



Teacher Appreciation Week Ideas

History

There are 6.2 million teachers in the United States. Each one deserves a thank you for using their energy to teach kids every day. Teacher Appreciation Week is the first week of May with National Teacher Day landing on the Tuesday. Thousands of communities will take time to honor their local educators and acknowledge the contributions they make to society.

In 1944, Mattye Whyte Woodridge, an Arkansas teacher, began corresponding with political and educational leaders about establishing a national observance to honor teachers. This effort bore fruit when Congress proclaimed National Teacher Day in 1953. But the proclamation referred to that year only. In the late 1970s, the National Education Association (NEA) and its affiliates began observing Teacher Day on the first Tuesday in March. That continued until 1985 when the NEA and the National Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) expanded this to a full week and moved it to the first week of May. Below are some websites and ideas for Teacher Appreciation Week.

from National Education Association (NEA)

In the Community

- Run congratulatory messages on electronic signs outside banks or other businesses, or on billboards, banners or storefront signs.
- Offer teachers discounts on purchases made on Teacher Day.
- Invite teachers to a before-school "coffee, juice and pastries" salute at a local grocery store or other business - or even in a school parking lot (think tailgate party!).

In School

- Hang a sign on each classroom door saluting, by name, the teacher within.
- Provide balloon bouquets and flowers for every teachers' lounge.
- Set up a lunchtime "Relaxation and Rejuvenation Spa" on Teacher Day, where teachers are treated to hand, foot, back and neck massages, perhaps while being serenaded by a student or parent playing a mellow cello.

Media Outreach

- Invite newspaper reporters or TV news personality, to spend a day as a guest teacher or classroom observer, and then to publish or air his or her observations on what being a teacher is like today.
- Suggest that local media outlets broadcast quick interviews where local citizens answer one question: *What teacher had the greatest influence on your life?*

from National Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

- **Thanks from Parents** Ask parents to e-mail messages of gratitude to teachers, drop by for a before-school coffee reception for teachers or contribute classroom materials, such as poster board, stickers, high-quality chalk, stamps and inkpads, books, and other supplies, to their children's teachers.
- **School Spirit** Create a wall of fame for teachers; post quotes from students, parents, and principals on the special contributions of each teacher. Make banners recognizing Teacher Appreciation Week and hang them in the halls and common areas. Present each teacher with a certificate of appreciation at a school wide assembly attended by parents as well as students.
- **Recognition Opportunities** Nominate teachers for national awards and recognition. Publish in the PTA or school newsletter "teacher triumphs" or stories of appreciation that relate the special accomplishments of individual teachers.
- **Community Involvement** Have local businesses put up signs and banners that give thanks to teachers. Reward teachers with gift certificates or merchandise donated by local businesses. Distribute pin-on buttons that proclaim "Teacher Appreciation Week" or some other teacher-oriented slogan. Work with the local library to set up displays honoring teachers. Plant trees or flowers in public areas or on school grounds in honor of teachers.
- **Teacher Grammys** Each Spring, Grandville High School holds an all-school assembly to give out Teacher Grammys. All students vote to nominate male and female teachers for categories such as Mr./Ms. J Crew, Bulldog (for school spirit), Energetic, Hip-and-Happenin', Sports Illustrated, etc. A special "Match Made in Heaven" award is also given to a husband/wife team that work at school (there are several who qualify at GHS). The actual "Grammy" award is a certificate and a gold-painted apple that can be purchased at most craft stores. Sorting through the nominations is a tedious process but worth it when the teachers are visibly happy and excited to be recognized. This big event is the culmination of our Teacher Appreciation Week in which we recognize and show appreciation for ALL teachers.
- **Teacher Recognition Dinner** Through our Teacher Recognition Dinner, seniors show appreciation to staff members who made a difference in their lives. Each senior member of National Honor Society is allowed to invite one teacher from his/her entire K-12 experience with whom they would like to share this special evening. The program is held in the evening on the last day of school and those teachers being honored are sent invitations to attend. The name of the student inviting them is not divulged until that evening.
- **Survival Kit** On the first day of school, teachers arrive at their classrooms to find a School Year Survival Kit to help them get through the year. Some things like: a Hershey's kiss to stay sweet, a band-aid to cover the small things, an eraser to correct mistakes, a pencil to stay sharp, etc. We also gave every staff member some pudding with an attached note "Thanks for PUDDING up with Us!"
- **Staff Scavenger Hunt** A Staff Scavenger Hunt is a fun way to get people to mix and mingle. Ask staff members to submit interesting and unique information about themselves to create a human scavenger hunt. Offer a great prize to the student who can identify the most people on the Scavenger Hunt list.

from Teacher Appreciation Website

- **Teacher Notepad** You make a beautiful drawing and message for teacher appreciation, no bigger than a square inch. Then you take it to the local copy shop and make fifty copies on note-sized paper. You have them bound together. Your teacher appreciation notepad is ready!
- **Class Recipe Book** Each family donates one recipe. You bind them together with a nice home-made cover! The teacher will feel appreciation whenever he or she cooks!
- **Book of Thanks** Each of your classmates can write or draw their teacher appreciation message in a page.
- **Home-made Board Game** You know Monopoly, don't you? Now, how about actually making a similar board game where you include your teacher, school, classmates, your town's streets... All you need is cardboard, pens, plastic tokens and a lot of patience. It is worth it because you express your teacher appreciation and also make an interesting game you'll love to play later on.
- **Take Notes** Write poems, letters, or notes of appreciation and leave them in teachers' mailboxes. Read them at morning assembly or over the intercom.
- **Good Morning** Take orders the previous night so that coffee and pastries from the local coffeehouse are waiting for the teachers when they arrive at work.
- **Personalize It** Print teachers' names on coffee mugs, T-shirts, or other items to commemorate the years' efforts.
- **After-School Activities** Plan an end-of-the-day stress relief game such as volleyball or softball. Provide free snacks and refreshments.
- **Make it a Surprise** Our two staff bathrooms were very plain and utilitarian. One year, the PTA/PTO spent a whole weekend at school to surprise us: On Monday, when we arrived at school we discovered that the bathrooms had been redecorated--wallpaper, new paint, pictures on the wall, a little dresser to hold our personal items, fresh flowers. The following year, the PTA/PTO brought kids into school over a weekend and put their handprints in red, blue, or yellow paint on the walls of the front foyer as a welcoming touch.
- **Adopt-A-Teacher** Organize an event in which parents and administrators cover teachers' classrooms for an hour during lunch so that they can enjoy a meal outside of their classrooms.
- **Dress It Up** Decorate the staff lounge and the hallways of the school with Teacher Appreciation Week themed pictures and banners.
- **Walk of Fame** Create your own Walk of Fame for your teachers. Get a piece of donated red carpet or put red butcher paper down in the entry hall. Make gold stars with a teacher's name on each, and have the school meet the teachers as they arrive one morning.

from Education World

- **Quality Time** Gather students of a grade level or instructional team in the gym for a volleyball tournament. The principal and assistant principal, and other available support staff, organize and monitor the tournament while teachers spend time socializing over a specially planned meal or work together to accomplish other planning tasks.
- **Cookie Coupons** Recognize special contributions by putting "Cookie Coupons" in teachers' mailboxes. Arrange with the cafeteria for teachers to redeem those coupons for a special treat!
- **Jeans Day** Call for a "Jeans Day." All teachers can dress down on that day. Or make this a special reward for teachers who have gone above-and-beyond; have stickers printed that say "I earned this Jeans Day." They can wear the sticker on whatever "Jeans Day" they choose.
- **Pamper Room** Plan a "Pamper Day." Set aside a space and bring in a nail technician to do teachers' nails or to give hand massages with hot lotions. Put out scented potpourri, the silver punchbowl, and special cookies. Play relaxing music. Arrange to have each teacher's class covered for 30 minutes so they can visit the Pamper Room.
- **Business Cards** Make staff members feel special and professional by purchasing business cards for them. If such a purchase is not in your budget, enlist the support of your art and technology teachers to use school computers to design and print cards.
- **Encouraging Words** Start an "Encouraging Words" chain. Use a computer to design and print special cards, or purchase card stock and attach a small apple sticker to each card. The principal will begin the chain by sending the first five cards to five deserving faculty members. The next week, the principal places a blank "Encouraging Words" card in the mailbox of each teacher who received one the week before. Each of those teachers sends an "Encouraging Words" card to another of their colleagues. And the cycle continues... Include the entire staff -- don't forget custodians, cafeteria workers, teacher assistants, bus drivers, and others -- in this project. You might even attach to each card an apple sticker that still has on its backing. As teachers drop "Encouraging Words" cards in their colleagues' mailboxes, they affix the sticker next to the person's name on their mailbox. That way, teachers can see who has not yet been recognized; all staff members should be recognized once before anybody receives a second recognition.

from Washington Activity Coordinators Association

- **\$1,000,000 Bills** With the help of the Advanced Graphic Design students, scan in a very real looking \$1,000,000 bill. Electronically change as many areas as possible to make it clear and personal. You can replace the face on the bill with the teacher's picture and put their name in under the photo. Print them out (actual bill size) and make a huge poster to hang in the office that says, "Thanks a Million!" Teachers received a copy of their \$1,000,000 bill in their mailbox. Many teachers still display the bill on their bulletin boards.
- **Baby Picture Contest** Get teacher baby photos and put up in a secured display. Make it a contest for students to guess who is who.
- **Back Scratcher** Buy wooden back scratchers for staff. Attach a note that says, "Thanks for the helping hand!"
- **Banana Splits** Put a banana in the box of all staff members with an attached note which says "Don't split after school, bring this banana to room ____!" Have the fixings for banana splits after school.
- **Fairy Godmother Granting Wishes** Have a student dressed in a "fairy godmother" outfit complete with halo and wand ask each teacher to make a wish such as cleaning, recording papers, etc. Form a crew to grant the wishes.
- **Message in a Bottle** Recycle those plastic vending machine throw-a-way beverage containers and turn them into memorable thank-you! Collect, rinse, and remove label. Write an inspirational verse or quote on a piece of paper. Roll into a scroll and tuck inside the bottle. Attach a self-adhesive sticker to the outside of the bottle and write "Message in a Bottle." Tie on a steamer of ribbons for a special touch. Use self-adhesive stickers to decorate.
- **Post Cards** Once a week, each student in class writes a post card to a staff member. Write them about their teaching, support of activities, extra effort, etc. Only one student for a teacher in a given week. Post cards are delivered to teacher mailboxes.
- **Sweet Talk** Use candy and other treats to help share a thank you/encouragement message to teachers. Examples: Thanks for all the laughs and Snickers; You are Out of this World! (Mars or Milky Way); Thanks for the Mounds of Work You Do!; You are M&M!!! (Marvelous and Magnificent); Thanks for putting up with us Ding Dongs.

from AWSL Teacher Appreciation A to Z

"The greatest sign of success for a teacher is to be able to say, 'the children are now working as if I did not exist.'"

Maria Montessori



A	Apple or apple trinket: You make learning a-peeling!
B	Business cards: Create business cards for staff members accenting amazing teaching talents and personalities.
C	Clipboards: Using scrapbook paper and Modge Podge, individualize a clipboard for each teacher.
D	Door decorating: Decorate doors with fun drawings and artwork celebrating each teacher's unique personality.
E	Erasers: No mistake about it... you're the best! Teachers leave a mark on kids' lives that can't be erased!
F	Flower Power: Cut out a flower shape & place a lollipop through it. Write an inspirational quote or a happy thought for the day!
G	Gift Story Bag: Collect personal positive notes and thank you stories from students in paper bags for each staff and teacher.
H	Hey, Don't Split: Put a banana and note in staff members' boxes: "Don't Split After School! We have the fixings for Banana Splits in room ___."
I	Identify One: Choose one person from the staff each day to appreciate.
J	Just Because: Each week, select a class to write a thank you letters to a school employee – secretary, bus driver, custodian, cook, etc. – for whatever reason.
K	Kudos Crew: In the evening when teachers are at home, sneak into their rooms and leave positive messages for them on their white boards.
L	Lounge Decorating: Decorate the teacher's lounge according to a destination theme – Hawaii here we come!
M	Mints: Thank you for your commit <i>mint</i> , encourag <i>emint</i> and involv <i>emint</i> in our future!
N	Note for any occasion: For teaching us lessons & helping us grow; let this gift remind you, you're the best teacher we know!
O	Orange: Orange you glad you work here. We are!!!
P	Positive Puzzles: Give teachers a few pieces of a positive message puzzle each day for them to put together.

Q	Questionnaire: Ask staff to complete a questionnaire, so gifts can be individualized throughout the year.
R	Room Service Bring a room service cart to each classroom: offer teachers water, coffee, juice, pastries, fruit, etc.
S	Souper Teachers: “We think you are soup-er!” Give with a Lipton Cup o’ Soup
T	Teacher’s Pet Collect photos of the personal pets of staff members. Students try to match the pet to the teacher.
U	U Get A Break Custodians: Switch with the custodians! Provide them lunch and have your group clean the cafeteria!
V	Vacation Countdown Create a calendar to count down the last month of school. Add quotes to inspire the teachers each day!
W	Wash Windows: Wash staff car or classroom windows!
X	X-Marks the Spot: Have a scavenger hunt for new teachers. X marks the spot of the prize!
Y	Yellow Bus Brigade: Have a group of students give treats to bus drivers, or greet them with hot chocolate on cold mornings.
Z	Zzzzzz... Put a box of Sleepytime tea with hot water in the staff lounge before a break with a note: “You deserve a restful vacation!”