



4. Students complete the routine independently (you do), removing scaffolding from the teacher, as appropriate, and transferring ownership to students.
5. Reinforce and maintain the routine consistently through [acknowledgement](#), [praise](#) and practice.

Adapted from Archer and Hughes (2011), Bennett (2020) and Lemov (2021)

The importance of teaching routines

Routines give students certainty about what is expected in the classroom by providing consistency, predictability and structure (AERO, 2021). Well-established routines enable students to independently follow them with little involvement from the teacher, reducing interruptions and increasing teaching time (Archer & Hughes, 2011). It's easier for students to decide how to behave when they are given clear sequences of the expected modelled behaviour (Bennett, 2020).

Explicitly teaching and modelling the expected behaviours of routines helps to free up students' working memory to focus on learning. To support students, a teacher should establish routines for specific tasks or times of the school day, such as entering the classroom, answering questions or transitioning between activities. Students who have learned the behaviours and routines expected of them, and had sufficient opportunities to practise to the point they become automatic, won't have to think about these things while focused on learning (Chaffee et al., 2017; Simonsen et al., 2008).

Teaching and maintaining routines

Routines should be [taught explicitly](#) to students, in the same way as curriculum content and skills. Teachers should identify routines that are necessary for their context, considering their students' needs, ages and the school's expectations.

Introduce specific routines the first time they are required, likely spread out over the first few weeks of school to avoid students feeling overwhelmed (Archer & Hughes, 2011). Explaining why a routine is required and its connection to behaviour expectations is key to establishing shared understanding (Bennett, 2020). Breaking a routine into a small number of discrete steps, and providing opportunities to revisit this and practise it over time, allows students to master the routine and commit it more easily to long-term memory (Lemov, 2021).

Students require support to learn and practise each step of a routine, as routines must be taught, rehearsed and reinforced in order to be learned (Lemov, 2021; Wong & Wong, 2018). Check students' understanding by modelling a routine correctly and incorrectly, and asking students to identify the differences (Archer & Hughes, 2011).

Teachers can support students in understanding and successfully following classroom routines by providing [specific praise](#) and constructive feedback about expected behaviours. Routines can be displayed visually on the board or a poster to provide a reminder and a scaffold for students who need more time and ongoing guidance to learn and follow them. Teachers can also discuss what the routine 'looks like' and 'sounds like' with their students (Archer & Hughes, 2011).

Mastering any behaviour takes practice. The more students practise, the better they get at it and the less they need to focus on this in ways that might distract from the content of their learning. Teachers need to allow time for students, and themselves, to become familiar with new routines (or time to relearn a routine that may have slipped).

Routines should be consistently monitored and regularly revised daily, weekly or monthly as needed.

Scenario

This scenario provides a practical example of the evidence summarised in this explainer. It provides insight into one teacher's approach to establishing and maintaining routines



Further reading

For more information on teaching routines, read:

Archer, A. L., & Hughes, C. A. (2011). *Explicit instruction: Effective and efficient teaching*. Guildford Press. (pp. 121–129)

Bennett, T. (2020). *Running the room: The teacher's guide to behaviour*. John Catt Educational. (pp. 161–205)

Lemov, D. (2021). *Teach like a champion 3.0: 63 techniques that put students on the path to college*. Jossey-Bass. (pp. 385–417)

McCrea, P. (2020). *Motivated teaching*. Ingram Content Group. (pp. 57–67)

McDonald, T. (2019). *Classroom management: Engaging students in learning*. Oxford University Press. (pp. 122–130)

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (2018). *The first days of school: How to be an effective teacher* (5th ed.). Harry K. Wong Publications. (pp. 138–196)

References

Archer, A. L., & Hughes, C. A. (2011). *Explicit instruction: Effective and efficient teaching*. Guildford Press.

Australian Education Research Organisation. (2021). *Focused classrooms: Managing the classroom to maximise learning*. <https://www.edresearch.edu.au/resources/focused-classrooms-practice-guide/focused-classrooms-practice-guide-full-publication>

Bennett, T. (2020). *Running the room: The teacher's guide to behaviour*. John Catt Educational.

Chaffee, R. K., Briesch, A. M., Johnson, A. H., & Volpe, R. J. (2017). A meta-analysis of class-wide interventions for supporting student behavior. *School Psychology Review*, 46(2), 149–164. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2017-26745-001>

Lemov, D. (2021). *Teach like a champion 3.0: 63 techniques that put students on the path to college*. Jossey-Bass.

McCrea, P. (2020). *Motivated teaching*. Ingram Content Group.

McDonald, T. (2019). *Classroom management: Engaging students in learning*, Rng students in learning
