

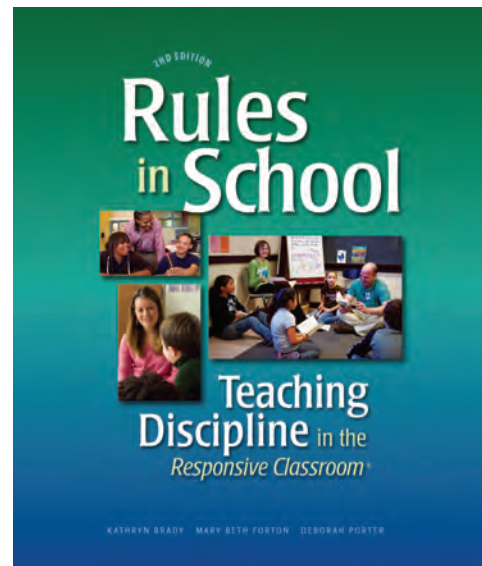
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR

Rules in School

Teaching Discipline in the Responsive Classroom®

Introduction: Overview of the *Responsive Classroom* Approach to Discipline

1. Before you delve further into the *Responsive Classroom* approach to discipline, think about the classroom rules you've implemented in the past. Which ones worked best? What do you think made them successful? What does an ideal set of classroom rules look like to you? Why?
2. The author discusses three common approaches to discipline (pp. 3–6). What strikes you most about how these approaches differ from the *Responsive Classroom* approach to discipline (pp. 7–9)?
3. The *Responsive Classroom* approach to discipline “aims to help children develop self-control, begin to understand what socially responsible behavior is, and come to value such behavior” (p. 7). Think back to a time when you were a student and didn't follow a rule. How did your teacher respond? How did that make you feel? What did you learn from that interaction? How would you respond to a similar situation with one of the students you teach?



Published by Center for Responsive Schools, developer of *Responsive Classroom*®, a research-based educational approach associated with greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and improved school climate. Visit www.responsiveclassroom.org for further information and additional resources.

Chapter One: Creating Rules with Students

1. The author lists four steps (pp. 12–13) in creating rules:

- Articulating learning goals
- Generating rules
- Framing the rules in the positive
- Condensing the list down to a few global rules

Which of these steps do you think you already practice well? Which do you think might be most challenging for you to implement? Which would be the easiest?

2. Interactive Modeling (pp. 16–21) teaches students what positive behavior looks like, sounds like, and feels like. Which classroom routines do you think you might teach through Interactive Modeling? (For ideas, check out page 17.) Use the steps on page 18 to help you create your Interactive Modeling lesson.

3. The author suggests that teachers should examine their own feelings and assumptions about rules before discussing rules with students. After answering the questions at the bottom of page 27, compare your answers with the list on page 28. What insight have you gained from this exercise?

4. Helping children articulate their learning goals for the year is a crucial step in the rule-establishing process (pp. 24–41). Thinking about the students you teach, what steps could you take to ensure that they come up with meaningful, realistic goals for school? What wording might you use?

5. The author discusses reasons why teachers would create rules on their own (pp. 42–43). Do any of these reasons apply to you? What are ways you can include students in the process when you must create rules on your own?

Chapter Two: Teaching Positive Behavior: Bringing the Rules to Life

1. To succeed, students need encouragement, support, and opportunities to practice positive behavior. This chapter offers four ways (pp. 48–68) to provide those essentials. Which of these ways gets your attention the most right now? Why?
2. Write down questions you've asked (or plan on asking) to help students apply school rules to specific situations. Use the tips for asking open-ended questions on page 50. Are your questions open-ended? Are they specific and clear? How might you rephrase questions to fully "challenge students to think deeply about a situation, draw on prior knowledge, and listen carefully to one another's ideas" (p. 50)?
3. Role-playing works best when situations "spring from the life of the classroom" (p. 55). Thinking of the students you teach, what types of role-playing scenarios would be most effective in teaching them positive behavior?
4. Read through the pages on the three categories of teacher language: reinforcing, reminding, and redirecting (pp. 58–67). What resonates most with you? Does anything jump out as similar to or different from the way you usually speak to students?
5. The author states that changing language is a conscious process. Looking on page 68 at the list of possible strategies to help change language, which do you think will be the easiest for you to try? Which might be the most challenging? Which strategy are you most excited about?

Chapter Three: Responding to Misbehavior

1. The author says that “when using visual cues and gestures, it’s important to pay attention to body language” (p. 76). What do you notice about your own body language when using visual cues and gestures with students? What might help you continue and build upon what you’re doing well when it comes to your body language?
2. Review the chart on page 79. What, if anything, jumps out at you? Where did you say “Aha!” or “Hmm . . .” to yourself?

3. _____ S C E N A R I O S _____

- Lamar doodles on his worksheet instead of doing the assignment. The teacher takes the worksheet from him and says, “Lamar, since you don’t want to work, you will not be allowed to lead the class to lunch for the rest of the week.”
- Cynthia runs in the hallway, even after the teacher reminds her to walk. The teacher shouts, “Cynthia! I am taking away your participation in sharing time until you learn to walk in the halls.”
- During story time, Phina blurts out questions every time the teacher turns the page. The teacher closes the book and announces that story time is cancelled until everyone learns to listen quietly.

Think about why the teacher’s response in each of these scenarios might feel like a punishment. What logical consequences could the teachers have given instead? Use the “three Rs of logical consequences” on page 77 and the chart on page 79 as guidance.

4. In the scenarios above, what do you imagine are some possible causes of the children’s behavior? With those possible causes in mind, and thinking about the proactive strategies that you read about in Chapter Two, what might a teacher have done to prevent the behavior? To stop the behavior before it escalated?

Chapter Four: Grades K–2

1. Creating classroom rules is a collaborative group process (pp. 109–117). Think about the developmental stage and particular interests and strengths of the children you teach. How will you introduce the rule creation process to them and what language will you use to set them up for success? Thinking about your own teaching style, what beliefs, practices, and supports will enable you to conduct this process and use the resulting rules effectively?
2. The classroom scenario described on pages 119–120 shows the importance of focusing on the positive consequences of following rules. The author emphasizes that “a consequence is the result of an action” (p. 120). What about this approach to teaching rules stands out to you? In what ways can you reinforce the idea of positive consequences in your discussions with students about following rules?
3. The author suggests writing letters to families to inform them about *Responsive Classroom* rules and discipline, including logical consequences (pp. 41, 143). What are some other ways you could involve families in helping students be invested in classroom rules?

4. _____ S C E N A R I O S _____

- At independent reading time, Jamison chooses a book and sits down at his desk to read. At first he turns pages carefully, but after a while he gets excited and starts flipping through them more and more quickly. When Jamison gets near the end of the story, he turns a page so vigorously he tears it out of the book.
- Students are using rulers to measure different objects in the classroom. As students move among the different objects, Deanna waves her ruler in the air, despite the teacher having taught the class how to use rulers safely. Before long, Deanna’s ruler hits another student.

Which of the three logical consequences described in Chapter Three might you use to teach Jamison how to take responsibility for his actions? Which would you use to teach Deanna? Refer to the “Guidelines for Using Logical Consequences” (pp. 137–148) to help you decide.

5. In the scenarios above, what do you imagine are some possible causes of the children’s behavior? With those possible causes in mind, and thinking about the proactive strategies you read about in Chapter Two, what might a teacher have done to prevent the behavior? To stop the behavior before it escalated?
6. On pages 122–137, the author describes how she introduces logical consequences to her class. Think about the students you teach and your personal style as a teacher. What might you do similarly when you introduce logical consequences? What might you modify while still meeting the goal of helping students see logical consequences as something that supports their learning?

Chapter Five: Grades 3–5

1. Creating classroom rules is a collaborative group process (pp. 152–164). Think about the developmental stage and particular interests and strengths of the children you teach. How will you introduce this process to them and what language will you use to set them up for success? Thinking about your own teaching style, what beliefs, practices, and supports will enable you to conduct this process and use the resulting rules effectively?
2. As pages 169–174 explain, Interactive Modeling and role-playing have different purposes. Thinking about the students you teach and their classroom life, which routines would you teach using Interactive Modeling? Using role-playing?
3. The author suggests writing letters to families to inform them about *Responsive Classroom* rules and discipline, including logical consequences (pp. 41, 188–189). What are some other ways you could involve families in helping students be invested in classroom rules?

4. _____ S C E N A R I O S _____

- Natalia, Miriam, and Lily are good friends. They usually sit together during group activities and lunch when the teacher allows free-choice seating. But today at Morning Meeting, the three girls argue back and forth until Natalia and Miriam loudly announce that Lily isn't allowed to sit with them anymore.
- During sharing, Lincoln sticks his foot into the aisle despite the teacher having taught the class how to sit at their desks safely. When Doug gets up for his turn to share, he trips over Lincoln's foot and his model airplane falls to the floor and breaks.

Which of the three logical consequences described in Chapter Three might you use to teach Natalia and Miriam how to take responsibility for their actions? Which would you use to teach Lincoln? Refer to "Logical Consequences in Action" (pp. 189–194) to help you decide.

5. In the scenarios above, what do you imagine are some possible causes of the children's behavior? With those possible causes in mind, and thinking about the proactive strategies you read about in Chapter Two, what might a teacher have done to prevent the behavior? To stop the behavior before it escalated?
6. On pages 179–187, the author describes how she introduces logical consequences to her class. Think about the students you teach and your personal style as a teacher. What might you do similarly when you introduce logical consequences? What might you modify while still meeting the goal of helping students see logical consequences as something that supports their learning?

Chapter Six: Grades 6–8

1. Creating classroom rules is a collaborative group process (pp. 201–211). Think about the developmental stage and particular interests and strengths of the students you teach. How will you introduce this process to them and what language will you use to set them up for success? Thinking about your own teaching style, what beliefs, practices, and supports will enable you to conduct this process and use the resulting rules effectively?
2. Page 202 provides ways to engage students in thinking of and articulating “one most important goal” for school. Which of these might work well for the students you teach? Why?
3. The author suggests using a “light touch combined with a serious message” (p. 204) to help those students who resist naming a goal. What strikes you most about this method? What are some other ways you might encourage students who resist?
- 4 The author suggests writing letters to families to inform them about *Responsive Classroom* rules (pp. 41, 206). What are some other ways you could involve families in helping students be invested in classroom rules?

5. _____ S C E N A R I O S _____
- The class is learning about the locations of different countries in Europe. When the teacher asks Nikki to locate Spain on the globe, Nikki spins the globe so fast that it topples onto the floor.
 - Oriel, Marcus, Tom, and Uri play basketball at recess every day. Today, Jordan asks if she can join them. Tom tells Jordan that she isn’t fast enough to play with them. Oriel, Marcus, and Uri nod in agreement.

Which of the three logical consequences described in Chapter Three might you use to teach Nikki how to take responsibility for her actions? Which would you use to teach the students who excluded Jordan? Refer to “Responding to Misbehavior” (pp. 220–228) to help you decide.

- 6 In the scenarios above, what do you imagine are some possible causes of the students’ behavior? With those possible causes in mind, and thinking about the proactive strategies you read about in Chapter Two, what might a teacher have done to prevent the behavior? To stop the behavior before it escalated?
- 7 On pages 214–220, the author describes how she introduces logical consequences to her class. Think about the students you teach and your personal style as a teacher. What might you do similarly when you introduce logical consequences? What might you modify while still meeting the goal of helping students see logical consequences as something that supports their learning?