

First Day Back Starter Pack

Twelve ready-to-use questions for the first lesson after half term. Find out what stuck before you teach anything new.

THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES

A 3-step first lesson routine

1

60 seconds on the break. Then pens down.

As they sit down: "You've got 60 seconds to write about your half term. Anything you like." When the time's up, pens down and eyes front. The holiday chat goes on paper, not across the room.

2

Lower your voice.

Give the next instruction a little quieter than usual. A calm, low voice sets the tone for the term far better than a loud one.

3

Start with a quick win.

Pick one question from this pack that everyone can have a go at and run it as a Get It? check. Every pupil explains it in their own words, and you see who kept it from before the break, by name.

RUNNING IT IN GET IT?

From login to answers in four steps

1

Pick your class

Sign in at app.dotheygetit.app and choose your class. First time? Add a class and paste your class list in once, one name per line.

2

Type the topic

Under New check, type the topic in "What did you teach?" (we give you the words below) and press 1. Generate questions.

3

Swap in our questions

Click into a question, select it all and paste ours over it. Remove spares with **x** or use + Add question. Then press 2. Create check.

4

Code on the board

Show the class code or the QR code. Pupils pick their name and explain each answer in their own words. You see Get it, Shaky or Struggling for each pupil, by name.

No devices in your room? Every question works just as well on mini whiteboards or paper.

KS3 Maths

TYPE IN "WHAT DID YOU TEACH?"
place value, negative numbers and adding fractions

1

YEAR 7

Explain why 0.7 is bigger than 0.65, even though 65 is bigger than 7.

A GOOD ANSWER

Compares the tenths first: 7 tenths beats 6 tenths. Might write 0.7 as 0.70, so 70 hundredths against 65 hundredths.

WATCH FOR "More digits means bigger."

2

YEAR 7

Explain why -8 is smaller than -3. Use a number line or a real-life example.

A GOOD ANSWER

-8 is further below zero, so it sits further left on a number line. A temperature of -8°C is colder than -3°C.

WATCH FOR "8 is bigger than 3, so -8 is bigger."

3

YEARS 7-8

Explain why $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3}$ is not $\frac{2}{5}$.

A GOOD ANSWER

Halves and thirds are different sized pieces, so you can't just add the tops and the bottoms. Make them sixths: $\frac{3}{6} + \frac{2}{6} = \frac{5}{6}$. Bonus: $\frac{2}{5}$ is less than $\frac{1}{2}$, so it can't be right.

WATCH FOR Adding the tops and adding the bottoms.

1

YEAR 7

Explain the difference between a simile and a metaphor. Give your own example of each.

A GOOD ANSWER

A simile compares using "like" or "as" (the snow was like a blanket). A metaphor says one thing is another (the snow was a blanket). Stronger answers say what the comparison makes the reader picture or feel.

WATCH FOR Any comparison counts as a simile.

2

YEARS 7-8

A character slams the door and says nothing at dinner. What can you infer about how they feel? Explain which clues tell you.

A GOOD ANSWER

Infers a feeling that is never stated, such as angry, upset or hurt, and links it to the clues: "slams" suggests force or anger, the silence suggests they are withdrawn or holding something back.

WATCH FOR Retelling what happens instead of inferring.

3

YEARS 8-9

A writer describes a house as "crouching at the end of the lane". What does "crouching" suggest, and why might the writer have chosen it?

A GOOD ANSWER

Spots the personification: the house seems alive. "Crouching" suggests hiding, waiting or about to pounce, so it feels threatening. Links the word to the mood the writer wants.

WATCH FOR Naming the technique with no comment on its effect.

KS3 Science

TYPE IN "WHAT DID YOU TEACH?"
 cells, particles and balanced forces

1

YEAR 7

Explain two differences between a plant cell and an animal cell, and why a plant cell needs them.

A GOOD ANSWER

Any two: a cell wall (strengthens and supports the cell), chloroplasts (where photosynthesis happens), a permanent vacuole (filled with cell sap, keeps the cell firm). Animal cells have none of these.

WATCH FOR "Plant cells have a cell wall instead of a membrane." They have both.

2

YEAR 7

Using particles, explain why you can squash a gas but you can't squash a solid.

A GOOD ANSWER

Gas particles are far apart with lots of space between them, so they can be pushed closer together. Solid particles are tightly packed in a fixed pattern and only vibrate, so there is no space to close.

WATCH FOR "The particles themselves get smaller."

3

YEARS 7-8

A book is resting on a table and not moving. Explain what forces act on it and why it stays still.

A GOOD ANSWER

Its weight (gravity) pulls it down and the table pushes up with a support force (normal contact force). They are equal in size and opposite in direction, so the forces are balanced and its motion doesn't change.

WATCH FOR "No forces act on it because it isn't moving."

Any subject

TYPE IN "WHAT DID YOU TEACH?"
 your real topic from before half term, e.g. "the causes of World War One"

1

ANY YEAR

In your own words, what does [key word] mean? Give an example of it.

A GOOD ANSWER

An accurate meaning in their own words, not a copied definition, plus an example that genuinely fits.

WATCH FOR A word-perfect definition with a wrong example. It was memorised, not understood.

2

ANY YEAR

What's the most common mistake people make with [topic], and how do you avoid it?

A GOOD ANSWER

Names a real, specific mistake and explains the right way and why. Spotting the trap shows they understand the idea, not just the steps.

WATCH FOR "Not checking your work." Too vague to tell you anything.

3

ANY YEAR

Explain [topic] to someone who missed every lesson on it. Start with the most important idea.

A GOOD ANSWER

Leads with the central idea, gets it right, puts the steps in a sensible order and uses an example. What they leave out tells you what didn't stick.

WATCH FOR A list of facts with no link between them.



Get It?

Built for UK KS3, KS4 and GCSE teachers. You set the topic, pupils explain it in their own words, and you see who got it, by name. Free while in beta, and pupils need no account.

dotheygetit.app