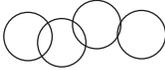
WACKY WORDIES #1 (Junior/Intermediate/Senior)

Can you figure out these common sayings based on the position of the words and letters?

1 GEGS GSEG SEGG	2 R >C u A Y Z	3 R O ROADS D S	4 MEsnackALS	5 PAINS
6 R/E/A/D/I/N/G	7 everything PIZZA	8 <u>STAND</u> I	9 HE ART	10 __ORSEMAN
11 D U C K	12 MAN BOARD	13 T s I ti M tch E	14 bet your dollar	15 WEAR long
16 death LIFE	17 <u>bridge</u> WATER	18 T O W N	19 t M a U h S w T	20 SCHOOL
21 GROUND feet feet feet feet feet feet	22 CYCLE	23 CYCLE CYCLE	4 CYCLE CYCLE CYCLE	25 or 0 or
26 speed speed speed speed speed speed speed speed speed speed	27 WRITER'S	28 MIND matter	29 C C C C C C C	30 wheel D wheel R wheel I wheel V E

WACKY WORDIES #2 (Intermediate/Senior)

Can you figure out these common sayings based on the position of the words and letters?

1 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">SAND</div>	2 WAY yield	3 _ HOPPIN _	4 your III 	5 L Y I N G JOB
6 KNEE lights	7 “-” attitude	8 _____ PROGRAM	9 SE COND timing	10 SWEAR bible bible bible
11 T O U C H	12 H C U O T	13 J U you S me T	14 CHAIR	15 $\frac{0}{}$ Ph. D. B. Sc. M.A.
16 league	17 ECNALG	18 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">T R A F A L G A R</div>	19 LE VEL	20 HE’S himself
21 DICE DICE	22 <u>EGGS</u> easy	23 r e c t o n u	24 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">PIT</div>	25 t o 2 PAR n
26 January February <u>March</u> Due	27 TOP	28 yourself K C I P	29 INSULT + INJURY	30 peck #1 peck #2 peck #3 peck #4

WACKY WORDIES #3 (Junior/Intermediate/Senior)

Can you figure out these common sayings based on the position of the words and letters?

1 AaRrMm	2 ↓ TIME	3 airet<	4 P P A A R R K K I I N N G G	5 cast cast cast cast
6 yourselfLOOK	7 J U U S S T	8 dayDAY	9 UP	10 youBr boBBnBneBt
11 SW lake	12 BAN ANA	13 sleeping JOB	14 WORK pleasure	15 IIIII
16 RISE	17 >f s r d i n e	18 y r r u h	19 SENTE	20 DON'T do it
21 poiCASEnt	22 say DIE	23 doWHENubt ASK	24 not W I T H	25 enemy
26 3x2+9 after	27 GRfootAVE	28 AIR	29 TIME a b “_” d e f g	30 əɪpðə

ANSWERS to WACKY WORDIES

#1

- 1 three scrambled eggs
- 2 crazy about you
- 3 crossroads
- 4 a snack between meals
- 5 growing pains
- 6 reading between the lines
- 7 a pizza with everything on it
- 8 I understand
- 9 a broken heart
- 10 a headless horseman
- 11 a sitting duck
- 12 man overboard
- 13 a stitch in time
- 14 bet your bottom dollar
- 15 long underwear
- 16 life after death
- 17 water under the bridge
- 18 downtown
- 19 what goes up, must come down
- 20 high school
- 21 six feet under ground
- 22 unicycle
- 23 bicycle
- 24 tricycle
- 25 double or nothing
- 26 a ten speed
- 27 writer's cramp
- 28 mind over matter
- 29 the seven seas
- 30 four-wheel drive

#2

- 1 sand box
- 2 yield the right of way
- 3 shopping centre
- 4 circles under your eyes
- 5 lying down on the job
- 6 neon lights
- 7 negative attitude
- 8 space program
- 9 split second timing
- 10 swear on a stack of bibles
- 11 touch down
- 12 touch-up
- 13 just between you and me
- 14 high chair
- 15 three degrees below zero
- 16 little league
- 17 a backward glance
- 18 Trafalgar Square
- 19 split level
- 20 he's beside himself (with worry)
- 21 paradise
- 22 eggs over easy
- 23 counterclockwise
- 24 a bottomless pit
- 25 not up to par
- 26 3 months overdue
- 27 the big top
28. pick up after yourself
- 29 adding insult to injury
- 30 the pecking order

ANSWERS to WACKY WORDIES (cont.)

#3

- 1 arm-in-arm
- 2 a point in time
- 3 bacteria
- 4 parallel parking
- 5 forecast
- 6 look after yourself
- 7 just between us
- 8 day after day
- 9 up tight
- 10 bees in your bonnet
- 11 Swan Lake
- 12 banana split
- 13 sleeping on the job
- 14 putting work before pleasure
- 15 dots before your eyes
- 16 high rise
- 17 circle of friends
- 18 hurry up
- 19 an incomplete sentence
- 20 don't over do it
- 21 a case in point
- 22 never say die
- 23 when in doubt, ask
- 24 notwithstanding
- 25 arch-enemy
- 26 aftermath
- 27 a foot in the grave
- 28 thin air
- 29 long time no see
- 30 an apple turnover

BINGO (Any grade)

Bingo can be adapted to any almost aspect of the curriculum (for example, math equations, symbols of the periodic table, historical figures, etc.).

Students place 25 items from a list of at least 50 items in their 5x5 grid. (Allow the students to select a “free” square if they wish.) The teacher then calls out clues from the list of 50 items while the students mark their grids if they have the corresponding item on their grid.

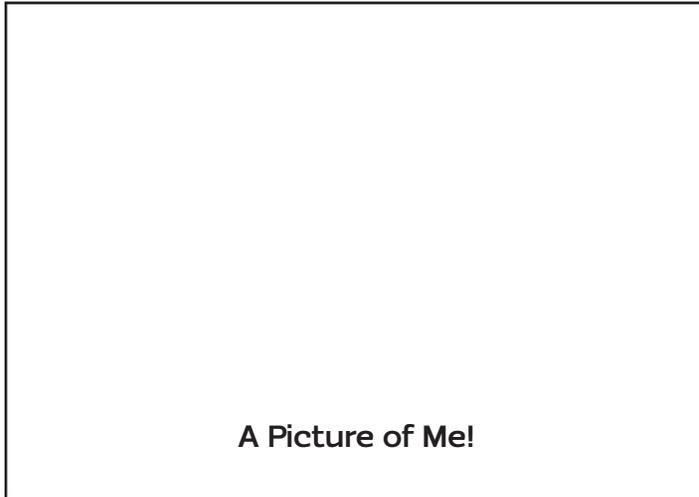
A student who has a row, column or diagonal calls “BINGO!” and the teacher verifies the correct answers.

		FREE		

LONGER LESSON ACTIVITIES

The Top Ten Things I Like About Me! (Primary/Junior)

Name: _____



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

STORY WRITING (Primary/Junior/Intermediate)

Lesson

Write one or more of the potential story starters (next page) on the board.

Students are to write a rough draft of a story using the starter.

Depending on the age and ability of the students, choose a length that is appropriate. For instance, for primary-aged students, you might choose to assign one page with two pictures, for junior level students you might choose two pages double spaced etc.

Time Frame

30 – 60 minutes

Materials Required

- lined paper
- pen or pencil
- potential story starters

Variations/Accommodations

Length and time can be increased or decreased to accommodate different ability levels.

This can be done as a comic book or graphic novel.

Students may decide to work together when one is stronger in writing and the other is stronger in drawing and illustrate their story.

Extensions

After students have finished writing their stories, have them work in groups and peer edit their work. Conduct a lesson on descriptive words.

Have students include these in their story and analyze the effect of adding these.

Potential Story Starters

- I never knew why they say, “truth is stranger than fiction,” until that fateful weekend a few weeks ago...
- “Are you ready to go yet?” my mom called up from the bottom of the stairs. Who could be ready for this?...
- I was certainly not one to pass on a dare though I could have never imagined what would happen...
- His heart was pounding. He was sure that he had seen the doorknob turn...

- He had warned her about the book. Now it was too late...
- So it's true he thought, it's really true...
- If there was an answer, he'd find it there...
- It was exactly what he needed, but he couldn't reach it...
- Aha! These are the electrician's fingerprints," said the detective....
- It all started when someone left the door open...
- The creepy house down the street had been abandoned for years...
- "Truth, dare or double dare," Chris demanded of me. What could I say?...

YOU ARE UNIQUE! (Junior)

Name: _____

In each section, put a picture or words that best describe you. In the centre create a picture of yourself and write your name.

FAMILY MEMBERS

FAVOURITE SCHOOL SUBJECT(S)

Me

INTERESTS OR HOBBIES

HOME RESPONSIBILITIES/CHORES

THINKING ABOUT MYSELF.. (Junior/Intermediate)

Name: _____

Write five (5) descriptors under each of the headings below.

How I see myself:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

How I think others see me:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Traits that I would like to develop:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

WORKING WITH TANGRAMS (Primary/Junior/Intermediate)

“Tangram” is an ancient Chinese puzzle game that enhances geometry skills. It uses seven flat shapes or “tans” (five right-angled triangles, one square, and one parallelogram). Students arrange these shapes to make pictures of various items.

Time Frame: 45 minutes (approximately)

Materials Required:

- copies of tangram template (one for each student)
- scissors
- copies of possible items that could be made with tangrams

Optional Materials:

- pencil crayons
- glue
- construction paper

Lesson

Have students cut out the tangram shapes. Each of the seven pieces is to be used when making a picture. Pieces should be laid flat with no overlapping.

Divide the students into groups so that they will be able to assist each other. Most students will need examples (see following pages for ideas) of the possible pictures they could make. Make a copy of these for each group. Depending on the age and ability of the students, you may wish to have them try to create their own pictures without following the examples. Circulate around the classroom providing guidance where necessary. Once a child has made one picture, encourage them to move on to create another one.

Variations/Accommodations

For students who need assistance, you may wish to cut out a few sets of the tangrams in advance to ensure success for those who have difficulty with fine motor skill tasks.

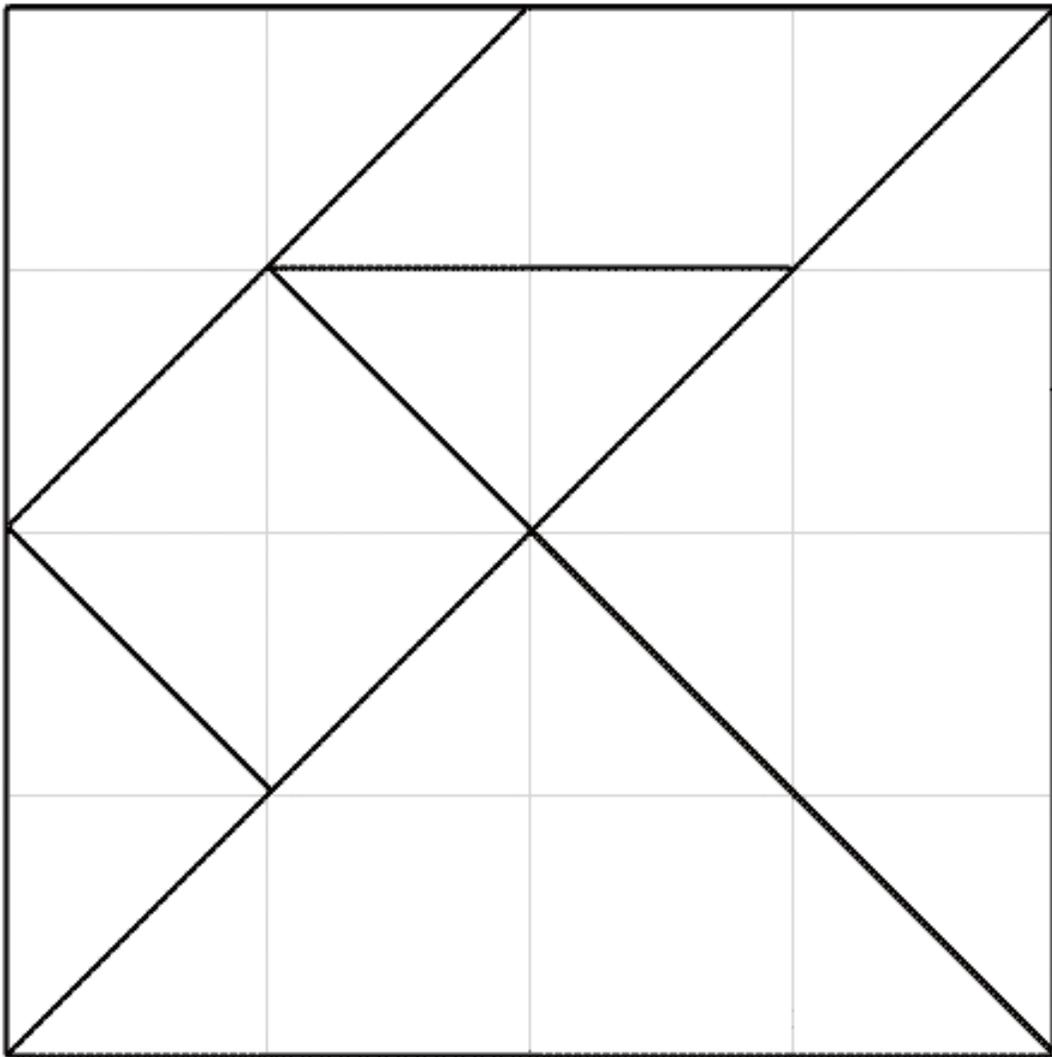
After students have had a chance to create a few pictures, they could glue the tangram picture onto a piece of construction paper. These could then be coloured with the pencil crayons.

Extensions

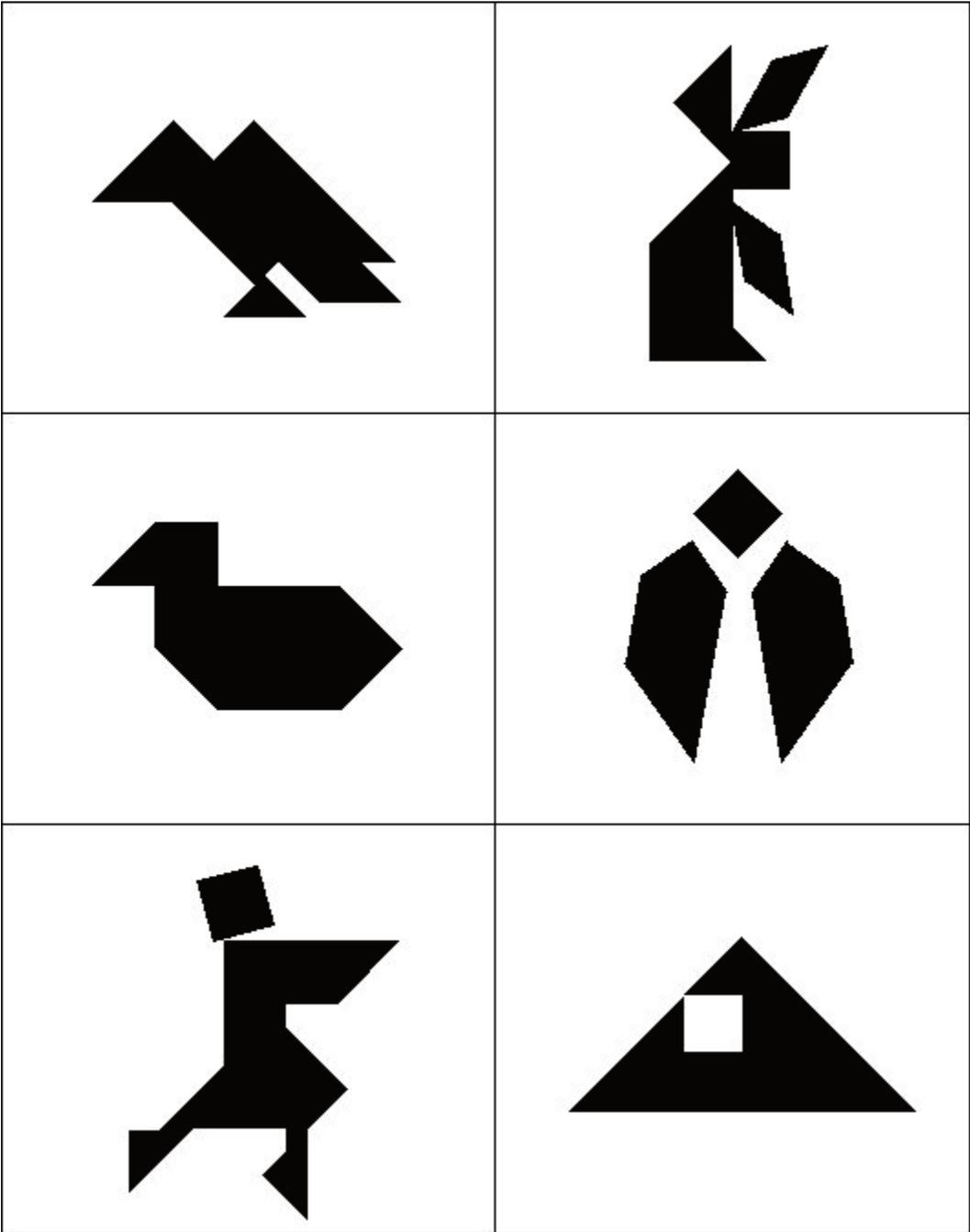
Grandfather Tang's Story by Ann Tompert is a great picture book told in tangrams of animals shapes (e.g. a rabbit, dog, turtle, squirrel, or lion). You may wish to purchase this book to keep in your "Tool Kit". Read through the story and have the students try to make the tangram picture mentioned as you read.

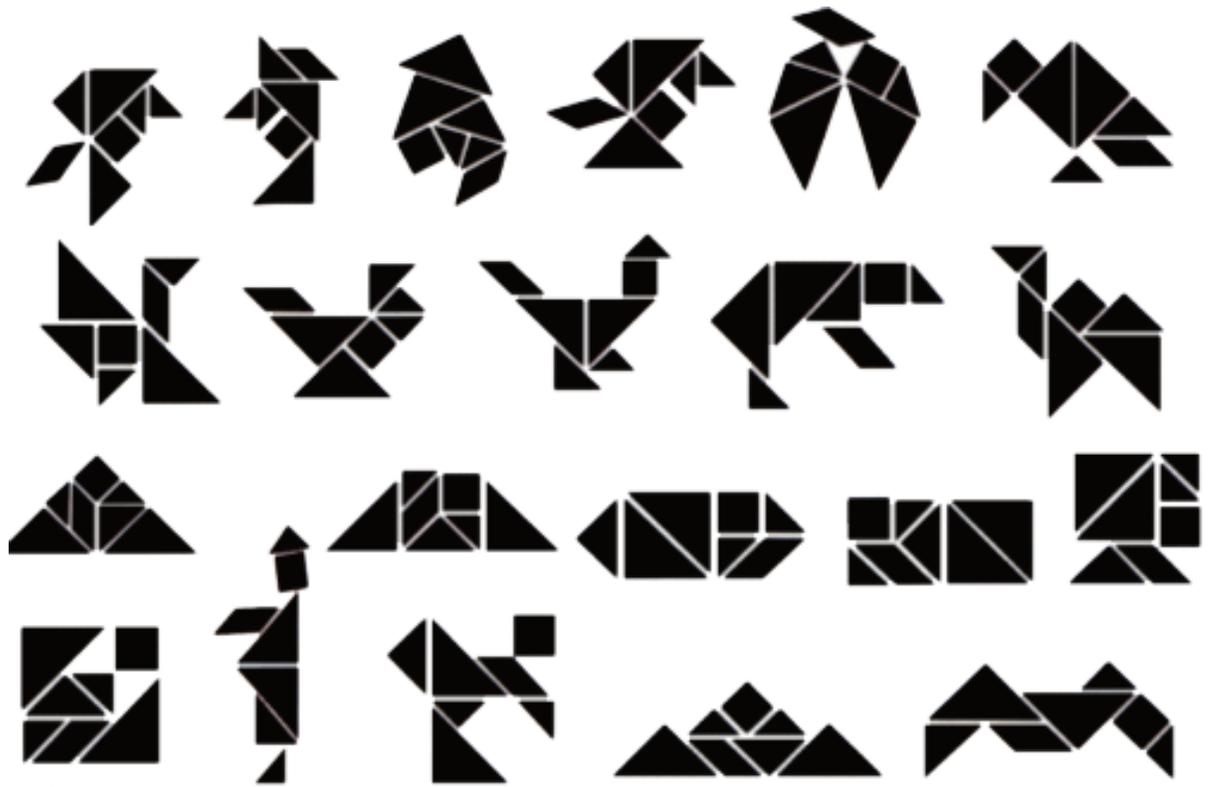
Have the children write their own stories incorporating the animals, people or items they are able to make with the tangrams. Students could work in partners.

TANGRAM TEMPLATE



POSSIBLE TANGRAM PICTURES





MAGIC SQUARE (Junior/Intermediate)

“Magic Square” is a game that utilizes reasoning, problem solving, and addition. This is a great activity that can be done when students have finished their assigned work and time is remaining in the period.

Time Frame: 30 minutes

Materials Required:

- copy of the 3 x 3 square (rows and columns)
- copy of numbers 1-9 the same size as each of the squares the magic square template
- scissors (you may wish to cut this out and have them ready)

Lesson:

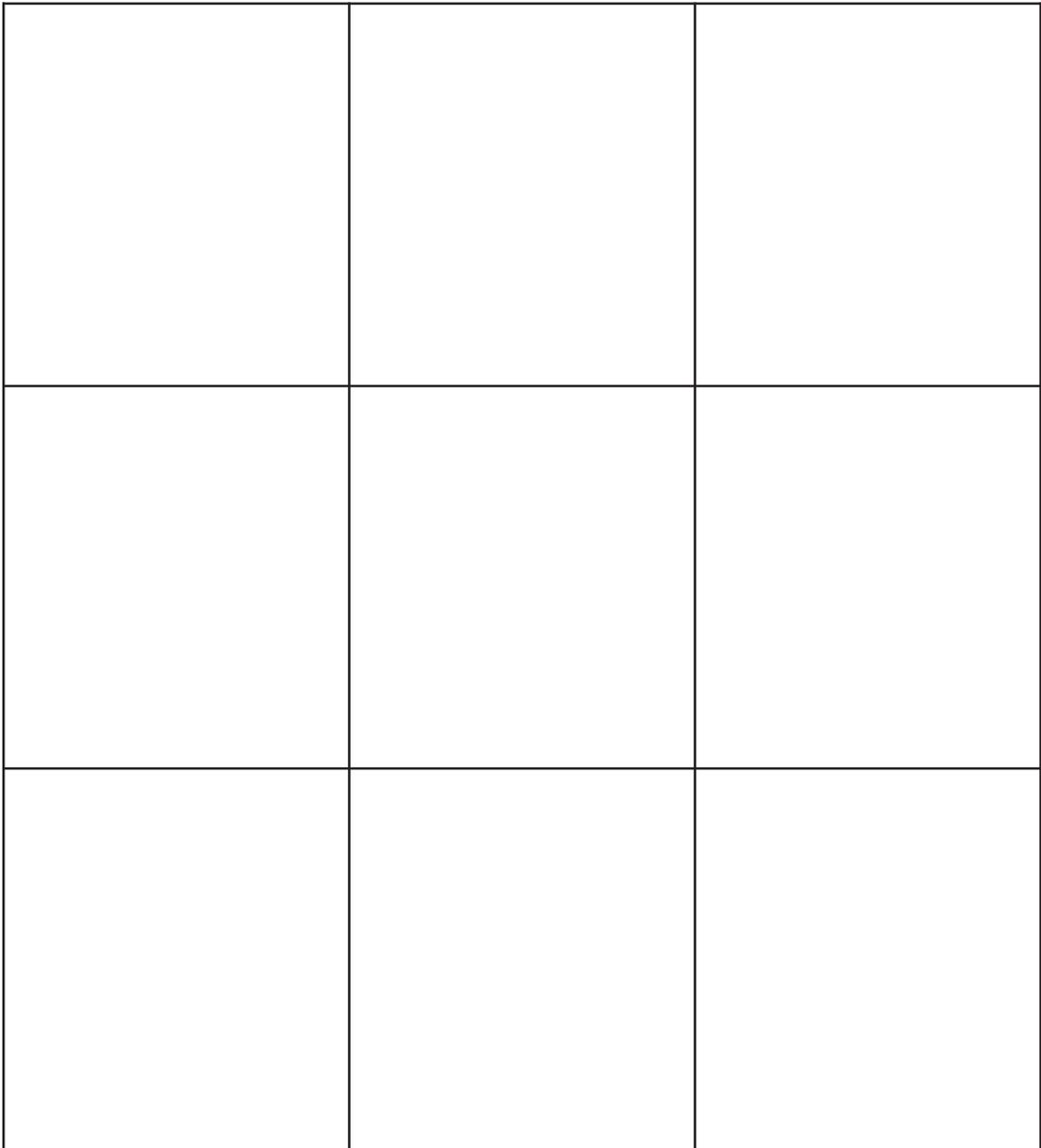
Provide each student with a template of the magic square (3 x 3 grid). Distribute one copy of the numbers 1- 9 to each student. Explain they are to arrange the numbers 1 to 9 in each of the squares. Every row, column, and diagonal must add to 15. There are several possible answers. (See possible answer below)

Sample Magic Square Solutions:

8	1	6
3	5	7
4	9	2

2	7	6
9	5	1
4	3	8

MAGIC SQUARE TEMPLATE



MAGIC SQUARE NUMBERS

1	2	3
4	5	<u>6</u>
7	8	<u>9</u>

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