

# Sportsmanship

- Good sportsmanship contains the following core elements:
  - Empathy—good sportsmanship requires actively understanding and feeling others' perspectives and emotions.
  - Respect—good sportsmanship treats all with dignity, valuing their efforts and varied abilities.
  - Fairness—good sportsmanship involves adhering to rules and responding gracefully regardless of the outcome of the game.
- General guidelines of good sportsmanship to instill in students:
  - Be courteous to everyone
  - Don't brag
  - Compliment both teammates and opponents
  - Learn and play by the rules
  - Follow teacher/umpire directions
  - Don't blame others for the outcome of a game
  - Share positions
  - No cheating
  - Cheer all teammates
  - Be a team player
  - Play hard
  - Embrace competition
- Establish expectations before leaving the classroom to play. Emphasize that the most important thing is to create an environment where everyone can have fun. Second in importance is to learn team skills (a vital life skill). When those two things are in place, healthy competition can thrive.
- Consider involving students in a wide range of games and activities. Along with learning how to play basketball, softball, soccer, and volleyball, they can also experience flying kites, playing croquet and badminton, and taking nature walks. The more competitive and athletic students may balk at this, but it is a chance for them to develop character in participating well in a physical activity they don't prefer (which is something the less athletic students need to do often).
- Remember that everyone feels comfortable trying to do their best in an encouraging, non-threatening environment. That is more important than having students feel shamed, embarrassed, and humiliated just because of a silly ball. Teaching students how to be part of creating a respectful and positive environment develops the beautiful qualities of kindness and patience.

## Sources

- Teaching Sportsmanship by Jonathan Miller: [Teaching Sportsmanship - The Dock for Learning](#)

- Why Everyone Gets to Hit and Make It to First by Deana Swanson: [Why Everyone Gets to Hit and Make it to First - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Winning and Losing Successfully by Nathan Yoder: [Winning and Losing Successfully - The Dock for Learning](#)