

First Day: Getting to Know Your Tutee

It will be much easier to tutor students when you start by getting to know them. While few students will open up to you right away, the first day is a good time to learn about your tutee and to begin to create a trusting and respectful atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Below are some suggestions about how to start your first meeting.

- (1) Spend a good portion of the first day **getting to know each other** and getting a general idea of your tutee's interests, likes, and dislikes.
- (2) **Learn your tutee's name** and make sure you pronounce it correctly.
- (3) Before you start asking questions, **tell the student something about yourself**. Talk about your interests, your family, and what you do at Carleton. Explain why you tutor.
- (4) Learn about your tutee by asking **open-ended, non-judgmental questions**. Some ice-breaker topics are listed below.
- (5) Try to gauge **how your tutee feels about school**. Ask questions like: Who is your teacher? What do you think about school? Do you participate in after-school programs?
- (6) Briefly **go over the subjects on which you'll be working** with your tutee. Ask the student on what s/he needs help and make sure your tutee knows that it's okay to ask questions whenever something is unclear.
- (7) Explain to your tutee that **you have made a commitment** to be at all of the tutoring sessions and that the only time that you'll not be there is if you're sick or on a college break. Ask the student to make the same commitment.

Ice-Breakers

Here are some good topics to bring up in conversation when you're getting to know your tutee:

My favorite song is... My favorite TV program is... My favorite color is...

The subject I like best/least is... On the weekends I... I feel proud when...

My favorite place to go is... My least favorite place to go is... My favorite sport is...

I have a real talent for... I want to travel to... A career that interests me is...

I have ___ brothers and sisters... My Birthday is (a good one to remember!)...