

LOGISTICS

To **find a classroom to visit**, you can start by contacting the schools in the district where you reside. If you have school age children, or have friends or colleagues with school age children, you may also talk with their teachers or principal about being a guest teacher.

Educate yourself about your school, and plan your transportation arrangements (for example, many schools in cities are not accessible by public transportation).

Confirm arrangements with the school. Please inform your school's teacher, principal, and all relevant security officers of your upcoming arrival, and remember to check in with the front office or security desk when you arrive at the school. Many schools today, particularly in urban areas, have strict security to ensure the students' safety, and any outside individuals must be registered before entering the classroom.

ACS provides an age-appropriate curriculum for students. We offer lesson plans for elementary, middle, and high schools. These materials can be found on our website [here](#).

ACS will also send you Pocket Constitutions for your students. These are both fun souvenirs and important visual aids for your lesson. Please respond with your mailing address and the estimated number of students you will teach, and we will send you Pocket Constitutions for your class.

Talk with the teacher. Don't get caught off guard: find out as much as you can about the class, and then use this information to guide your lesson planning. Ask what your students already know about the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the 1st Amendment, etc.; what level the students are for their grade (some classes are way below grade level, while others are way above); how well the students read; whether they can handle working with partners or in groups; and whether activities involving movement around the class are appropriate. In addition, communicate your lesson in advance, as the teacher may want to plan a homework assignment or an essay that builds off of your lecture. You should also talk with the teacher about any topics that are potentially controversial the teacher may not be comfortable with them or may feel that the students would not be able to handle them maturely.

TEACHING TIPS

Teaching a classroom is like any other oral presentation. It is a good idea to **carefully prepare** each activity you plan to lead, each question you plan to ask, and each lecture you will deliver. If your lesson calls for materials, it is also a good idea to organize the materials so that they will be ready to use without mid-lesson sorting.

Be aware that a typical lesson is 45-55 minutes in length. **You might be surprised by how fast this time passes once the lesson begins.** Many of ACS' lesson plans are intended to be comprehensive, and may well provide enough material for several lessons. This is to help you be flexible and be prepared to shift gears as necessary.

Do Not Lecture. The more interactive, the more enjoyable it will be for you and the students.

Let the students do the teaching! For everything you plan to do, ask yourself whether a student could do it instead. Students can write on the board, read passages aloud, call on other students, number students off into groups, and explain or act out the facts of cases. Students listen and learn better from their peers.

Get both energetic and quiet students involved. Identify the class clown and shy wallflowers and get them engaged at the start. Utilize the energetic students, who may otherwise get restless and become disruptive due to boredom. These students are good volunteers; get them involved and engaged immediately. Don't let quiet or bored students who easily fall behind "disappear." While they may be less eager to volunteer, they will often have thoughtful answers, and you need to get them involved from the start. For example, they can help pass out materials. Also, use physical proximity to keep students engaged: stand close to students who you suspect are drifting away (while respecting personal boundaries).

Model everything. Model active listening when you want them to listen. To do this, use body language to show that all of your attention is on the person speaking. That will encourage the other students to do so as well. If someone interrupts or is talking while that student is talking, you can ask the student who has the floor to pause for a moment; say that you are having trouble hearing him/her because of the commotion and that you really want to hear what he/she has to say. Ask the commotion-causers to share their thoughts after the current speaker is done so that you and the class can hear both of them.

Be flexible. Have more activities planned than you anticipate having time for (use them if the activities go faster than planned, and know which ones you plan to cut if the first activities take much longer than expected). Have a backup plan for everything. For instance, if you ask students to read something aloud but they prove unable, have an alternative plan in mind for how to deliver the information.

Do not engage in power struggles with the students.

If a student is uncooperative, do not escalate the situation. If you use the methods described at the training and on this sheet, it is unlikely that you will have problems with students acting up. But if you do, rely on the teacher to handle the situation. You are a guest speaker and not their disciplinarian.

Concluding. Get the students to summarize what they learned.