



New Teacher Survival Kit

Tips, Tools, and Resources



Compliments of
Texas AFT

800-222-3827
www.texasaft.org





Welcome to teaching! The beginning of a new year is a crucial time for students and teachers. What you do to establish an effective classroom management system and create an environment that supports learning will influence what your students accomplish throughout the year. Everyone knows learning cannot take place in chaos. We also know well-managed classrooms don't just happen. They are the result of teachers' careful planning before the year begins and their deliberate implementation of the plan on the first day of school and thereafter. Today there is a solid research base that identifies the practices of effective classroom managers at the beginning of the year.

Studies have consistently found that the most successful teachers:

- arrange and organize their classrooms to support instructional goals;
- establish procedures for conducting routine activities and rules to govern student behavior;
- teach rules and procedures as they would any new content area; and,
- actively monitor students and consistently apply appropriate consequences.

While these findings validate many of the things good teachers do intuitively, the research also offers some new ideas and approaches. This guide summarizes the consistent findings from classroom management research conducted over the past 25 years. It is designed to help you and your students get off to a good start and have a productive school year.

Good classroom management is the result of a three-stage process:

1. Before the year begins—planning and preparation;
2. During the first days of school—deliberate introduction and reinforcement of expectations; and,
3. Throughout the year—maintaining cooperation through consistency and effective instruction.



Stage I: Before the Year Begins

Arranging Your Classroom

Good teachers know the physical environment of the classroom can either enhance or hinder learning. Appropriate room preparation and arrangement of materials conserve class time for learning, while inadequate planning interferes with instruction by causing interruptions and delays.

An effective room arrangement is also essential to classroom management because it eliminates distractions and minimizes opportunities for students to disrupt others.

When arranging student desks or tables, keep in mind potential distractions such as windows and doors, small-group work areas, or your desk. Leave enough room around student desks so you can easily reach each student when monitoring or giving help. Plan to seat students who need extra attention close to the area where you spend more of your time.

At the beginning of the year, consider arranging student desks in rows facing the major instructional area. This will allow you to deliver instructions to the whole class, monitor student behavior more readily, and become familiar with each student's work habits. Once you have established your management system, you may want to move desks into clusters or other flexible groupings.

Remember that your classroom is the learning environment for both you and your students. Research shows that effective managers take stock of their rooms and the characteristics of their students and develop a room plan that meets their instructional, behavioral, and organizational needs.

Keys to Good Classroom Design

- Ensure an easy flow of traffic through the room and keep high traffic areas, such as those near the teacher's desk, pencil sharpener, and wastebasket, free from congestion.
- Make sure you have a clear view of all students at all times.
- Ensure that students can easily see instructional displays and presentations.
- Make storage space and materials readily accessible.



Procedures and Rules

Before the year begins, effective classroom managers carefully consider how they want their classrooms to function and the way they want their students to behave. Good managers think through what procedures students need to know in order to perform specific activities, and they establish classroom rules that clearly articulate their expectations for behavior.

Procedures guide students in how to perform routine instructional and housekeeping tasks.

A smooth-running classroom requires as many as 30 to 60 procedures. Examples of such routines include:


- getting the teacher's attention;
- using the pencil sharpener, bathroom, or drinking fountain;
- moving within and outside the classroom;
- creating orderly lines;
- storing personal belongings;
- using learning centers; and,
- taking down and turning in assignments.

Introduce procedures to students over a period of time, as needed. Sometimes it's necessary to modify procedures during the school year to adapt to changes in instruction or the needs of a particular class.

Rules guide students in how they are expected to behave.

Rules apply to areas such as classroom interactions, respect for others and their property, and participation in class. Effective managers establish only three to six "umbrella" rules that remain consistent throughout the year. Most rules are stated positively and are written in broad, general terms that require further thought and interpretation.

Rules should be prominently posted in the classroom and should be introduced on the first day of school.



Example of Classroom Rules

- Be Prompt
- Be Prepared
- Be Polite
- Be Productive

Reinforcing Your Expectations

Good teachers know that a positive classroom climate supports student learning. They create such an environment by communicating high expectations and standards, conveying confidence in students' abilities, and praising good performance. These teachers provide incentives, rewards, and recognition to highlight appropriate behavior.

At the same time, however, effective managers must consider how they will respond when students misbehave. They create a system of fair and appropriate consequences to use when students do not cooperate.

Consequences are sanctions applied when students behave inappropriately.

Think of these interventions as a “hierarchy of consequences” that includes a range of sanctions with each step increasing in severity in relation to the offense. It's particularly important to develop a range of minor interventions you can use without interrupting the instructional flow of the class.

Such a system of consequences might include the following:

Minor Interventions



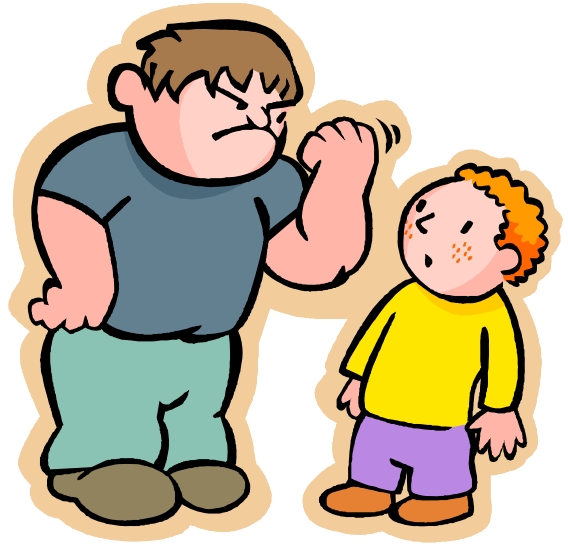
- Use nonverbal cues such as looking directly at the student, frowning, or using a hand signal.
- Move closer to the student.
- Direct a question to the student using his or her name.
- Redirect the student to the task or activity.
- Remind the student of the rule or procedure not being followed.
- Have the student state the rule or procedure that applies and explain the behavior that would have been more appropriate.
- Tell the student, in a calm but authoritative tone, to stop the behavior.
- Move the student to another seat.

Moderate Interventions

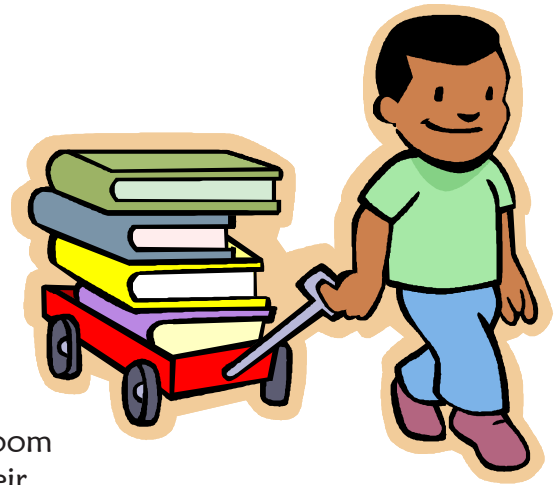
- Have the student stay after class for a conference or assign after-school detention.
- Withhold a privilege or assign a penalty.
- Isolate the student in another part of the room or to a “time-out” area.
- Contact the student's parents to discuss the misbehavior.
- Write a behavior contract.

Serious Interventions

- Remove the student from the class in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures.
- Schedule a formal parent conference to identify and select mutually agreed-upon interventions.
- Recommend that the student be suspended from class for a specified period of time.
- For violent and abusive behavior, use the Safe Schools Act to ensure removal of dangerous students. For more information on the Safe Schools Act, go to www.texasaft.org and look for "Publications and Reports."



Stage 2: At the Beginning of the Year



Effective managers take deliberate actions during the first few days of school to create a productive classroom learning environment. They assume leadership of their classes immediately, make clear their expectations for students, and plan activities that will ensure high levels of teacher-student interaction.

First Day of School

The first day of the new school year is a critical one for teachers. With careful planning, you will create a good first impression and be prepared to handle unexpected events. Here are some tips as you plan for the first day of school.

- **Greet students at the door and direct them to their seats.**
This simple act ensures that students enter the classroom in an orderly fashion and allows you to make immediate contact with each student.
- **Introduce yourself to students and learn their names as quickly as possible.**
Knowing the names of your students enables you to make a personal connection. Calling students by name helps to build positive relationships and allows you to deal promptly with misbehavior.
- **Introduce students to one another.**
Create an enjoyable way for students to meet each other and feel comfortable participating in class activities.
- **Teach procedures needed immediately and present your rules for behavior.**
Teach your procedures and rules just as you would any content area. Procedures related to students' personal needs (such as where to store belongings and how to get the teacher's attention) should be explained and practiced immediately. Then introduce your rules and provide students an opportunity to discuss the meaning of the rules. Give specific examples. Helping students understand the rationale behind the rules encourages student buy-in and cooperation.
- **Introduce students to the classroom.**
Acquaint students with the room by describing each area and how it will be used. When students know where to go and where to find things, it helps eliminate disturbing interruptions and unnecessary questions.

- **Lead a learning activity that is simple and fun.**

Plan an introductory lesson that will create interest in your subject. Including an appropriate academic activity on the first day sends the signal that your classroom is a place for learning and a place where students will be productive and successful.

- **Plan for maximum contact with students.**

Consider using whole class instruction in order to have maximum contact with all students. Move around the room to establish your presence, and stay with the class unless it is absolutely necessary to leave the room. If visitors arrive, invite them into the room for a brief stay or ask them to come back at a scheduled time. In short, be visible, available, and in charge.

First Three Weeks

Good classroom management cannot be established in one day. In fact, researchers have found that effective elementary teachers devote the first three weeks to presenting, reinforcing, and reviewing their rules and procedures until they become automatic. While less time is needed at the upper grade levels, considerable attention is still required to teach instructional procedures.

Investing enough time at the beginning of the year to firmly establish your classroom management system will result in a classroom that is focused on teaching and learning during the remainder of the year.

Tips for Reinforcing Rules and Procedures

- Actively monitor the classroom and observe and assess student needs.
- Provide feed back to students about their performance, rewarding them through praise or special privileges when their behavior is appropriate.
- Stop inappropriate behavior immediately and apply a consequence consistent with the misbehavior.
- If a procedure is not working well, modify or replace it. However, be sure to explain the new procedure and give students opportunities to practice it.
- Re-teach the rules as necessary (especially after holidays and school vacations).

Stage 3: Throughout the Year

Once students know what's expected of them and that they will be held accountable for their actions, the teacher's primary role changes. From that point on, teachers maintain good classroom management by:

- designing lessons that actively involve all students;
- providing instruction at an appropriate level of difficulty;
- capturing students' interest and helping them see the progress they are making;
- delivering instruction smoothly and at an appropriate pace; and,
- using the Safe Schools Act to stop classroom disruptions.



What to Expect Your First Year of Teaching

Veteran teachers have supplied the following suggestions and tips to help new teachers achieve a positive experience their first year of teaching.

- Contact parents in the beginning of the school year, fostering a friendly rapport before problems arise.
- Be well-prepared for class.
- Model and enforce rules of courtesy and respect.
- Make friends with the custodial staff—you'll need them.
- Get to know your students by coaching or taking part in an extracurricular activity.
- Take care of yourself physically and spiritually.
- Don't forget you're only human.
- Consistency—do what you say you are going to do at all times and with every child.
- Model a love for learning.
- Maintain a sense of humor.
- Offer a variety of interesting choices of activities for kids when they finish work or have down time.
- Keep an open-door policy to parents.
- Reward and praise students.



Compliments of
Texas AFT
www.texasaft.org

Encouraging Student Participation

Innovative teachers look for a variety of ways to engage their students. Here are some ideas for increasing student participation.

“Dividing topics into smaller, more manageable, and therefore more achievable tasks has encouraged students to take it one step at a time. Presenting a variety of student-centered lessons that require participation has stimulated student interest. Relating information to students’ lives and establishing a reason for learning has increased participation.”

—*Grace D. Clark, 9th-11th grades, Virginia*

“I have ‘cool cash rewards’ that can be redeemed in the Shipley Store, which has things that local businesses have donated. Rewards will take you farther than punishments in the long run.”

—*Lisa M. Shipley, 7th and 8th grades, Missouri*

“If you have a tough time assigning classroom jobs at the beginning of the year, try having your students fill out a ‘job application’ for you. For example, elementary school students could be invited to apply for class monitor, AV helper, board cleaner, messenger, reporter or classroom librarian. Aside from being a real-life skill, these job applications are easily adaptable to children in any grade. Students have the chance to choose from a selection of classroom jobs and to use their writing skills to explain why they should be ‘hired.’ Jobs may change on a monthly basis, giving students practice in filling out a teacher-designed application.”

—*Karen A. Pierino, New York*



Compliments of
Texas AFT
www.texasaft.org

Working With Families

Experienced teachers have submitted several ideas for making parent conferences and Open Houses more interesting.

“Give parents a delightful surprise for Open House—a cutout of their kids. Have the students work in pairs to trace their outlines on a large piece of paper. Each student decorates their cutout with drawn clothing, jewelry, etc., then cuts it out. On the afternoon of the special day, tape the cutouts to the student chairs—to make the head stand up, tape the student’s ruler to the back of the chair.

“Imagine the parents’ surprise at seeing their ‘child’ sitting at attention when they arrive. They love it. A side bonus—expect attendance to be high, as the kids get excited about the special surprise awaiting their parents.”

—*Juanita Nosworthy, Arizona*

“Help parents understand their children’s writing process—particularly the big challenge a blank sheet of paper offers—by asking them to do a writing assignment during Back-to-School night. Assign a topic for each parent to develop and write up. The stories are then left overnight for the children to read the next day. This is great fun, and it really breaks the ice with other parents.”

—*Constance Banded, New York*

“An important reminder for all school staff: Brothers and sisters of a former ‘trouble-maker’ or ‘problem’ student should not be reminded of their sibling’s past performance. Let them start fresh without dredging up history.”

—*Ruth McKenzie, Ohio*



Compliments of
Texas AFT
www.texasaft.org

Parent Conference Tips

Before the Conference Begins

Review the student's performance in your class and be prepared to discuss his or her academic, behavioral, and social progress.

Have a progress report prepared for the conference. Bring a folder that includes a complete list of the student's grades, samples of his or her work and any other documentation you have to share with the parents, but never take your grade book to a parent conference. If you are questioned about other students' progress or grades, explain that you are not permitted to discuss other students because of Public Law 142 (Federal law protecting education privacy) and that you would not discuss their child's grades with another individual.

Remind yourself parents are not your adversaries. You all want the student to succeed, and you should approach the conference with a positive and professional attitude.

During the Conference

Greet the parents as quickly as possible. The longer they wait, the more impatient they may become. Find a comfortable spot with a table so you can spread out your materials.

Begin on a positive note. Explain what the student has done well and the progress he or she has made. Make sure you find at least one positive thing to discuss.

When discussing the student's deficiencies, be careful to explain the problem as simply and clearly as possible. This would be a good place to discuss classroom rules and procedures and provide a copy to the parents.

Be able to explain your grading procedures clearly. Have a copy of your grading procedures in writing for the parents.

Do not argue with the parents. Sit, look, and listen. If necessary, call in an administrator to mediate the conference. Address the parents respectfully and explain the student's situation clearly. Be sure you are hearing the questions the parents are asking and are answering them appropriately and professionally.

If the parents become abusive, end the conference by simply saying that you do not wish to continue with the conference and immediately seek an administrator. Explain the situation to the administrator and the reason for ending the conference.

Ending the Conference

Recommend how the parents can assist the student, and provide a written contract if necessary.

Thank the parents for coming, and explain you will follow up regularly on their child's progress.

Immediately document the conference and its outcomes while your memory is fresh.

Preparing for Your Evaluation

Tips for managing the Professional Development and Appraisal System.

- Note in your calendar the date and time of the PDAS Orientation.
- When you are notified who your appraiser will be for the school year, schedule your pre-observation conference as soon as possible. Make sure your request is made in writing.
- Ask questions that will help you understand what the appraiser will be looking for when he or she comes to observe you.
- At your post-observation conference, ask questions to clarify the appraiser's scoring.
- Attend all required meetings and follow through with directives.
- Keep copies of everything. All information that is provided to you can be used as documentation at the end of the year to improve your evaluation score.
- When completing the Teacher Self Report Form Part I, only check objectives that you know you will teach during the school year.
- When completing the Teacher Self Report Forms II and III, you may review and change your TSR Form Part I.
- When completing the TSR Forms Part II and III, provide documentation that you have been collecting all year to help improve your evaluation score.
- Do not waive your right to the annual summative conference. You will need to meet with your appraiser at the end of the year to discuss your evaluation and improve your score.

If at any time you have any questions about PDAS or your evaluation, call Texas AFT at 1-800-222-3827.



Compliments of
Texas AFT
www.texasaft.org

Substitute Checklist

One important area of responsibility often overlooked is what you should do when you need a substitute. Every teacher should have a special folder containing the following information for a substitute. If you are prepared, it will be simpler for you and your substitute.

- Class rules
- Seating charts
- A list of responsible students for each class
- A map of your campus
- Fire drill/Disaster plan
- Discipline program
- Your schedule
- Bell schedule
- Tape some quarters to the folder for the substitute to buy a soft drink
- Your lesson plans (Many teachers write up three lessons that could be called “generic.” Then, if there is an emergency, the plans are ready.)
- Student Behavior Report form



Compliments of
Texas AFT
www.texasaft.org



Share My Lesson enables educators to share what we do best.

It lets us pass along our knowledge, skills and effective classroom strategies to colleagues.



Share My Lesson gives educators a way to connect with colleagues across the country and share ideas easily.

Share your expertise with colleagues and get new ideas – for free.



This online community is a network for teachers to share ideas and assume responsibility for the quality and usefulness of shared materials. The advantages to joining **Share My Lesson** include:

- ✓ A single website that provides high-quality teaching resources.
- ✓ Access to all the resources is free.
- ✓ You'll be able to search by subject, topic, grade, type and format.
- ✓ All resources are rated and reviewed by other educators.
- ✓ You can see resources from our content partners, including Sesame Street, Oxfam, Green TV and Encyclopedia Britannica.




$$7 \times 3 = 21$$

Dear New Teacher:

Please find enclosed a sampling of reproducible masters for you to use this year. They should be beneficial when you begin setting up your classroom, managing student discipline, and keeping your records in order.

It is the mission of Texas AFT to equip our fellow educators to do their best. Not only do we work on your behalf to improve wages, hours and working conditions, but we have a vested interest in your success.

Texas AFT, through its affiliate the American Federation of Teachers, is able to provide assistance with teaching matters in many ways. The AFT provides useful literature for all general teaching functions, compiles educational research, sponsors useful workshop sessions, and provides many regional and national level conferences focused on improving the quality of public education.

We hope you find the enclosed items useful. We also invite you to become a member of our educational family. Best wishes on a successful new year.

Sincerely,



Linda Bridges
Texas AFT President



Discipline Documentation Form

Student: _____ Class _____ Period _____

Offense Codes

1 = talking without permission	6 = breaking class rule
2 = out of desk without permission	7 = chewing gum/eating
3 = rough play	8 = off task
4 = tardy to class	9 = inappropriate language
5 = failure to have materials/books	10 = other

Date	Offense	Action Taken by Teacher	Student's Initials

Parent/Guardian _____ Phones: Home _____
 Work _____
 Emergency _____



Compliments of
Texas AFT
www.texasaft.org



Good News!

I have the pleasure to inform you that

Student Name

has earned recognition for

in my class.

Signature of Teacher

Date





Congratulations to

for earning an apple award for:

_____ the great grade on your test!

_____ your excellent conduct in class!

_____ always working hard!

_____ always coming to class prepared!

_____ helping someone else!

_____ the good work on _____!

Signature of Teacher

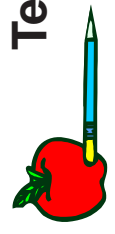
Date

Class Seating Chart

Teacher: _____ Class _____ Period _____



Compliments of
Texas AFT



**Teacher
Desk**



Grading Aid

Possible Number Right

Number Right	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30																	
1	33	25	20	17	14	13	11	10	9	8	8	7	7	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3																
2	66	50	40	33	29	25	22	20	18	17	15	14	13	13	12	11	11	10	9	9	9	8	8	8	7	7	7	6	6																
3	100	75	60	50	43	38	33	30	27	25	23	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	14	13	13	12	12	11	11	10	10	10																
4	100	80	67	57	50	44	40	38	33	31	29	27	25	24	22	21	20	19	18	17	17	17	16	15	14	14	13	13	13																
5	100	83	72	63	56	50	45	42	38	36	33	31	29	28	26	25	24	23	22	21	21	20	19	19	18	17	16	16	16																
6	100	88	75	67	60	55	50	46	43	40	38	35	33	32	30	29	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21	21	21	20	20	20	20															
7	100	88	78	70	64	58	54	50	47	44	41	39	37	35	33	32	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21	21	21	21															
8	100	89	80	73	67	62	57	53	50	47	44	42	40	38	36	35	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21	21														
9	100	90	82	75	69	64	60	56	53	50	47	45	43	41	39	38	36	35	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21	21												
10	100	91	83	77	71	67	63	59	56	53	50	48	45	43	42	40	39	37	36	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21	21										
11	100	92	85	79	73	69	65	61	58	55	52	50	48	46	44	42	41	39	38	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21	21								
12	100	92	86	80	75	71	67	63	60	57	55	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21						
13	100	93	87	81	76	72	68	65	62	59	57	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21					
14	100	93	86	82	78	74	70	67	64	61	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21				
15	100	94	87	83	79	75	71	68	65	63	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21			
16	100	94	89	84	80	76	73	70	67	64	61	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21			
17	100	94	89	85	81	77	74	71	68	65	63	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21		
18	100	95	90	88	82	78	75	72	69	67	64	61	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21		
19	100	95	91	86	83	79	76	73	70	68	65	63	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21	
20	100	95	91	87	83	80	77	74	72	69	67	64	62	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21
21	100	95	91	88	84	81	78	75	72	69	67	64	62	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21
22	100	96	92	88	85	81	79	76	73	70	68	65	63	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21
23	100	95	92	88	85	82	79	76	73	70	68	65	63	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21
24	100	96	92	89	86	83	80	77	74	72	69	66	63	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21
25	100	96	92	89	86	83	80	77	74	72	69	66	63	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21
26	100	95	93	89	86	83	80	77	74	72	69	66	63	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21
27	100	96	93	89	86	83	80	77	74	72	69	66	63	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21
28	100	96	93	89	86	83	80	77	74	72	69	66	63	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21
29	100	96	93	89	86	83	80	77	74	72	69	66	63	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21
30	100	96	93	89	86	83	80	77	74	72	69	66	63	60	58	56	54	52	50	48	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	21



Compliments of
Texas AFT
www.texasaft.org

Instructions: Determine the number of possible right answers and locate that number on the top of the chart. Next, find the number of right answers and locate that number in the left column. Where the two lines meet, you will find the percentage of correct answers.



Texas AFT

3000 S. IH-35, Ste. 175
Austin, TX 78704

800-222-3827
www.texasaft.org

