Such an important part of being an effective educator is knowing your students, knowing who’s in the room and using that in a way to make sure everyone is learning.

It was the first week of school and we still didn’t know who was who...we went to school with them before but there were more new students in our classroom. And so, to get to know everyone and what they’re comfortable and uncomfortable with was very hard.

The first thing you need in a classroom is to have a safe, inclusive learning environment where kids come in and they feel like they can say what they need to and they know what they are talking about is relevant to their lives and Facing History will help give you the tools to create that type of setting.

Welcome to Facing History’s Back-to-School Toolkit. I’m Charles Fitzgibbon and I’m a former social studies teacher who has been using Facing History resources in my classroom for many years.

The first few days of the school year are an important time for establishing a classroom culture. The resources in the Toolkit are designed to guide and support you as you launch your year, meet your students, and establish a reflective, inclusive, and courageous classroom community.

A classroom community where students are known and know each other, and where they can engage in difficult conversations about the complex histories that they will encounter over the course of the school year.

The toolkit includes five lessons that are structured around the essential question: How can we work together to create an open, supportive, and reflective learning community?

Each of the five lessons have been carefully designed to explore the themes of identity and community.

Facing History’s unique approach incorporates not only historical knowledge but also the social-emotional, ethical, and civic reasoning skills that are essential for a more humane and informed citizenry.

The Toolkit includes all the materials needed for teaching each of the five lessons and highlights the SEL competencies that students are developing within each lesson.
The Toolkit also includes places where you can differentiate to meet the needs of your students.

At the end of each lesson, there are teacher reflection questions. We invite you to take the time to reflect on your practice, an essential component to your own professional growth to use not only as you plan the first days of school but throughout the school year.

Back to school is an important time as you establish new routines and get to know your students. As you prepare to facilitate respectful classroom discussions on difficult issues, Facing History is here to help.

We invite you to use this hashtag to share how back to school is going in your classroom.

Facing History is looking forward to supporting you as you begin the school year. So welcome back to school!