

# 7 ways to praise students

Praise is one of the most powerful tools you have as a teacher. These seven tips can help you praise students in effective, meaningful, and empowering ways.

## 1 **Be precise about what you're praising.**

Specific praise allows students to identify exactly what they did well and reinforces the positive behavior you want students to repeat.

## 2 **Praise the process and progress, not just the outcome.**

When you praise success along the way, you're reinforcing that the process and strategies students use are just as important as reaching the goal.

## 3 **Be clear about your standards and expectations.**

Explicitly state the criteria you're using to evaluate an assignment or the behaviors you expect. Students can then match the praise to those clearly defined expectations.

## 4 **Be sincere.**

Students know when you're being disingenuous. Insincere praise can make students doubt you and wonder why you're not telling the truth.

## 5 **Avoid comparisons to other students.**

Praise students for mastering a skill they're working on rather than telling them they did better than someone else.

## 6 **Praise students for hard work.**

Focus your comments on how much effort students put in or which techniques they use. This emphasizes what students can control rather than skills that come naturally to them.

## 7 **Avoid overpraising.**

The instinct to heap on the praise (especially for students who struggle) is well-intentioned, but it can backfire. Overpraising for small things can make students doubt whether they're capable of handling big things.