

Getting/keeping whole class attention:

1. Signal your students by any number of techniques—turning off the lights, flashing the lights, ringing a bell, raising your hand which signals the students to raise their hands and close their mouths until everyone is quiet, playing a bar of music, etc. Make sure it is quiet before proceeding with instruction.
2. Vary tone of voice: loud, soft, whispering. Try making a loud command: “Listen! Ready! Freeze! Followed by a few seconds of silence before proceeding in a normal voice to give directions.
3. Eye contact: students should be facing you when you are speaking, especially while instructions are being given.
4. Model excitement and enthusiasm about the upcoming lesson.
5. Try “silliness” and theatrics at times. Sometimes props such as a crazy hat or music are helpful in getting your students’ attention.
6. Mystery: Bring in an object relevant to the upcoming lesson in a box, bag, or pillowcase to generate predictions about the lesson.
7. Use visuals. Write key words or pictures on the board or overhead projector while presenting.
8. Use color. Colored chalk to highlight on the chalkboard, colored pens on the overhead. Write key words, phrases, steps to computation problems, tricky letters in spelling words, etc. in different colors.
9. Use a flashlight. Turn off the lights and get students to focus by illuminating objects or individuals with a flashlight.
10. Use cloze techniques. Provide a study sheet or study guide with key words omitted. Have students fill in the missing words during instruction.
11. Provide study sheet to students to highlight in color the key points.
12. Unison response methods to keep the distractible student from the “zoning out”
 - Use individual whiteboards or chalkboards. Each student can keep one at their desk, or the teacher can pass them out when needed. When the teacher asks the class a question or has them do a math problem, the students write on their boards, and at the teacher’s signal, hold them up under their chins for the teacher to see.
 - Hold your hand out with a straight arm while asking your students a question. Make sure they are instructed to watch you carefully. After giving some “think time” drop your arm—preferably with a snap of your fingers or other auditory signal. At this prompt, students all call out the answer in unison.