

31 BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS FOR TEACHERS





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Dive into a collection of practical back-to-school advice to kickoff the year confidently. This ebook features a blend of tips from dedicated Reading Horizons staff—former educators with valuable insights to share.

You'll find strategies to create a positive and productive learning environment.

Whether you're looking to refine your reading instruction practices or streamline your classroom operations, these recommendations will help you begin the school year on the right foot and make a lasting impact on your students.



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #1



Before

Back-to-School Night, quiz yourself on student faces and names using their photos.

Greet them by name to make them feel welcome!

KATIE SHELTON, 10 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #2



Back-to-school emotions aren't just for kids. Write a thoughtful note to caregivers on the first day to build trust and create a strong partnership.

JILLIAN KASTER, 10 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #3



Before school starts, I send postcards to my students. I also offer voluntary home visits to strengthen relationships with students and families.

LORI PEACOCK, 5 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #4



No amount of summer prep will ever feel like enough. List your must-haves for a strong start, then relax so you return to the classroom recharged!

KALEB YOUNG, 10 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #5



**Plan all procedures
before students arrive: lining
up, distributing materials,
and transitions. Be firm
and implement quickly for
a smoother year!**

HEATHER PRICE, 20 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO SCHOOL TIP #6



Overplan for the first week, but don't worry if you only get through half of it. You'll feel better knowing you have plans for week two!

CHRISTINE RICK, 28 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO SCHOOL TIP #7



Read “7 Mighty Moves”
by Lindsay Kemeny to
ensure K-to-3 reading
success!

SEAN LINDSEY, 11 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #8



Take picture of
each read-aloud and hang
them on a clothesline. It
sparks discussion and
helps students pick books
by favorite authors!

JENI COX-HOWARD, 18 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO SCHOOL TIP #9



Self-care is essential. Go for a walk, work on a puzzle, or order from your favorite restaurant. Take some time for yourself every day!

LUANNE TUBBS, 25 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #10



**Label classroom furniture
and other items in English
and other languages. It's a
great way to promote
inclusivity and learning!**

JENNY KIER, 13 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #11



To build proficient readers collaborate with general ed, special ed, and interventionists to align on grade-level content for students.

LAURA AXTELL, 29 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #12



When prepping first-day packets, prepare a few extras and store them for new students throughout the year. Your future self will thank you!

KIANA PORTER-ISOM, 7 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO SCHOOL TIP #13



Get your
back-to-school playlist ready!
Playing music as students
enter the classroom is an easy
way to ease those first-day
jitters!

JARVIS PACE, 8 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO SCHOOL TIP #14



Discover your students' passions, dislikes, and even a bit about their families. It will make supporting them easier—especially when challenges arise.

BENINATI, 10 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO SCHOOL TIP #15



Don't do things for
your students that they can do
for themselves. The independenc
e will boost their self-confidence.
Kids are capable of so much more
than we realize!

WENDY MORREY, 11 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #16



Create a shared digital to-do list with your team or co-teacher (Google Docs work well). It's an easy way to track tasks and divide prep work!

LAUREN HAYES, 8 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO SCHOOL TIP #17



If you don't want to take
care of a class pet, you can
always bring in a pet rock!

KATIE SHELTON, 10 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO SCHOOL TIP #18



Set aside one day each week for grading and updating your gradebook. It keeps your bag (and weekends) paper-free!

SHATAMARA DAVIS, 17 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #19



**Shine bright like the star
you are, and embrace
your mistakes—they're part of
the journey!**

CHRISTINE RICK, 28 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #20



Read-alouds aren't just for the little ones! Sharing stories sparks imagination and builds connections at any age. Make it a classroom tradition!

STACEY BLACK, 14 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #21



**Classroom clean-up
hack! Label bins and shelves
with matching pics. Start the
year with a “Where is my
home” game—students love
keeping their space tidy!**

SUSANNAH ALLEN, 31 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #22



Boost literacy with digital tools! Use interactive reading apps, online libraries, and digital writing platforms to engage students. Explore local library resources, too!

THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #23



Give students a voice in the classroom library. Let them rate and recommend books for their peers in a cozy reading corner. A love of reading starts with choice!

KATIE MOORE, 3 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #24



Kick off the school year with read-alouds to teach classroom rules and expectations. One of my favorites is *The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes.*

KATIE SHELTON, 10 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #25



Always clean off your desk before you leave. Every other table can have projects on it, but having one organized space to return to in the morning will help you plan the rest of your day.

WENDY MORREY, 11 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO SCHOOL TIP #26



Set timers for those quick classroom transitions and track the times on your whiteboard—your students will love trying to beat their time every day! Efficient transitions mean more precious instructional time!

SEAN LINDSEY, 11 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #27



Start your week with a *mystery word* aligned with the skills being taught. Drop hints throughout the week and reveal the word on Friday! It's a fun way to build excitement around phonics!

JARVIS PACE, 8 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #28



Phonemic awareness just got even more fun! Try calling gro to line up by the sound of the first phoneme in their name. It's a playful way to reinforce key skills!

JENNY KIER, 13 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO SCHOOL TIP #29



Remind students and families that recipes, graphic novels—and even closed captions on TV—are all fun ways to practice reading.

KATIE MOORE, 3 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #30



Give students the gift of *think time*

After you ask a

question, pause and count to

seven. You'll be surprised at

how many more students

become willing and eager to

respond.

ASHLEY GARGULAK, 10 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM



BACK TO

SCHOOL TIP #31



Give yourself grace.

Whether it's your first or 25th

year in the classroom, there

will be challenges—but you've

got this!

RACHEL McCOY, 16 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM

Here's to a fantastic school year!

Reading Horizons empowers educators to eradicate illiteracy with effective, tech-enabled foundational reading instruction that helps all students achieve reading proficiency.

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