



Cold Call

I-2, I-5, I-7, I-8

Cold Call is a practice that calls on students for answers whether they have their hands raised or not. If done consistently, students take more responsibility for the material, pay closer attention to the teacher, and are compelled to prepare and respond at any time. Cold Call helps maintain pace and increases the actual rate at which you can cover material. Without this practice, it is difficult to check for comprehensive student understanding reliably. It is misleading to rely only on students who think they are doing well. Cold calling is even more effective when executed simultaneously with the No Opt Out, which encourages all students to arrive at the right answer.

- Review the lesson plan and determine the sections where Cold Call could be used.
- Prepare exact questions in advance to ensure that they are clear and accessible to students using various levels of rigor.
- Create a systematic method of calling.
- Introduce Cold Call to the class, preferably at the beginning of the school year, by presenting details of the process; model how students will be called on, how they should respond, how important it is to listen to their peers, and when to expect a Cold Call.
- Explain the reasoning behind the routine and how it will improve student learning, better checks for student understanding, more efficient pacing of material, more equitable participation.
- Question the class using one of the previously prepared questions, pause to give think time, and then call the name of a student to answer the question. Allow time for students to practice the routine.
- Scaffold for different types of learners by initially asking a simple question as a warm up, then progressing to a series of more difficult probing questions.



Additional Tools

Pepper

A fast paced game used to reinforce skills, not teach new skills. The teacher asks an individual student a question. If the student gets the answer right, the teacher moves to the next question with a new student. If the student gets the answer wrong, the teacher calls on someone else to answer. The teacher can choose to return back to the original student to repeat the correct answer, but there is no discussion of the incorrect answer because this is a fast-paced review.

Baseball

The teacher asks a question to the whole class, and then tosses a ball to a batter. The batter taps it back toward the group using a bat or stick. The student nearest the ball catches it and tosses it back to the teacher while sharing the answer.

For more strategies and/or resources, visit houstonisd.org/EffectivePractices



ALERTS

Cold Call is an engagement practice, not a disciplinary system. The purpose is to make students feel successful, engaged, and motivated.



QUICK TIPS

Try pulling students in and promoting success by emphasizing basic knowledge before challenging them with more rigorous questions.