

PHOENIX OFFICE OF ARTS & CULTURE TEACHING ARTIST QUICK START GUIDE

This Quick Start Guide is designed to accompany the full Best Practices Guide for Teaching Artists. It distills the most essential insights and tools for planning and leading effective residencies, offering a concise reference to support your work in schools and community settings.

1. Before You Begin

- **Clarify purpose and goals.** Co-plan with the classroom teacher. Write down shared objectives, logistics, and responsibilities.
- **Know your context.** Every school has its own culture, routines, and priorities. Observe and adapt.
- **Connect artistry and standards.** Align your art form with the Arizona Arts Standards, the National Core Arts Standards, and the *Studio Habits of Mind*. These frameworks translate artistic thinking into clear, teachable habits.
- **Plan for inclusion.** Design multiple ways for students to enter the work—visual, verbal, tactile, and kinesthetic. Anticipate sensory sensitivities and provide choice and flexibility.

2. In the Classroom

Lead with Presence

- Greet students warmly and learn their names.
- Share your artist story and genuine enthusiasm.
- Model curiosity and creative risk-taking. Mistakes are part of the process.
- Resource: [Fostering a culture of connection through the arts](#)

Create Structure

- Begin with a consistent opening: a warm-up, question, or short demo.
- Give clear, concise directions and model each step.
- Phrase expectations positively (“Do...” rather than “Don’t...”).
- Resource: [Lesson Plan Template](#)

Engage Everyone

- Vary activity structures—individual, small-group, and whole-class.
- Acknowledge specific efforts by name and describe what you notice.
- Use humor, play, and surprise to spark energy and curiosity.
- Resource: [Inspired Classrooms](#)

Differentiate with Care

- Accommodations change how a student learns; modifications change what is learned.
- Look to the classroom teacher for specific strategies that support students receiving special education services.
- The goal is not to simplify but to help every learner succeed through flexibility and creativity.
- Resource: [Universal Design for Learning](#)

3. Partner Well

- Teachers: Communicate consistently, invite their insights, and align your plans with classroom norms.
- Administrators: Keep them informed about goals, progress, and outcomes. Show how your work supports school priorities.

- Families: Celebrate student growth with showcases, photos, or newsletters (always following school policies).
- Support Staff: Build rapport with front office, custodial, and security staff. Their partnership enables your work to run smoothly.

4. Teaching Artist Mindsets

The **Studio Habits of Mind** (Hetland et al., *Studio Thinking 2*) describe the ways artists think and work. While they were designed for visual arts, they can form the foundation of effective teaching artistry across art forms.

Studio Habit	Teaching Artist Application
Develop Craft	Teach core techniques and vocabulary clearly.
Engage & Persist	Model focus, resilience, and persistence.
Envision	Encourage students to imagine possibilities and next steps.
Express	Help students communicate meaning through artistic choices.
Observe	Guide close looking and attentive listening.
Reflect	Build habits of self-assessment and dialogue about process.
Stretch & Explore	Encourage experimentation and risk-taking.
Understand Art Worlds	Connect students to the broader community of artists and cultural contexts.

Consider what makes you distinctive as a teaching artist. Identify the unique experiences, perspectives, or processes you bring that no one else can offer. The strength of your residency begins with the authenticity of your own practice. Pair these artistic mindsets with Arizona's **Six Pillars of Character** (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship) to align artistic and educational language.

5. Avoid Common Pitfalls

- Lack of clarity: Confirm goals, roles, and schedules in writing.
- Ignoring school culture: Observe and adapt to existing routines.
- Over- or underestimating student skills: Start simple and scaffold complexity.
- Overlooking quieter students: Build structures for all voices.
- Focusing only on product: Celebrate process and growth.
- Burnout: Protect time for your own creative work and rest.

6. After Each Session

- Reflect: What worked, what surprised you, and what you might change.
- Document: Capture notes, photos, or quotes (with permission).
- Communicate: Send a brief follow-up or thank-you to the teacher or administrator.
- Recharge: Your artistry is the source of your teaching energy—protect it.