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Transition Time Tips for K-3 Teachers

Looking for creative ways to make the most of every moment in the school day? The teachers at DreamBox Learning have put their collective experience together and suggested these fun activities for transition times. Try these in your classroom to help your students see the many ways math is relevant and fun!



Transition: Lining Up

Activity: Counting Through the Line

Before moving a line of students out the door, have them skip count down the line. The first person starts and then each child adds on until you reach the back of the line. Once everyone has had a turn, the line may move. This does a couple things: it helps keep students engaged and it can help quiet down a noisy line since they need to hear the count. It helps students find a spot so they know whose turn is next. And it reinforces counting patterns. If the line is short or you have more time, count through the line more than once. For example, count up from front to back and then count down from back to front. For variations: start with numbers other than zero, count by multiples of 10, or count backwards.



Transition: Clean Up

Activity: Classified Clean Up

Assign certain students (or groups of students) to clean up a specific group or classification of items, such as specific shapes, colors, sizes, etc. This helps children identify object attributes and classify objects according to the attributes.

Any Transition

Activity: Beat the Clock

Time various transitions (lining up, cleaning up, walking to a specialist class) and keep track of the time. This helps students develop a sense of time as well as provides motivation for students to work together to be efficient. This also includes students in a data collection activity and provides a useful data set that can be used as part of a statistics activity.



Transition: Leaving or entering the classroom

Activity: Double Up

Greet students when they come in the door with a deck of cards (without face cards). Show each student a card as they enter and ask them to double it. As a variation, give students 2 cards and ask them to identify which is more (or less) or whether they're equal. More variations: how many more are needed to make 10 or how many should be added or taken away to make 5?

Activity: Making Ten

As students are lined up to leave or enter the classroom, say a number from 1-20 to each student. Have the student tell you how many more are needed to get to ten, or how many should be removed to get to ten. For older students, say a number from 0-100 and have the student tell you how many need to be added to get to the next higher multiple of ten. Or alternatively, have your student tell you the nearest multiple of ten.

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Transition: Snack Time

Activity: How Much Snack?

Arrange students in pairs or small groups with counters available. Before students may have their snack, have them do some math:

- Tell the class how much snack each student should get, or have students decide on a reasonable amount of snack for each student. Then have groups figure out how much snack will be needed for everyone to get that amount. For example: if the class decides everyone should have 5 crackers, a group of four figures out they need 20 crackers.
- Put the entire quantity of the snack in a container. Tell students how much each child should have. Before eating the snack, ask your students to predict if the container has too much, too little, or the right amount for everyone. Allow students to “deal out” the snacks one at a time to see if their prediction was correct.



- Cut an apple into 8 wedges. Ask students how many apples you will need to cut for everyone to get one wedge. If everyone wanted two wedges, how many apples would you need? (This could be done with oranges, bananas, a loaf of bread, anything you can cut into pieces.)
- For a given number of apples, ask students to decide how many wedges should be cut for everyone to have one wedge.
- Have students tell each other math stories as they eat their snack. For example: using teddy grahams, I saw 6 bears in the forest. Two bears went hiding in a cave. (Child eats two bear crackers). Now I see 4 bears.



Practice at Home

Share this activity with parents to try at home or in the car—it’s great to play with siblings! Start with any number 1-9, and skip count by 10. You can ask kids to start from the nineties, over the century mark and into the twenties. For example 88, 98, 108, 118, 128...In this example, 108 and 118 are common error spots. Skip count beyond 500.

Learn more about DreamBox Learning K-3 Math

DreamBox provides more than 500 math lessons and completely individualized learning in an engaging and effective game experience that students love to play! And teachers appreciate the ability to track student’s academic progress through the in-depth math curriculum.

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