

Put Your Goggles On!

Teacher-Tested Ideas for Getting Your Students to Wear Their Goggles

Introduction

One fundamental safety rule in the science laboratory is wearing safety goggles whenever heat, glassware, or chemicals are used. The struggle to get students to wear safety goggles can be a constant battle and a source of frustration for many teachers. Following are some safety tips and teacher-tested ideas that work.

Flinn Safety Tips

- **Invest in high quality goggles.** Make sure high quality goggles are purchased for your students. Goggles vary considerably in flexibility, durability, and venting or anti-fog ability. Cheap goggles are uncomfortable, fog up easily, and can be a significant distraction to students trying to perform laboratory activities. Higher quality goggles are soft, pliable, and are comfortable to wear. Visor goggles are very popular because they are comfortable and do not fog up, even in the most humid environments.
- **Safety comes first.** Incorporate safety into each laboratory exercise. Begin each lab period with a discussion of the safety precautions, including the use of goggles, for the lab. Pre-lab assignments are an ideal way to initiate a safety discussion.
- **Always set a good example.** The teacher is the most visible and important role model. Wear your safety goggles whenever you are working in the lab, even (or especially) when class is not in session. Students learn from your good example—whether you are preparing reagents, testing a procedure, or performing a demonstration.
- **No exceptions.** Enforce your safety rules consistently with every student, every day.

Teacher-Tested Ideas

The following teacher-tested ideas are presented to provide some suggestions on how to encourage your students to wear goggles. You, the professional teacher, must decide what will work best in your classroom based on your particular teaching style, your students, and the school environment.

1. **Grading Policy:** Develop a consistent lab grading policy that acknowledges the essential nature of following the safety rules. One way to do this is to assign a two-part grade for each lab: one for content and one for safety. The safety grade may include pre-lab preparation, adherence to the written safety policy, and using safe laboratory practices. Failure to wear goggles results in an automatic and substantial grade deduction for that lab.

2. **Peer Pressure:** To encourage positive peer pressure for wearing goggles, everyone in the lab group (or class) is penalized if one person of the lab group is not wearing goggles. Peer pressure will quickly take over and the students (rather than you) will be reinforcing the safety rules in your classroom.
3. **Extra Credit:** Instead of penalizing students, reward them with extra credit points any time everyone in their lab group (or class) keeps their goggles on for the whole lab. Structure your grading policy to account for the extra credit points.
4. **Safety Tickets:** Prepare safety tickets and issue one immediately to any student not wearing goggles. Have a space on the ticket for the student's name, date, class period, a checklist of the three most common rule violations, a space to write in a new violation, and spaces for the student's and teacher's signatures. Anytime a laboratory rule is broken, the teacher (or better yet, the student) writes a ticket. To be effective, each ticket must carry a consequence—retaking a safety test, cleaning out test tubes, etc. Any student who accumulates three safety tickets in a grading period should receive a harsher penalty such as being disqualified from participating in the next lab activity.
5. **Encourage Creativity:** Students develop pride of ownership in a safety policy if they have a role in formulating the reasons behind the rules. Develop a short poem or jingle contest in the classroom—ask students to write poems or jingles that can then be used to prepare safety lab signs and posters.
6. **Goggles During Class:** Anyone caught not wearing goggles during lab must wear goggles during the entire next science class period, whether it is during a test, a group activity, or a lecture.
7. **Colorful Goggles:** Have students design or dye their own goggles. Flinn Scientific has a colorful goggle dye kit that allows students the creativity to dye their goggles a multitude of colors. Students can match their goggles to a lab coat and “accessorize” for their chemistry labs!
8. **Short Essay:** Have the student write a short essay titled “Why I Think I Can Never Get Hurt” or “Why I Think I Don’t Have To Wear Goggles” to make up for the zero they will receive on their lab report for not wearing goggles. This normally generates some

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good responses and hopefully an apology from the student.

9. **Demonstration:** Many students are visual learners and must see for themselves the effect of acid on eyes before understanding the need to wear safety goggles. Perform a demonstration for your students to show the value of wearing safety goggles. We recommend Cow Eye (Safety Fax #10062), Acid-in-the-Eye (#801.0) or Pie in the Face (#10303) demonstrations. If you are unfamiliar with these demos, please contact Flinn Scientific via phone or e-mail to request a copy of the Safety Fax.
10. **Goggle Song:** Students not wearing their goggles must sing the goggle song for the whole class. If you feel this is too embarrassing, then have the whole class sing the song anytime one of them is caught. The song is sung to the tune of “I’m a Little Teapot.”

*I'm a little Chemist,
Short and stout*

*Here are my goggles,
Here are my eyes*

*When I don't wear my goggles,
My teacher shouts*

PUT THEM ON OR YOU GET OUT!

If you have any other creative ideas that work, please contact the Flinn Scientific Technical Service Department at 1-800-452-1261 or e-mail to: techservice@flinnsci.com so we can continue to share ideas with other teachers.