Teacher Resource Sheet

My first days at school

What this lesson is for

Children name what feels new when they start school and what helps them settle. The lesson works from pictures so the class finds the five things itself, then draws one new thing before the class says what it found.

In the curriculum (NCCA Primary SEE, 2025)

Stage 1, My locality: Identity and heritage. Identify and describe important events and milestones in their own life and those of other important people in their life.

Before the lesson

- Print one activity sheet for each child; it comes with the lesson.

How the lesson runs

1. Look and wonder	5 min	4. Draw it in your copy	7 min
2. Talk and learn	6 min	5. What we found	5 min
3. What is new?	11 min		
Then the activity sheet, at the children's desks			about 11 min

Teaching tips

- Show the picture with no explanation first and give the class a quiet look.
- Read every word aloud on the slides and point to the classroom on the first slide.
- Call one child at a time to point to the new thing on each of the five pictures.
- Walk the room during the drawing time and notice the drawings over shoulders.

What to watch for

- Some children may talk about their own first day instead of the pictures. Welcome it briefly then return to the pictures.
- A child may stay quiet during the talk. Do not single them out, because that can make a quiet child feel put on the spot.
- Some children may be stuck on what to draw. Quietly name one of the five pictures as a choice.
- **A common wrong idea:** “New always means scary or bad.” Say new only means not done before. It can feel odd and still be fine. Point to a picture and name one helpful thing right beside the new one.

Help and stretch

- For children who find the talk hard, narrow it to one question only such as what is new.
- For extension, ask what else in our room is like the picture on the board.
- If a child is stuck on the drawing, quietly name one of the five pictures.

Lesson 1

If you are short of time

Shorten talk on one or two of the five pictures. Keep the drawing and the closing talk that names what the class found.

Background for you

Starting school brings clear firsts: a peg for your own coat, a teacher who is not family, a yard for play, lunch at a table with the class, and a bag for the day. Naming each one helps children see that new places have jobs and routines, not only odd feelings.

What helps is often simple and on show: a kind face, a clear peg, a friend in the yard, or knowing where lunch goes. Stay with the pictures. We do not know each child's first day, and no child needs to tell a private story for the lesson to work.

Key words

new	not done or used before
school	the place where children learn together
help	someone or something that makes a hard thing easier

Children will ask

What if I cried on my first day? Many children feel wobbly at first. A kind teacher, a clear peg, and knowing the routine help. Feeling new is ordinary and it usually settles.

Is everything at school different from home? Some things feel alike, like sitting at a table. Many things are different, like coat pegs and the yard. That is why the sheet sorts Home and School.

Handle with care

Some children still feel wobbly about school or leaving home. Stay with the pictures. Welcome a short share if offered. Never ask a child to tell their own first day, and do not dwell on worry or separation.

Activity sheet answers

1. Sort Is it at home or at school? Draw a line from each picture to Home or School. Then colour your favourite.

Home: A bed at home., A sofa at home., A bathtub with a rubber duck. School: A schoolbag., Coat pegs at school., A classroom table with small chairs and a pot of crayons.