

Praise Rate & Distribution Tally

A one-week count for grades 6–12 — from Positive Reinforcement in the Classroom on ElevateTheNorm.com

Why count at all. In the largest review of behavior-specific praise, most teachers delivered **0 to 2 praise statements in 30 minutes** before training. Almost nobody can judge their own rate from memory, and you cannot reliably count while teaching. Use a silent phone timer, or ask a colleague with a free period to sit in and mark this sheet.

Part 1 — Your rate, one class period at a time

Mark one tally for every time you name a specific behavior. Do not count “good job,” “thank you,” or “nice work” — by the research definition those are not behavior-specific praise.

Day	Class / period	Specific praise (tally)	Total
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

Read it like this. Under five in a period means the fix is frequency, not arithmetic. Raise your rate before you worry about any praise-to-reprimand ratio — only two of eleven methodologically sound studies manipulated a ratio at all, so the famous 3:1 and 4:1 targets are recommendations rather than findings.

Who Is Actually Getting It?

Part 2 — the distribution check most teachers find uncomfortable

List the students in one class. Tally each time that student receives specific praise across the week. Most teachers who run this find their praise concentrated on the quiet, compliant students who needed it least.

Student	Tally across the week	Total

The five moves this sheet supports

1. **Name the behavior, not the student.** “You cited the document in your second paragraph” tells a teenager what to repeat. “Good job” does not.
2. **Say it quietly when quiet is faster.** Public and private praise showed no significant difference in the one study run in high school classrooms.
3. **Raise your rate before your ratio.** Frequency is almost always the broken part.
4. **Stop promising what you will not deliver.** An unpaid promise teaches a class that your word does not hold.
5. **Check who is getting it.** That is what Part 2 is for.

One honest caveat to keep with the sheet. Every secondary finding behind these moves measures on-task or disruptive behavior, not grades. Raising your praise rate is not known to move a test score. It is known to be free.