

## **SYLLABUS TIPS**

It's best not to map out every detail of your syllabus or give too many specific dates. There are two reasons for this: your students will get overwhelmed and "check out" if given too much information at once. And you don't want to be tied down to specifics in case things change – and they will!

For most teachers, preparing well in advance is a mythical goal, but the effort put into figuring out the Big Picture of what you want your students to learn, and how you and they will know that they have learned it, is well worth the effort. If you are going to outline content for the year in the syllabus, think in larger units, essential questions or overarching goals.

## **SYLLABUS ACTIVITIES**

Find a creative way for students to review the syllabus information. Consider the following ideas:

Have a scavenger hunt. Make a list of questions, the answers to which are in the syllabus. Put students in teams to find and share all the answers. Questions can be Goofy, as long as they address the syllabus.

For example, "Take the number of points you lose for turning in late work and double that. Then divide the total by 4. What number do you have?" or "Which of the following could most likely survive in the classroom based on the rules listed on page 1 in the syllabus- a gold fish, a DJ, a Mime, or a monkey? The best answer is probably goldfish because water is the only drink allowed in class, but students might say mime because the mime would never talk out of turn. In the end it doesn't matter. It's about making the review engaging.

Give an open-notes syllabus quiz. Infuse some fun by adding one silly answer into each list of multiple-choice answers. Make getting 100% on the quiz mandatory, but let kids take it as many times as they need in order to achieve that grade.

Have students silently skim through the syllabus and then in pairs choose a section they wish was different (a rule or procedure they wish they could change). Have them re-write it from the most student-friendly possible perspective. Have them share out to the class and reward those who come up with the most creative changes.