

Hints for Teams/Coaches

Schedule a Workshop: A half-day or full-day workshop, “day away,” “pull-together” workshop/professional development (or whatever name your district might use) is a great way to introduce students to FPS. Start the time with some brief discussion about the topic and share some background information, but spend most of the time focusing on the process. Use the first Future Scene of the year to walk students through the process.

Read To, Read With: If you are working with a class, ease into the research by taking a few minutes each day to read articles or summaries to the students. Every few days, provide a short passage for students to read in pairs. Discuss the content each time, but keep it brief. Students will gradually build an understanding of the topic so you won’t feel you have to cover so much ground all at once.

Late Start: If you get started later in the year, use the Future Scene from the first topic for quick training. Skip the research phase and work through all of the steps as a group. Brainstorm together, then ask each student to choose one challenge and one solution to write. Start the next topic early to give yourself plenty of time for research and process practice.

Skip Practice Problem #1: If you’re feeling pressured for time, just skip Practice Problem #1 and get a good start with Practice Problem #2, especially if this is your first year.

Double Practice Problem #2: If you only see your students once a week, consider using the second topic for both your first and second practice. You would have to write your own Future Scene for the first practice, trying to make it quite different from the second one. You can continue to research the same topic for both practices, rather than starting over from scratch. Send along your Future Scene and an explanation with your first booklet, and we’ll find an evaluator to give you some feedback. (Only one booklet per registered team will be formally evaluated.)

Choice of Underlying Problem: If you don’t have time to teach all three steps thoroughly on Practice Problem #1, work on challenges and solutions with the students. For the underlying problem, write three UPs yourself, explain their construction to the students, then have each team select one to use for the booklet.

Booklet All At Once: On the first two practice problems, the booklet writing can be split up over several days. However, if you see students once a week, splitting the booklet over several weeks does not work well at all. It’s very important that the second practice booklet is written in

one 2-3 hour period, or over 2-3 days in a row at the most, if at all possible! This is the practice before the students move into the timed competition booklet of District Competition.

Be Patient: FPS teaches very complex thinking skills. It takes a full year for most students to have a good handle on the process and writing skills, and even more than that to have a feeling of “mastery.” If you’re overwhelmed with the competitive program, consider trying the non-competitive curricular material (Action-Based Problem Solving) or concentrate on the Presentation of Action Plan for the District Competition. Let the students experience the fun of FPS as they become proficient in the process!

Contact Former Students: If you can get a former student to come and talk to your students, it can help build enthusiasm for doing FPS.