

# 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.

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

## 2 Praise the process and progress, not just the outcomes.

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Praise successes along the way, like the strategies students use. Let students know that the process is important, too.

## 3 Be clear about your standards and expectations.

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Make sure students understand the behaviors you expect or the requirements of an assignment. Then give praise that matches those expectations.

## 4 Be sincere.

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

## 5 Avoid comparisons to other students.

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Praise students for mastering a skill they're working on. Don't compare their skills to other students' skills or tell them they did better than someone else.

## 6 Praise students for hard work.

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

## 7 Avoid overpraising.

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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 they can do big things.