Grab and Go Lesson Plan

How to Survive Grade ____

June is the perfect time for students to look back on the school year and realize just how much they've learned - not just academically, but about classroom life itself. By the end of the year, students have become the "experts" on their grade: they know the routines, the teacher's favourite sayings, the important survival tricks, and all the little things future students will want to know!

This playful writing lesson invites students to create a ***How to Survive Grade*** ___ guide filled with helpful advice, funny warnings, classroom truths, and encouraging tips for next year's students. Using engaging instruction phrases such as *Always…, Remember to…, and Be careful not to*…, students reflect on their experiences while practicing voice, organization, and instructional writing in a format that feels authentic and fun.

I especially love this lesson because it keeps the end-of-year energy light and playful while still encouraging reflection. Knowing that these "survival guides" will be read by incoming students in September gives students a real sense of purpose for their writing. They aren't just completing an assignment - they're creating helpful guides, insider tips, and encouragement for the next group of students about to begin the adventure of Grade ___.

🗺️ The Anchor: *How to Wash a Woolly Mammoth -*

This engaging "how-to" guidebook is a perfect mentor text for introducing "expert writing" in a fun and engaging way. Throughout the book, the author gives readers step by step instructions on how to become an astronaut, including helpful "tips" and advice.

In this lesson, students will borrow this same "How To" style to create their own How to Survive Grade ___ guides filled with helpful tips, reminders, warnings, and insider advice for future students.

🖍️ Materials

- Copy of ***How to Wash a Woolly Mammoth*** **— Michelle Robinson** (or another "how-to" style mentor text)
- Youtube read aloud **HERE** (but remember to press **mute** and read it aloud yourself!)
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Student writing paper or reproducible templates (included)
- Markers/pencil crayons
- Optional: construction paper for Survival Guide booklet covers

⏱️ 1. Introduction

Set the Context:

Explain to students that they are now the “experts” in this classroom because they have spent the whole year learning, growing, and experiencing life in the class.

Next year, a brand-new group of students will walk through the classroom door feeling excited, nervous, curious, and maybe even a little unsure.

Explain that today, they will be creating a “Survival Guide” for those future students. You may want to discuss what the purpose of a survival guide is.

- 🌟 ***How to Survive Grade ___*** (or *The Unofficial Guide to Grade ___!*)

Explain that this activity should be:

- helpful
- funny
- honest
- welcoming
- full of personality

Encourage students to think about the little things future students would REALLY want to know.

Discussion Prompts:

- What do students NEED to know to survive this grade? 😄
- What makes this classroom special?
- What are some funny or important things you learned this year?
- What advice would help next year’s students feel successful?
- What should future students definitely NOT forget?

Before writing, brainstorm ideas together as a class to help spark memories and funny moments from the year.

📖 2. Read Aloud

Tell the students…

Today I am going to read you a book called How to Wash a Woolly Mammoth by Michelle Robinson. While I am reading, I would like you to pay attention to HOW the author gives instructions and advice in simple steps and includes important tips!

Set intention:

Ask students to notice:

- What instructional words or phrases are used? What tips does the narrator (little girl) give us?
- How is she able to give such clear, simple instructions?

Read:

Pause to notice any **instruction words** or "tip starters" such as:

- Step 1, Step 2, Step 3, etc.
- "Try not to….
- "Make sure…"
- "Don't forget to…"
- "Be careful! …"
- "Always…"
- "Remember to…"
- "Be careful not to…"

Discuss how experts are able to give tips because they have had experience with the task and are trying to help the reader be successful.

After reading, create an anchor chart of "tip starters":

🖍️ Helpful Tip Starters

- Don't
- Always…
- Never…
- Remember to…
- Be careful not to…

- Trust me…
- Whatever you do…
- Don't panic when…
- One important thing to know is…
- You'll survive if…
- Try to…

🎨 3. Activity - Survival Guides

Begin with a whole-class brainstorming session to help students reflect on the year and generate ideas for their survival guides. Invite students to think about classroom routines, favourite activities, funny moments, field trips, projects, teacher sayings, important lessons, and "things future students should definitely know!" 😄

Record ideas on chart paper under headings such as:

- Helpful Tips
- Classroom Routines
- Funny Warnings
- How to Make the Teacher Happy

Students then create:

🚨 ***How to Survive Grade ___***

Students may use the Survival Guide **template** or use the template on page 7 (Primary) or page 8 (Intermediate) to create a list of tips and advice for future students.

Alternatively, they may create an actual **Survival Booklet** (three legal size papers folded in half and stapled) with:

- one tip per page
- illustrations
- headings
- "warning" boxes
- funny captions
- survival checklists

Encourage students to use playful instruction phrases such as:

- Always…
- Never…
- Remember to…
- Be careful not to…
- Trust me…
- Don't panic when…
- One important thing to know is…

Remind students that these guides will be left behind for next year's students to read in September — so their writing should be neat, helpful and welcoming.

🌼 Early Primary Modification (K–1)

For younger students, simplify the activity by focusing on:

- one important tip and a picture

Students may begin with a drawing first and then add a simple sentence starter such as:

- Always…
- Never…
- Remember to…
- Be careful not to…

4. End the Lesson

SAY:

Today we reflected on your year in this class and turned those experiences into helpful advice for future students. You are able to write these survival guides because you are EXPERTS - you've spent the whole year figuring out what works, what matters, and what future students should know before they walk through the classroom door!

The best survival guides are a mix of helpful advice, honest truths, humour and encouragement and you have certainly created guidebooks that will be very helpful for the new students who are starting grade ___ in September!

🌟 Extension Activities (Optional)

📖 **Create a Class Survival Guide Book**
Combine student pages into a class book for next year's students.

🚪 **Welcome Display**
Post survival guides outside the classroom in September.

🎤 **Expert Advice Circle**
Students share their BEST survival tips aloud.

📷 **Digital Slideshow**
Photograph student pages and create a slideshow for families.

🎨 **Illustrated Covers**
Students design "official" covers for their survival guides.

How to Survive Grade ___

Tips from an Expert!

By: _____

Tip #1

_____

_____

Tip #2

_____

_____

Tip #3

_____

_____

Tip #4

_____

_____

WARNING!

_____

_____

How to Survive Grade ___

Tips from an Expert!

By: _____

WARNING!

Never _____

📚 Additional "How To" Read Alouds

How to Find an Elephant **— Kate Banks**

How to Code a Sandcastle **— Josh Funk**

How to Clean Your Room in 10 Easy Steps **— Jennifer LaRue Huget**

Pizza Day **— Melissa Iwai**

How to Apologize **— David LaRochelle**

How I Trained My Dog in 10 Days **— Norma Lewis**

How to Be a Cat **— Nikki McClure**

How to Be **— Lisa Brown**

How to Make a Pancake **— Dave Max**

Astronaut Handbook **-** Meghan McCarthy

How to Read a Story **— Kate Messner**

How to Teach a Slug to Read **— Susan Pearson**

Everyone Can Learn to Ride a Bicycle **— Chris Raschka**

How to Babysit Grandpa **- Jean Reagan**

How to Babysit a Grandma **- Jean Reagan**

How to Wash a Woolly Mammoth **— Michelle Robinson**

How to Make Slime **— Lori Shores**

If Your Monster Won't Go to Bed **— Denise Vega**

10 Things I Can Do to Help My World **— Melanie Walsh**

Scaredy Squirrel Makes a Friend **— Melanie Watt**

How to Give Your Cat a Bath in Five Easy Steps **— Nicola Winstanley**