

Thumbnail Learning

The Thumbnail Newsletter for Teachers



A helping hand at the touch of a button!

‘I touch the future. I teach.’ Christa McAuliffe.

“In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.” – Albert Camus

“Keep your face always toward the sunshine—and shadows will fall behind you.” – Walt Whitman

Hi, everyone,

Does your heart sink at the thought of the new school year? So many classes to get off the ground... so many new faces...names to learn.... There’s a thousand details to master and initiate and it all starts here. With you. We wouldn’t be human if we didn’t quail a little at thought of the heavy lifting, the tiny daily miracles we are about to perform, especially at the start of September. We hope we can help a little with this bumper edition of the Newsletter.

Top tip: Without being too preachy about it [sorry!] do try and carry a bit of holiday sunshine into your classrooms. Enjoy your teaching and help the kids to enjoy it too.

Top, top tip: pace yourself. This is not a sprint and the school year has its own rhythm that will carry you forward.

Have a great term!

Sarah and Roj.

Read on, Friend, to find a few tips and hints that might help with the heavy lifting and daily miracles.

First Challenge: the extended tutor period!

Quite a few of you will be tasked with managing your tutor group for an entire morning. That’s a lot of time to fill!

Here’s a few suggestions:

Practical stuff!

Check that everyone:

- Has their timetable
- Knows their way around the school. Obviously vital for a Y7 class but what about a new kid in an older class? Take a field trip round the site with your group if necessary.
- Knows the essential rules, like not having a mobile phone in school.
- Knows where to go if they need help.
- Knows the fire drill and assembly point.

Icebreakers for that first tutor period!

[Remember last months 'Survival Kit?' This is when you'll be so glad you bought those sticky notes, your new best friend in the classroom!]

Sticky notes:

1. New tutor group? Get the kids to write their names and wear them as name badges. Large, clear writing please and no nick names.

[Shortened names like 'Fred' are fine but don't begin on the 'Bulldozer Man' or 'Zombie.' There will be in-jokes that you don't get and definitely some inappropriate suggestions!]

Tip: as you work with the group, move around the room, memorising names as you go. Show off your skill at the end of the session!

2. Working in pairs, students write down a suggestion for the tutor group 'house rules'. Like 'no name calling' 'Everyone gets listened to.' Collect their sticky notes on the board, in topic groups.

Keep it simple. Is there a one-liner that sums up the ethos of their tutor group?

3. Inventors: get your tutor group to invent any or all of the following:
 - a. A form of transport to quickly and safely move between lessons
 - b. A new competitive sport (e.g. by mixing elements of existing sports - downhill hurdles, skateboard breakdancing, pole-vault judo...)
 - c. A phone case to make you stand out from the crowd
4. Each member of the tutor group interviews someone they don't know well in the group and reports back.

[Suggest you and the class draw up a list of 5 questions that everyone will be asked, such as 'Favourite subject...film... best moment...in my spare time I... ']

Again, use the sticky notes to help students form their ideas before telling the class what they suggest.]

Props!

Take in a bean bag. The person holding it is the only one allowed to speak and the rest of the class listen to them. Perhaps they are all answering the same question such as 'The best/worst thing about school...' The bean bag should be passed around so that everyone gets a turn.

Tip: keep charge of the bean bag; you don't want it being hurled across the room!

Reading!

Your school may already have a policy on this but if not, it's a good idea to build up a book box with more than enough for everyone to have a choice. Get your class in the habit of reading and talking about books.

Here are our suggestions to add to your book boxes or use as class readers:

Y7 and 8

Princess Victoria's War by Sarah Green and Roger Haines

A great read for both boys and girls. The young Princess Victoria, an orphan bullied by her wicked cousin, bravely defeats him with the help of her friends.

Emma and Houdini and James Price series by Roger Haines

A ghostly series where the clever pair, James and Emma, investigate the spooky goings-on at their school. A gripping read for both boys and girls.

Rowan, Leader of the Deer Kin by Sarah Green

Are there big cats roaming Britain? What does the class think? In the tradition of Watership Down this is the story of roe deer Rowan who leads his people in an epic journey. Will appeal to both boys and girls.

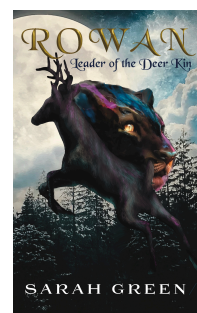
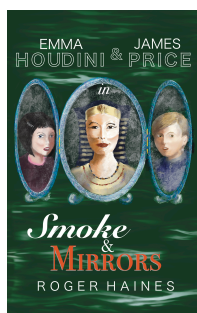
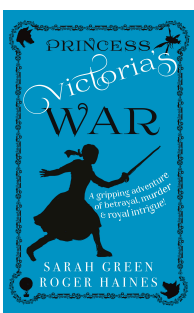
Y9

The Peaceweaver by Sarah Green

A Saxon princess; the goldsmith's daughter and a struggle for survival. With great female leads, this book is packed with action and intrigue.

And did we say that there's free bonus material?

There are extensive teaching materials for each of these books on our website for you to download! Pop over to thumbnail-books.com to find out more.



One last thing:

Before you get too far into the fresh new academic year, take some time to reflect on your professional practice! Use our handy handout to think about your approach, environment and priorities.

'A good pilot is compelled to evaluate what's happened, so they can apply what they've learned.' - Viper, Top Gun (Also applies to teachers!)

Visit our website!

thumbnail-books.com

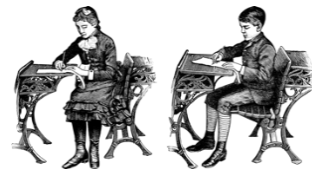
We are an independent book publisher with lots of great, original titles for you to explore, and FREE teaching materials to discover!



THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE YOUR TEACHING STYLE:



THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE YOUR CLASSROOM:



THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE YOUR TEACHING PRIORITIES THIS YEAR:

