

Participating in Class

Class participation is a valuable part of learning. In many cases, participating in class is an important criterion that teachers use to assign final grades.

Many students are reluctant to participate in class. This may be because they are shy or are fearful of being judged and criticized. Other students participate in class, but do so inappropriately.

Here are some suggestions that can help you be an effective class participant.

- Be sure to come to class prepared. Do all assignments and readings and review your notes from previous class sessions. This will help to prevent you from making uninformed comments or asking inappropriate questions.
- As you prepare for class, think about important questions and concerns that may come up in class. Be sure that you are prepared to handle these.
- Try to sit close to the front of the class. It's hard to stay uninvolved when you are in close proximity to the teacher.
- Listen to what the other students say. You can then build off their comments to make your own.
- Have confidence that your opinions will be valued by your teacher and by the other students.
- Be constructive when you react to something another student says. You can disagree, but don't go into an "attack mode."
- Don't "hog" the class. Teachers and students alike resent someone who seems to have something to say about everything.
- Don't be afraid to be wrong. Learning is a change in behavior based on experience. You can learn from being wrong.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. This is a good learning technique. Also, the chances are that other students in the class have the same questions as you do, and they will appreciate your asking.
- Be sure that your questions and comments are relevant to the class topic. Don't waste the time of the teacher and other students by going off track.
- Don't take it personally if others disagree with what you say. Class should be a good forum for give and take.

Finally, here is a suggestion for students who are shy. Come to class early so that you can talk to some of the other students. This will help you to establish a personal connection with them so that you will feel more comfortable about participating in class

Get involved in your classes. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain by participating.

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