# Modes of Engagement

*Low friction modes of engagement support diverse neurotypes and processing differences. These warm up the brain, scaffold executive function, and provide initiation support. As an educator, feel free to use these as templates for your classes.*

**One-Sentence Start**
Prompt: "In one sentence, what's one thing you're thinking about from last class?"
Prompt: "In one sentence, what's one thing you're wondering about today?"
  *Low cognitive load. Creates immediate engagement.*

**Two-Word Check-In**
Students write *two words* that capture their state (e.g., "curious & tired").
  *This also normalizes emotion without derailing class.*

**Silent Sketch**
Sketch an image, concept, or feeling related to the topic.
  *Supports visual thinkers and ND learners.*

**Post-It Predict**
Students write one prediction about today's concept.
  *Stick it on the board as they enter or after 2 minutes of thinking.*

**Two Lines & a Link**
Line 1: What I know
Line 2: Why it matters
Link: One question I have

**Think–Ink–Link**
Think silently → write a quick thought → turn to a partner and share one idea.

**Spot & Label**
Show one image/text/graph. Students highlight any detail and give it a 2-word label.

**Silent Sketch**
1–2 minutes: sketch the concept, feeling, or question you have about today's topic.

**Future-You Note**
Write one sentence to Future-You: "Here's what you'll want to remember from this class."

**Emoji Check-In**
Pick or draw an emoji to show how prepared/curious/energized you feel.

**Stand & Meet**
Stand, walk a few feet, share one phrase from your writing with a new peer.

**Minute Map**
Draw a tiny concept map (60 seconds): center idea + 3 branches.


## Full examples of warm up (hooks) exercises


**Micro-Journal: Two Lines & a Link (2–3 min)**
**Goal: Prime relevance and retrieval without heavy initiation cost.**

- Prompt (on screen/handout):

    - Line 1: One thing I already know about today's topic is...

    - Line 2: One thing I'm curious about is...

    - Link: paste/write a short resource or example you find interesting.

- Variation:
    - Write 2 lines, or record voice note (≤30s), or doodle, add an example.

    - Curate 2–3 student links as "peer picks."

        *Payoff: You can develop the micro journal exercises into a learning log. Why it works: Autonomy (choice of mode), competence (clear success), relatedness (class collage of links).*

**Concept Spot & Label (2 min)**
**Goal: Immediate pattern recognition with minimal writing.**

- Show one image/graph/code snippet/text excerpt.

- Prompt: Circle or highlight one instance of [target concept] and add a two-word label.

  *Payoff : Naming key concepts, connecting terms to real examples*
  *Why it works: Single, bounded action; success is easy to see.*

**One-Minute Model, One-Minute Make (2–3 min)**
**Goal: Reduce cognitive load by showing what "good" looks like, then copying the skeleton.**

- Show a 20–40 word model (e.g., a clear claim, function header comment, citation format).

- Prompt: Now swap the nouns to fit today's topic and post yours in chat.

  *Payoff : Everyone leaves with a usable stem/snippet for the graded task later.*
  *Why it works: worked-example; immediate production; tiny scope; competence hit.*

**Myth/Prior Knowledge Flash Poll + Reveal (3–4 min)**
**Goal: Create curiosity via cognitive dissonance that resolves quickly.**

- Anonymous poll: True/False: [common misconception].

- Show results; do a 30-second reveal (one sentence + mini-demo or graph).

- Invite a one-line reflection: What changed for you?

  Payoff:: Snapshot of class priors, normalize cognitive flexibility
  Why it works: Relatedness (we're in this together), intrinsic interest from surprise.

**Teach Future-You Postcard (3–4 min)**
**Goal: Retrieval + personalization with zero stakes.**

- Hand out a quarter-sheet (or LMS text box): Dear Future Me in 2 weeks: The one thing not to forget about [topic] is...

- Collect/schedule an LMS auto-email to send it back before the quiz.

  *Payoff : A personally authored cue shows up at the exact moment they need it.*
  *Why it works: retrieval practice + time-shifted payoff; feels caring.*


**Choose Your First Step(2 min)**
**Goal: Kill initiation friction on a bigger assignment.**

 Offer three equally valid first steps on screen:

  1) Paste a quote and bold the key phrase.
  2) Draw a 3-box outline.
  3) Record a 20-second -what I think so far.

  Students do one now and submit it to earn the "I started" check.

  *Payoff : They have a tangible starting artifact; you reduce follow-up anxiety by acknowledging progress.*
  *Why it works: Autonomy + competence; tiny win builds momentum.*


**1-Minute Map(2–3 min)**
**Goal: Situate new info in a familiar mental model.**

- Provide a blank 2×2 or simple flow arrow.

- Prompt: "Place today's concept in one square/step; label the other squares/steps with what you already know."

- Optional share: Hold up or drop a photo.

  *Payoff (visible): A personal schema you can revisit during exam review.*
  *Why it works: Schema activation; reduces intrinsic load by an*