

# Setting the Tone: How to Have a Great First Day of Class!

JOHNSON CENTER LUNCH PROGRAM

AUSTIN COLLEGE

29 AUGUST, 2019

# PURPOSE OF THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS

- “To clarify all reasonable questions students might have relative to the course objectives, as well as your expectations for their performance in class. As students leave the first meeting, they should believe in your competence to teach the course, be able to predict the nature of your instruction, and know what you will require of them.
- To give you an understanding of who is taking your course and what their expectations are.”

“Make the Most of the First Day of Class”. *Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation*, Carnegie Mellon University, <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/teach/firstday.html>

# OBJECTIVES FOR THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS

Orchestrate  
positive first  
impressions

Introduce yourself  
effectively

Clarify learning  
objectives and  
expectations

Help students  
learn about each  
other

Set the tone for  
the course

Collect baseline  
data on students'  
knowledge and  
motivation

Whet students'  
appetite for  
course content

Inform students  
of course  
requirements

“Make the Most of the First Day of Class”. *Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation*, Carnegie Mellon University, <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/teach/firstday.html>

## FOUR PRINCIPLES

- **Curiosity**
- **Community**
- **Learning**
- **Expectations**

On the first day, Professors may...

# EXAMPLES OF FIRST DAY ACTIVITIES

Obtain student feedback on what has worked/not worked in prior courses, how you can best foster learning, etc.

Introduce themselves

Learn student names/about students

Ask students to try an assignment related to the course

Ice breaker activity/ have students work in groups

Go over the syllabus

Lang, James. "How to Teach a Good First Day of Class", The Chronicle of Higher Education, <https://www.chronicle.com/interactives/advice-firstday>

WHAT DO YOU DO ON  
YOUR FIRST DAY ?