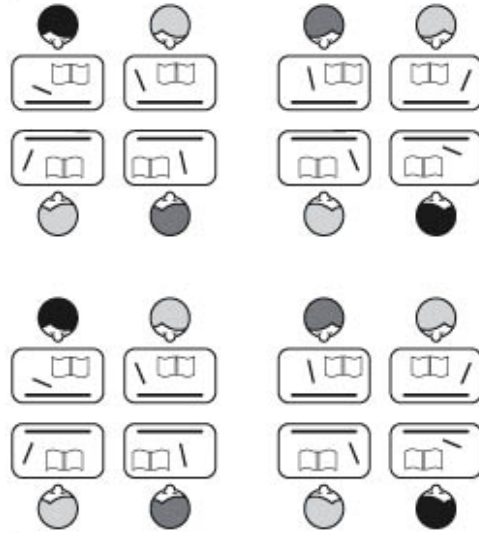# SEATING CHARTS

You need one for the first day of school!

Some of the best advice I ever received was from a principal who said, "Have them seat themselves on the first day, but use a pre-assigned seating chart. That way you can greet your students at the door and keep an eye on the students to make sure they are doing what you want them to do. You're not busy trying to find names on a chart." She believed, as I do, that students should not be able to pick where they sit. There are many reasons for this, starting with the isolation of the least "popular" students to the way smart kids group together too much... **Great advice!**

So the last 20-something years of my career, I did just that. I had a seating chart at the front of the room, most often on a podium or science teacher's cart. The students would come in on the first day of school, I would greet them at the door, tell them to pick up one of each of the papers on the Pick-Up Table, find their seat, and begin the bell, which was on the overhead/SmartBoard.

The best seating chart method I've ever used had **little picture tiles that stick to a sketch of the room**. Great way to effortlessly learn names.

There are several ways to get these photos.
(1) Photocopy last year's yearbook photos. Laminate and cut out.
(2) Use the photos in the electronic files on your school's network.
(3) Take as many as you can if you have an open house before school starts.
(4) If all else fails, take them the first day during work period and make them up that first night. (But have the names on the chart without photos that first day!)

This wonderful seating chart was popular with subs and counselors who came in to talk with my classes because they could catch those who played musical chairs with the visitor.
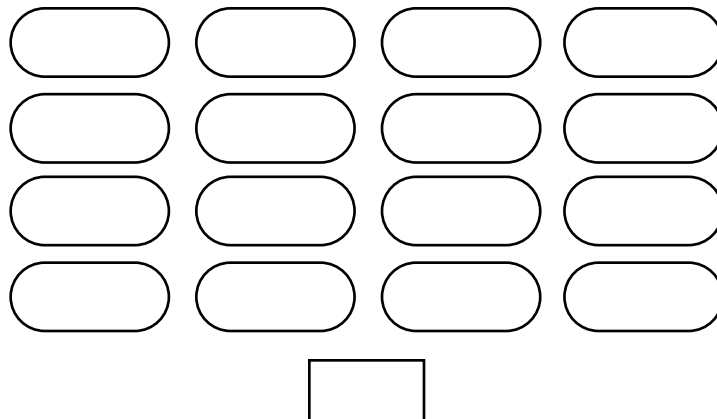
Photo Tile Seating Chart:

Make **student "photo tiles"** for a seating chart--a great way to connect new student names with faces! First, print out students' names in a small font with enough space for photos above the names. Then photocopy last year's yearbook pictures of each student and glue them above the names. Laminate the entire page and cut the tiles out. Put a blank copy of your seating chart inside a plastic sleeve. Using sticky-tack or double-sided tape, stick each photo on top of their assigned seat. Students can seat themselves the first day of school by finding their picture on the seating chart. This makes taking attendance a snap. Since the tiles are removable, new seating charts are easy! Counselors, substitutes, principals, and other visitors **LOVE** this!
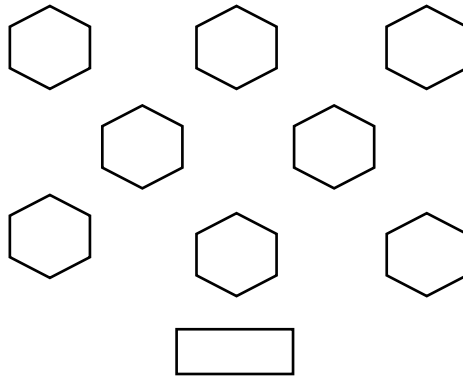
Arrangement of Desks/Tables:

I recommend changing seating on a regular basis. I trained my students to quickly change in and out of various formats. We practiced with my timer setting the amount of time it takes to change, usually one minute. If you have small groups working together, it's one arrangement. Teacher presentation such as viewing a PowerPoint, it's another. Team games, it's another. Individual work, it's still another. There is no one perfect arrangement of desks/tables! Anything can work. Don't fall into the trap of regretting you have tables, instead of desks, or vice versa. Use what you have and train your students to rearrange into different formations.
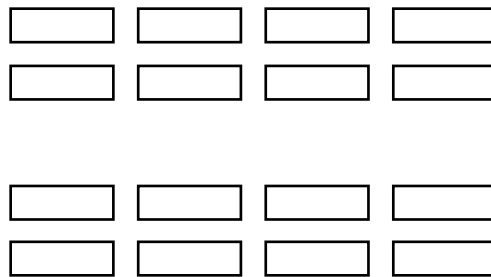
The "usual formation" can be traditional rows of desks with teacher at the front in the power position, such as a podium or overhead projector.
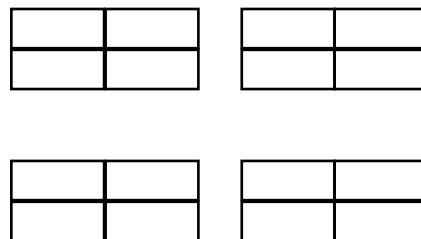
Or tables with students looking to the center of the table but trained to turn toward the front when you are speaking/presenting.

A fun arrangement puts a long aisle down the center of the classroom.

Or try this one:

The MAIN PRINCIPLES: Use a teacher-made seating chart from the first day of school! Change the arrangement frequently. Plan several different seating arrangements. Train your students to move the tables/desk themselves in a quick and orderly manner!