



Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

Get a Cue!

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What are Cues?

A *cue* or *prompt* is a hint given to help someone remember to do something without telling him directly. For example, if a student in a classroom is constantly out of his seat, the teacher may cue the student to stay seated using a sign or gesture, instead of saying "please sit down" every time he leaves his seat.

Types of Cues

There are several different types of cues. Some of the most commonly used cues include the following:



- **Visual** – The use of visual cues, such as pictures and picture schedules, help students remember the steps in a sequence or routine. For example, a picture schedule can remind students when they will participate in different activities throughout the day, such as math, lunch, or recess.



- **Tactile** – Tactile cues involve touching. For example, a touch on the hand can remind a student to keep working.



- **Gestural** – People also use hand signals to give cues. Gestural cues include pointing, invented signs, or established signs (like the signs used in sign language). For example, a teacher may hold up two fingers to remind students to quiet down.



- **Auditory** – Auditory cues include words and sounds. For example, if a student is having difficulty remembering a vocabulary word, the teacher might provide an auditory cue of just the initial sound.



Why Are Cues Important?

Cues provide multi-sensory input, so using cues while teaching can help students learn concepts and ideas better. Cues also provide positive support that can help a student respond appropriately. When a student responds appropriately, he/she experiences success and feels a sense of achievement which can improve motivation and reduce frustration. And improved motivation leads to greater independence.

How to Use Cues

When using cues, the teacher/parent should use them as seldom as possible – that is, only when necessary in order to get an appropriate response. Try to provide the cue before the student gives an inappropriate response in order to avoid any negative effects associated with providing correction. Finally, fade cues out as quickly as possible to prevent your student from becoming dependent on them.

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