



Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District

Instructional Office Newsletter

How to Survive the End of the School Year

Maintain consistency and routines.

I establish routines the very first day of school. If students fall away from these routines, we review them. Eventually, students realize routines help us and that I will hold them accountable.

Well, in honest reflection, I have found myself straying from the routines. For example, one of my routines is for students to enter the room and begin working. As summer approaches, I will start class without writing the first assignment on the board. It confuses students and ruins all of the work I did in August and September.

Students thrive on consistency and even if we teachers find it difficult to maintain routines, we owe it to students to do so.

Show students where the class is headed.

I stumbled upon this by accident. Students were asking questions about due dates and final quizzes, and I pulled up my lesson plans. They loved it... why, I have no idea. Maybe they thought these were secretive documents? Insider secrets? Nope, just a word document. (Insert shrugging emoji.)



I always try to alert students to upcoming assignments, but this act of complete transparency calmed my class. Now, I regularly show my students my lesson plans (with no revealing information!) especially at the end of the school year. When I return from spring break,

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IMPORTANT DATES

June 8 DY Graduation



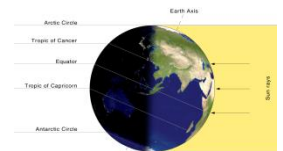
June 14 Flag Day



June 16 Father's Day

June 18 Last Day of School

June 21 Summer Solstice
@ 11:54 AM



IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Central office is a **fragrance-free zone** so please be respectful and plan accordingly when you visit.

Due to one of our members at the CO being highly sensitive to any type of fragrance, we ask that staff visiting/meeting at the Administration building refrain from using any scented products. Fragrances from personal care products, air fresheners, laundry and other cleaning products have been associated with adversely affecting a person's health. We ask that we all work together to make the environment a safe and healthy workplace for everyone.



Thank you very much for your cooperation!





(Continued from page 1)

I will show students the plan for the final four to five weeks.

Students feel some control, and I hear less grumbling. Clarity with students really helps me survive the end of the school year.

Color.



I pull out crayons and colored pencils to survive the end of the school year. Students might be riled, and coloring can calm people! I review grammar with [Color by Grammar](#) and literature with [literary device sheets](#). I was incredibly skeptical to ask older students to color, but they loved it.

The end of the school year can present interesting behavior. Allowing students to color has [shown benefits](#).

Take care of yourself.

Eat lunch. Bring fruit or veggies. Take the stairs. Drink water (and put down the coffee). Sleep at night.

The end of the school year is a whirlwind. Your health matters. You will be a better teacher if you are healthy.

Grading? Be smart.

Think of ways to maximize your efforts. If you have a pile to grade, could you turn some activities into completion points? Does everything need a grade?

Here's a trick I use specifically with student writing: pile all papers by student name. I will then ask Student #1 to come to my desk. I will conference over the papers and give feedback. Then, I will explain that I want one of the papers returned. My expectation is



that this will be a very polished piece of writing since I've given feedback and the student had extra time to make corrections.

I'll continue with each student. Now, students might turn in different papers! However, I have conferenced with students, provided feedback, and given the opportunity to make corrections. Now, the final paper that I do grade is stronger and therefore, I take less time grading it than I would have previously.

Step in the hall and read.

What do you want your students to do over summer break? I want mine to read. I drive home this message one more time through my actions. I want to put up my feet and relax, but I know that students need that modeling a few more times.

Plus, we know that reading relaxes people. Reading benefits both you and your students.

Review with movement.

Stations are the easiest way (for me, at least) to get students up and moving. I fill stations with a variety of tools, especially as we review for finals. For instance, I might have one station with [writing errors](#). Another could have a [grammar sort](#). (Ask students to take pictures of their finished product!) For literature, add analytical questions from a unit, and let students choose which question to answer.

Get creative with station assignments, and the class period will move quickly.

Read-alouds and summer reading.

Increasingly, I am exposing students to more literature through [read-alouds](#). If I have time at the end of the hour, I will read a few poems or part of a short story. (Here are a few other [ideas](#).) I even read children's books.

Last year was my first year trying this, and my goal is to increase the number of books students borrow over the summer. My classroom library will NOT help anyone boxed up over the summer. I send as many





books home with students. This past year, most of my books made it back! My overall goal with a [classroom library](#) is that I average \$1 per book, so if I don't have a returned book, I don't stress.

Study in unique ways.

GimKit and Kahoot are interactive digital review forums. If you have never used one of these review sites, give them a chance! I know the end of the year can be overwhelming, but once you have the account set up, students will be learning the entire class period.

Address media literacy.

The content for an ELA class is endless, and that content includes media literacy. Students respond well to media lessons because they realize that marketing strategies and the media are stacked against them. Students naturally have an interest in studying this. If you've taught *The Hunger Games* (or students have access to the books), you can examine how [reality television](#) plays a role in manipulating the audience.

Another opportunity for media literacy involves marketing tools and branding material from everyday packaging. Water bottles, fast food containers, candy bar wrappers... all of those items include marketing. Teach students the hidden [secrets of marketing](#) for an engaging end of the year activity.

The end of the school year is exhausting. August seems so, so long ago. We all need to survive the end of the school year. Take care of yourself and implement engaging activities so that you and students end the year in a positive way.

30 End-of-Year Assignments and Activities for Every Grade

It's not over until the school bell rings.

The school year is coming to a close! Now is the time to celebrate achievements and reflect on the memories of all that's happened. Read on to find creative ideas for end-of-year assignments and



activities that will get your students remembering all of the great things they accomplished in the last nine months, and looking forward to exciting days ahead.

1. List what you've learned from A to Z.



What a great way to look back over what kids have learned! For each letter of the alphabet, have them write and illustrate something they learned or did throughout the year. Hit the link below to get a free printable template for this project. (This isn't just for little kids—any grade will be challenged by this activity on their own or as a group.)

2. Send thank you notes.

This is a skill every kid should learn—writing and sending thank you notes. Have kids write a note to someone who made their school year special, then seal them in envelopes, address them, and deliver by hand or mail. And while you're at it, why not [write a thank you note to your own class?](#)

3. Post best-of-the-year snapshots.



Ask your students to sum up their favorite school-year memory (Science Fair? Field Day? Creative class presentations?) in one snapshot. Younger kids can





draw pictures of the event, while older kids are likely to have a photo on their phone they'd be willing to share. Assemble them on a bulletin board with a few words from each student about what made that moment so special.

4. Count the days.

Instead of counting down the days until the end, count up the days from the year behind you! Get students counting by having them use a calendar to figure out how many Mondays you've had this year, how many Fridays, how many P.E. days and how many Jello-in-the-cafeteria days. Then work together to make a bar graph and hang it on the wall.

5. Let the students become the teachers.

Take a break and let the students lead the class for a change. If you're reviewing material for finals or an end-of-year test, have each kid (or a group) lead the review session on a particular topic. You can also have your kids create their own lesson on a topic they're passionate about. And we love this idea of [having kids in one grade make and present lessons on what students in the grade below them can expect to learn the following year](#). There are a lot of options here, and all of them give you time to take a breather!

6. Talk behind each other's backs (really!).

Have your students help tape a piece of lined paper to one another's backs. Have each student get out a felt-tipped marker (not a Sharpie—it may bleed through). Set a timer and put on some favorite music. Let the students mix around the room and write a positive message on each student's paper. For example, The best thing about you is ..., What I appreciate most about you is ..., I remember ..., etc. After a set amount of time, have students stop, remove their papers from their backs and enjoy reading the words of love from their classmates (and you too!).

7. Coast into summer.

These DIY memory coasters are easy to make and give kids an end-of-year souvenir to take home. [Get the free printable templates and complete instructions here.](#)



8. Read a book to get some closure.

Little ones especially have a hard time with the end of a school year. Next year lots of things will be different, and that can be a sad and even scary thought for some. [Try this list of young reader books](#) like *The Egg* by M. P. Robertson to spark conversations about what kids have learned and what lies ahead.

9. Plan a summer trip.



Here's an end-of-year assignment that includes both art and writing. Have kids draw a portrait of themselves, then use the template at the link below to cut out and decorate an enormous pair of sunglasses. On the glasses, write about a summer trip they're going to take, or just one they'd really like to take. [Sunglass template.](#)

10. Raise a glass and toast your class.

Students get a chance to practice public speaking in a very meaningful way in this end-of-year activity. Get a few liters of ginger ale and plastic champagne flutes from a party store, arrange your students in a circle, and have everyone say something—maybe a goal for the next school year, well-wishes for their peers, a favorite memory. After everyone has spoken, lift your glasses with a cheer and celebrate to end the school year.

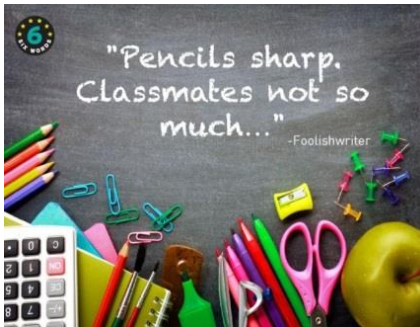
11. Author a six-word memoir.

This project has taken the world by storm. In six words, can you capture the essence of your school year? Kids can spend a little or a lot of time on this one, refining their words or even illustrating them. Collect them all





into a slide show (anonymous, if kids prefer) to share on the last day.



Learn more: [Six Words Memoir Project](#)

12. Take a field trip to the next grade.

Take your class to visit the classrooms they'll be in next year. Arrange to spend some time with the teachers, talk to the students, and hear more about what they'll be learning. This is a good way to allay fears many kids have about moving on from a classroom where they've been comfortable.

13. Design a school seal.



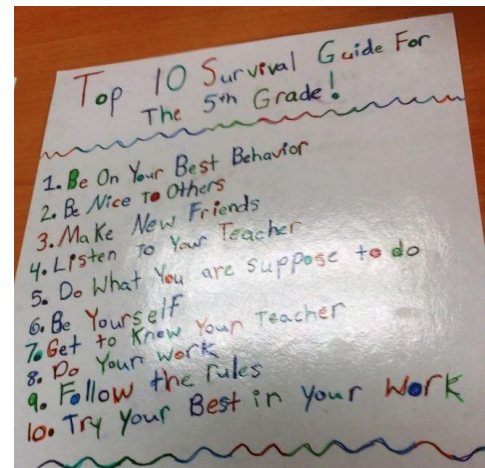
In this fun end-of-year activity that's perfect for social studies, have your students design a "Great Seal" for their school. First, break them into groups to talk about what makes your school special and memorable for them. Then, have each kid (or group) create their own "seal" based on the ones used by states and cities. This project is especially meaningful for kids about to move on to another school like junior high.



14. Determine your "People of the Year."

Time Magazine can't have all the fun! Help your students to compile a list of the "People of the Year" for your class. Include people important to your classroom (the custodian, the principal, everyone's favorite "lunch lady") along with classroom visitors and speakers from the year. Add in some people from current events and pop culture (the current president, a favorite musician) and even folks they studied throughout the year (Abraham Lincoln, Amelia Earheart). Try to take or draw portraits of each, and assign each student to write a brief bio of one of the people included.

15. Write letters or tips for next year's class.



Who better to advise next year's class on what they'll need to succeed than the kids who've just finished doing it? They can write letters on their own, or work together to create a master list of what it takes to make it in the next grade.

16. Create science-inspired art.

Ask your students to create a wall-worthy piece of art that reflects something they learned in science. Did you study plants? Maybe a watercolor of flowers. Or if you studied space? A cosmic-inspired number. Send their work home to help them remember, or collect them to create a bulletin board that will inspire next year's class about what they'll be learning.





17. Host an open-mic night.



Encourage kids to share the writing they've done in (and out of) class with an open mic night. Set up a stage complete with

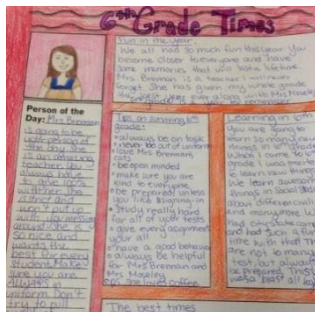
microphone and stool—get great tips for this at the link below—then bring kids up to tell a story or recite a poem. Overcome stage fright with a cool casual vibe and plenty of snacks.

18. Compose an end-of-year continuing story.

Write several story titles—"The Great Summer Adventure," "How My Teacher Lost Her Mind" or "My Teacher, My Hero" at the top of blank pages. Then, have each student start a story and after five minutes, pass the story to a neighbor who will continue writing. Continue writing round-robin style until you have several stories to read aloud to the class.

19. Publish a year-end newspaper.

You can do this one as a group or individually. Create a basic newspaper template and have the class fill in the "front page news." Recap the year, offer advice, illustrate favorite memories, and more. Then, pass these on to the grade below to give them an idea of what lies ahead.



20. Perform a High (or Middle or Elementary) School Musical number.

Break your students into groups and have them create (and perform) musical numbers commemorating the year. They can write new words to existing tunes, choreograph a lip-sync performance to an inspiring or

memorable song, or even come up with something entirely new. Invite parents or other classes to a final-day performance!

21. Assemble a Book Hall-of-Fame.



Have each student write (or draw) a reflection on the best book they read over the year. Then, save their reflections and post them on a bulletin board so that next year's students can glean reading ideas.

22. Play end-of-year charades.

Have each student write out one memorable moment from the school year on a slip of paper. Collect all the slips in a bag, hat, etc. Divide kids into teams and have them come up one team at a time, choose a slip and act out the memory for the group. No need to keep score—the goal is just to relive all the happy memories from the year.

23. Start a school graffiti wall.



Choose a wall in your school or classroom and





encourage kids to sign their name and date with a quote or other memory. Use permanent markers or small paint brushes. Each year, photograph the wall and then paint over it to start anew. If you have enough space, these walls can last longer and only be painted over every so many years, creating much more enduring memories. No wall room? Try a bulletin board or large sheet of paper instead.

24. Hold a “Stuff You Should Know” event.

Take a day or a week to pass on important things you want your kids to know as they move on in life without you. Share poems, songs, TED talks, quotes, books, and tips that you think will help them along their way. Don't forget to include simple life lessons (registering and preparing to vote, protecting yourself online, how to behave on an elevator) that school usually doesn't teach you. [Learn more about this end-of-year activity here.](#)

25. Print up a growing tree.



Capture each student's fingerprint as a tree leaf! Label them with their names, then hang them in your room from year to year so kids can see who's come before them.

26. Build a portfolio showcase.

Throughout the year, have students save their best work in a folder or box. Then, at the end of the year, each student chooses their favorite items to display in a portfolio like a binder or display board. Invite parents and friends to come view everyone's achievements.

27. Put together time capsules.

Students will have so much fun assembling time capsules to be opened some day in the future. These can be as simple as a plastic water bottle filled with information [\(Try these free printable prompts\)](#)



or a shoebox stuffed with items to represent what they did and learned over the school year.

28. Draw a school year timeline.

Classroom walls can start to look empty at the end of the year as you take things down to prepare for summer. Temporarily fill in the space with a long strip of butcher paper, then have kids create a timeline of the year. Break it down by month, then ask kids what they remember. Prompt their memories by having them look over their work (what a fun way to review!) and don't forget to include events, speakers, and holiday celebrations.

29. Plan a dream vacation.



Kids are already dreaming of how they'll fill the summer hours, so this last-minute math activity will be pure fun! Give kids a budget (say, \$2500) and then send them off to research whether their dream trip can be accomplished. Make sure they include airfare or gas money, lodgings, food, spending money, and all the incidentals that add up when you travel.

30. Fill out an end-of-year roundup.

END OF THE YEAR ROUND-UP

Name _____

Nickname _____

Age _____ Height _____

Grade _____ Teacher _____

School _____

Favorite color _____

Favorite food _____

Favorite part of school _____

Friends _____

Looking forward to next year because _____

Sometimes you just need a quick activity that doesn't take a lot of prep, and that's where this [free printable](#) comes in. Personalize it by taking and printing a photo of each student, or have them draw their own portrait in the space provided.

