

Short on Time?

Tips from the Team

We try to make the best use of every moment of instructional time in our plans – and we know that as a result it can be hard to fit everything into one 90-minute block. Consider these “Tips from the Team” if pacing is a challenge in your classroom.

Systems and Routines:

- Spend time early in the year/unit to name and practice expectations and habits for each component of class to save time in the long run. Model elements like efficient Turn and Talks, immediate pen to paper in Stop and Jots, and routinized and crisp vocab roll-outs so transaction costs are minimal.
- Focus on keeping transitions fast. State the directions once and, if you feel tempted to repeat them or augment them, simply say “Go” instead.
- For slower readers, provide an audio version of the book that they listen to before class. This will ensure they can complete AIR and participate in the discussion.

To Accelerate Reading:

- Modify the type of reading in a cycle (Read Aloud, Control the Game, AIR) to support pacing, often by doing more read aloud.
- Be efficient with Words to Watch For – mark up how many tricky words there will be in a text ahead of reading, and selectively neglect or quickly drop in the definition if there are many.

To Accelerate Writing:

- Instead of writing in response to a question, ask students to Turn and Talk or take hands to discuss. Just make sure that not all questions become a Turn and Talk. Be strategic about *which* questions you do this for.
- Consider skipping non-keyed and challenge questions or assign them for homework. Really, it’s okay!
- When you know that a key idea from earlier in the lesson or unit will be relevant to another lesson or question, chart that key idea and have it available for students to reference so that they can quickly call upon prior knowledge.

To Accelerate Discussion:

- Instead of facilitating a brief or extended discussion, Show Call 1-2 strong student responses to surface the key idea(s).
- Call on a few students to ‘boil the pot’ with responses but don’t feel the need to resolve the question. Use back pocket phrases like, “These are fascinating ideas. We’ll have to see where the book takes us,” or “Interesting. Let’s get back to the book to see who’s right.”
- You may opt not to debrief questions when you observe that students’ written responses are strong. You might say something like, “I can tell from reading your responses that you’ve nailed this. We understand that [name key idea].”
- Monitor student responses during independent work and Cold Call students who have demonstrated partial or full mastery of the key ideas to move discussion forward.
- Reduce the number of Active Practice or Retrieval Practice questions you ask. Better to ask a few of these each day than to drop these sections of the lesson entirely.