



GETTING STARTED: Day 1 Plans

Objective: Form a reading community reading in shared norms, expectations, materials, and self-reflection.

Materials: chart paper, markers, reader interest surveys (If piloting, you can find these digitally [here](#) and in print [here](#).), [see/think/wonder charts](#), classroom libraries (paperback books)

Lesson Flow

Introductions (15 minutes)

Choose from one of the following getting-to-know-you activities or choose your favorite one that you have used before:

- **Paper Planes:** Each student writes a get-to-know-you question on a piece of paper. (Encourage them to think creatively so you don't wind up with the same question over and over again.) Then, they fold the papers into planes and spend a minute throwing them across the room. Afterward, everyone picks up a plane and they take turns answering the question on theirs. (Could also do a variation of this with favorite book/movie/TV show)
- **Common Thread:** Divide students into groups of four and have them sit together in these small groups. Give each group 5 minutes to chat among themselves and find something they all have in common. It could be that they all play soccer, or pizza is their favorite dinner, or they each have a cat. Whatever the common thread, the conversation will help them get to know one another better. Repeat this activity in new groups as many times as you like.
- **Silent Line-Up:** This icebreaker helps kids get to know each other while also encouraging teamwork. As you call out each instruction, students must figure out how to line up properly without talking at all. Start out easy by asking them to line up by height. Move on to a more challenging task: lining up in alphabetical order.

Class Contract & Norms (20 minutes) - Adapted from [Facing History & Ourselves](#).

1. **Students Reflect:** To prepare students to develop a class contract, ask them to reflect on their experiences as students in a classroom community. You might use prompts like these to structure students' reflection:
 - Identify when you have felt comfortable sharing your ideas and questions in a class. What happened in those moments to help you feel comfortable?



- Identify when you have had ideas or questions but have not shared them. Why not? What was happening at those moments?
2. **Discuss Classroom Norms:** To get the contracting conversation started in a more concrete way, share with students a list of norms, rules, or expectations that have been used in other classrooms. You can write this list on the whiteboard or have it on chart paper ahead of time. Ask students to discuss what they think about these norms. Which ones do they think would help this group create a safe, respectful, productive community? Then, invite students to add to the list. Invite students to edit this list by deleting, revising, or adding to it. List of classroom norms:
 - If you don't understand something, ask a question.
 - Think with your head and your heart.
 - Share the talking time—provide room for others to speak.
 - Do not interrupt others while they are speaking.
 - Write thoughts in your journal if you don't have time to say them in class.
 - Listen with respect; do not interrupt others when they are talking.
 3. **Create the Contract:** On chart paper, write a list of 3-4 norms that students agree on.
 4. **Sign the Contract:** After the class has completed its contract, reaching consensus about rules, norms, and expectations, it is important for each student to signal their agreement. Ask all students to sign the copy of the contract that will remain displayed in the classroom during afterschool time.

Reading Surveys (10 minutes)

1. Introduce the survey: "We all have different experiences with reading: some positive, some not so positive. Today, I want to get to know your reading history so that I can understand more about your background and help you to choose texts that you will love."
2. Teacher models first few questions of reading survey.
3. Share in pairs/table or class.

Book Exploration (if time permits/with time remaining)

1. Model See/Think/Wonder: "Today, we are going to explore some of the books you'll be able to read as part of this program. Today, you'll just look at the books with a partner. You'll discuss what the book makes you see, think, and wonder about. When you're done doing a see/think/wonder for your book, you'll switch with another partnership that's done and they'll do the same. Fill out the



see/think/wonder chart as you look through the books.” Model filling out a see/think/wonder chart with a Storyshares book.

2. Break students up into partnerships/pairs. Pass out see/think/wonder charts *or* create a see/think/wonder chart on the board and have students copy them into their notebooks.
3. Give students time with the books.
4. When 5 minutes remain, have students share out what they saw, thought, and wondered with the class.
5. In partnerships, have each student share one thing that they are excited about for the afterschool program or the week ahead.

References

Classroom Contract Teaching Strategy. (2009, October 19). Facing History & Ourselves.

Retrieved August 15, 2025, from

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/contracting-0>

PZ's Thinking Routines Toolbox | Project Zero. (n.d.). Harvard's Project Zero. Retrieved August 15, 2025, from <https://pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines>