



Work the Clock

I-5, I-9, I-10

Work the Clock is a practice that emphasizes the importance of class time by announcing an allotted time for an activity and verbally counting down to remind students of work-time remaining. It encourages on-task and efficient work during lesson activities. This practice can be used to improve the pacing of a lesson by instilling a sense of urgency in students. It also can create a positive environment in the classroom that acknowledges and reinforces productive student behavior.

- Create an objective-driven lesson with aligned activities.
- Determine the places in the lesson where urgency will be important, where students might have a hard time staying engaged/on-task, or where racing the clock might bring joy or excitement to students.
- Decide on the ideal length of time for students to complete the parts in the lesson identified in the previous step.
- Plan how time and activity expectations will be communicated with students. For example, write a short script with clear directions for the activity and transitions.
- Decide where countdowns are needed and will be shared with students as a reminder to complete their work in order to proceed along to the next step.



Additional Tools

Class Dojo

This open-source web-based resource is a flexible tool that adds interest and fun to working the clock. Find it on the web at www.classdojo.com.

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



ALERTS

Be mindful that students are not rushing through the work and sacrificing quality for speed. Monitor work during the activity closely and set expectations for quality at the beginning of the lesson.



QUICK TIPS

Try rewarding positive behaviors during countdowns by acknowledging students. For example, "5, 4...John is ready...3, 2...Allison is ready...1." Consider using countdowns to set goals for the class. "I know we did this by my count of 8 last time, this time let's go for 6."