

Setting Limits & Making Requests

FIVE Steps to Setting Limits

1. Explain exactly *which* behavior is inappropriate.
Be specific. What rule isn't being followed?
2. Explain *why* the behavior is inappropriate.
Don't assume the student knows why the behavior is unacceptable.
3. Give reasonable choices and consequences.
By providing choices, you're acknowledging that you cannot force the student to behave in a certain way, but you are also informing him of the consequences of his actions. Emphasize the preferred choice.
4. Allow time to comply.
If you don't allow time for the student to make his decision - even if it's just a few seconds - it may seem that you are giving an ultimatum.
5. Enforce the consequences (follow through).
Be prepared to enforce your consequences, regardless of which choice the student makes.

Three-Steps for Making Requests to Students:

1. Give the student two clear choices with clear consequences. Order the choices so that the student hears the teacher-preferred choice last e.g., "John, you can refuse to participate in the math assignment and be written up for detention or you can start the math assignment now and not be written up." Make sure above all that you can enforce any consequences that you present to the student.
2. If the student fails to comply in a reasonable amount of time to Step 1, state clearly and firmly what you want the student to do. Include a time limit for student compliance and specify a location if necessary. For example, a teacher may tell the student, "John, I want you to return to your desk [location] now [time-frame] and begin your math assignment [requested behavior]."
3. If the student still fails to comply with your request, enforce alternative consequences that you have selected in advance.