

## Five Finger Agreement

**Focus:** Initiating and exploring a community agreement, establishing norms

**Materials:** Writing materials (optional)

**Level:** Grades K-6

### Suggested Procedure

1. Teach the class the Five Finger Agreement. Each of the fingers is a reminder to us about points that will make this class a safe and respectful place for everybody:
  - Pinky: Safety – it's the smallest and most vulnerable finger.
  - Ring Finger: Commitment – willingness to let things go (and not hold grudges).
  - Middle Finger: Awareness of put downs and support
  - Pointer Finger: Taking responsibility instead of pointing blame.
  - Thumb: Agreement to try and do your best.
2. Write about or discuss each one to agree on what it means to this class at this time.
3. Have a discussion about each one, and even write down ways to show each of these in action. For example, for Awareness of put downs and support, the class may suggest that people say they're sorry if they give a put down.
4. Another strategy is to write these on posterboard and ask everyone to add their thumbprints to denote agreement (once everyone indicates that they understand them).
5. Revisit the Five Finger Agreement periodically to learn more about what each point means. For example, talk about one or more points after an activity or as an evaluation at the end of a class. Talk about one or more points before a class begins to remind students about creating a safe environment.

### Sample Processing Questions

- How would you define each of these points?
- Considering we're not perfect, and that we are working toward these goals, what should we do when one (or more) of these points are ignored?
- How can we celebrate when we are adhering to these goals?



### Variations/Modifications

Draw a hand on a large piece of paper or posterboard. Have students decorate it. Write specific examples of each ideal on or around the hand.

### Extensions

Have each student create his or her own five finger agreement by tracing their own hands on a piece of paper. They can write in some goals and ideals they have for themselves, and then post it on their desks or in a notebook where they will see it everyday as a reminder.

### Facilitation Notes

Many times it is difficult to know where to begin when attempting to create a safe and respectful community. The Five Finger Agreement is a good place to start. It is important to set the right tone at the beginning of the process, and this can help. After the class has been together for a while, students can move into another phase where they can create a community agreement of their own.