

Essential Items For Your Supply Teacher Kit

So you're a qualified elementary or primary teacher - congratulations! Now your task is to get some teaching work. If you are like most new graduates, you will probably start out as a supply teacher - also known as a casual teacher or relief teacher, depending on where you live. It all means the same thing - being called at short notice to take on a class for the day or number of days. A bag or box of tricks is essential to help you breeze through the day like a professional. Follow this guide to creating a great supply teacher kit.

- The first thing you will need is a container to hold everything in. Make it a brightly coloured, sturdy plastic box - one on wheels is best in case you need to move around a lot during the day and you don't want to leave your precious materials unattended. The bright colours will help the students feel that you have a sense of fun and they may be more inclined to make the day of a supply teacher easier!
- Purchase a few books aimed at supply teachers. These are filled with photocopiable activities and games that you can use if the regular teacher hasn't left you with much of a plan for the day. You can also use the lesson activities for any early finishers.
- Add a 'surprise bag'. This is a bag that you can fill with interesting objects for the students to feel through the bag and guess what they are. Everyday objects like hairbrushes, seashells and small toys can all go in. Also use the surprise bag for drawing out an object and using it as a springboard for the students to write a short story about or create a role-play.
- Puzzle books are a great source of inspiration for interesting activities. Write up the puzzle on the blackboard and ask small groups of students to solve it. Good starter activities for the day - they will really get the students thinking.
- Stickers and small 'dollar shop' items are essential for a supply teacher kit. Use them as rewards - kids love them.
- Pack a supply of calculators, pencils, rulers and paper so students can't try the classic excuse 'I forgot to bring this today.'
- A stack of origami paper and instructions for making simple objects is always popular with students - and light and easy to cart around. Make sure you practise first!
- Buy a collection of cheap scarves of different sizes. These are fantastic to use for drama activities. You will be amazed at what the students will use scarves for as dress-ups - aprons, ties, headscarves, bracelets, skirts, capes - let their imaginations run wild!

As you become a more experienced supply teacher, you will most likely discover other useful items to add to your kit - don't be afraid to ask other teachers for advice. Good luck with your teaching adventure - and enjoy creating your supply teacher kit.