



# Preparing for Academic Success in the US

## Section 1: Adjusting to the US Classroom



# Getting Started: Talk About It

**What is a normal classroom like in your birth country?**

**Describe your favorite teacher. Why were they your favorite?**

**Is it easy for you to ask for help? Why or why not?**



# Objectives

**By the end of this section you should be able to explain:**

- **The Role of the Teacher in the US**  
How does a teacher act in a classroom?
- **What Teachers Expect From Students**  
If you know what the teachers want, it is easier to succeed!
- **How to Get Help at School**  
What should you do if you don't understand something or need help in school?

# What is the role of the teacher in a US classroom?

*Although every teacher is different, there are a few ways that American teachers are similar.*





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# The role of the teacher in a classroom in the US

**Teachers in the US often view themselves as guides.**

- Although teachers are experts, their goal is to help students understand ideas (not just memorize information).
  - Teachers encourage students to ask questions. Respectful disagreeing is also okay!
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# The role of the teacher in a classroom in the US

**The relationship between teachers and students in the US is usually informal.**

- ➔ Teachers will often make jokes with students
  - ➔ Teachers may allow students to call them by their name (instead of “Sir,” “Miss,” “Teacher,” or “Professor”)
  - ➔ You don’t need to stand when a teacher enters the room
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# What Do Teachers Expect From Students In the Classroom?

In general, they want students to be responsible for their own learning.





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# Expectations from teachers

## **Students should be on time to class.**

- Try to arrive before class starts. This helps you prepare your materials, and it shows respect for the teacher.
  - Don't be late for class. If you arrive more than 5 minutes late, it will interrupt the class and you may get in trouble.
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# Expectations from teachers

## Students should think independently.

- Teachers want you to understand what you are learning, not just repeat information.
  - They will often ask you to explain your answer and give your reasons.
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# Expectations from teachers

## Students should participate in class.

- Teachers will often require “class participation.” This means: raising your hand to answer a question, to ask a question, or add to something another classmate said.
  - Classes often include group projects and discussions. Students all need to talk and work together to do them.
  - “Class participation” is often part of a student’s grade. If you never say anything in class, you might get a lower grade.
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If you don't understand something in school, or need help, what should you do?

Knowing how to **find help** is one of the most important skills you can have as a student in the US.





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# Finding Help

**Students are generally responsible for getting help.**

- If you don't understand something in class, have a difficult time keeping up with assignments, or your grades are low, it's important to **seek help immediately**. Don't wait!
  - There are usually many different ways to find help at school in the US.
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# Finding Help: Talk to your teacher



**The first person you should ask for help from is your teacher.**

- Teachers **want** their students to ask for help - because they want their students to succeed! So don't feel shy about talking to your teacher about your problem.

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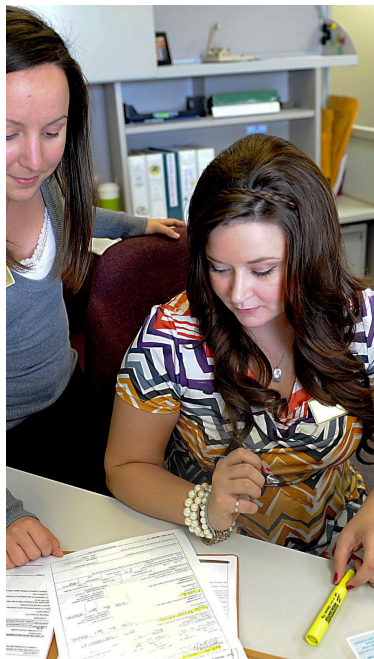
# Ways to ask your teacher for help

**You can talk to your teacher before class begins or after class ends.**

- They might have less time, but you can get a question answered quickly.

**You can contact your teacher at other times.**

- Teachers usually give an information sheet (sometimes called a “syllabus”).
  - This information sheet explains how to **email** the teacher or **visit** them other times (during “office hours”)
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# Ways Your School Can Help

## **You can talk to an academic advisor.**

- Academic advisors help students find helpful strategies, programs, and resources at your school.

## **Your school may have an academic support center or tutoring services.**

- If you are having trouble understanding your classes, the academic support center can help.
  - Tutors are sometimes also available through the school.
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## Putting It Together: Practice Activity

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### Tip

The mentor and mentee can practice this together. There may be many right ways to find help!

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# Practice

**Now, it's your turn to practice finding help at school!**

- **First, read over this sample course information sheet.**  
[Click here](#) to see an example of a course information sheet (or syllabus) at a community college. Of course, if you want to search a different school's website for information, please do!
  - **Then, work together to complete the short worksheet called "School Problem Solving Scenarios" in this module on Google Drive.**
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# Closing: Reflection Questions

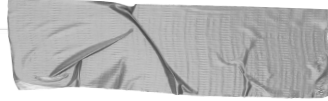
**What is the biggest difference between a classroom in your birth country and in the US?**

**What might be difficult for you as you adjust to being student in the US?**

**What could make it easier for you to succeed in school in the US?**

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# Resource Page



## **Problem-Solving Worksheet**

This worksheet is designed to help the mentor and mentee work together find a solution to a problem (at school or elsewhere).