

Learning English

What are routines?

Routines are repetitive actions or words that can be used to signal change in the class. After seeing or hearing these 'markers' several times, the children come to know what to expect. Routines therefore help establish norms in the class, and the children are made to feel more secure and independent.

For example, **Hello** and **Bye Routines** help us to begin and end the class in an organised way. A typical Hello Routine might be the following rhyme done with actions:

*Hands up, hands down
Shake your body, shake your body,
Hands up, hands down,
Let's start!*

And to finish the class we can say the following:

*Hands up, hands down
Shake your body, shake your body,
Hands up, hands down,
Let's go!*

Instead of a rhyme, we might also use a short dialogue in pairs. For example, at the beginning of the lesson, tell the class to *Stand up*, say *Hello* to their neighbour, *shake hands*

and *sit down*. At the end of the same lesson, ask the class to *Stand up*, say *Goodbye* to their neighbour, *shake hands* and *sit down*.

Why are routines useful?

If we do the same Hello and Bye routine over several classes, the children become familiar with the structure of the class, and the routines automatically signal the beginning or the end of the class. Children feel more confident and relaxed if they know what is expected of them, and routines can help us organise the class.

Classroom routines aren't necessarily just starting or finishing a class, they can include everything we do in class. For example, we might use the same language to start an activity ('It's time for a song...' or 'It's time for a story...'), or the same piece of music to calm the class down, or a sign to indicate that the children should return to their places and be quiet. Or we can move the children to the front of the classroom to sit in a semi-circle every time we tell a story. If we repeat these routines over and over again, the children quickly know how to 'interpret' the signs and 'managing' the class becomes much easier.

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*Some great routines have been suggested by teachers.
See **Tips and Teachers' Tales** on page 10.*



Through Routines