If you’ve ever watched David Letterman, you are probably familiar with his “Top 10 Lists.” Modeled after that same concept, students will create a *Top 10 Reasons Why it’s Great to be Back in School* list as a first day of school activity.

This activity is designed to get students excited for the school year by allowing them to think of all the positive aspects being back in school offers. Because they think of the reasons themselves, it’s intrinsic motivation at its finest.

I allow the students to present their Top 10 lists David-Letterman style (some read their list from a card and others make posters of their lists). When they are done, we post them in the room for other classes to see. I usually type these and post them online for the first couple of months of school, as well, to remind them why being in school is a positive thing.

**ADDITIONAL IDEAS:**

- Students could create the lists in a Powerpoint or Keynote presentation and present it as a mini-speech to the class.

- Continue the theme throughout the year (maybe once a quarter so they do not tire of the activity) for various events such as:
  - Top 10 Reasons We Will Win Our Homecoming Game
  - Top 10 Reasons to Read [Insert Novel Title Here]
  - Top 10 Reasons it’s Great to be Back in School After Holiday/Winter Break
  - Top 10 Reasons to Succeed on [Insert Standardized Test Name Here]
  - Top 10 Reasons Not to Slack Off 4th Quarter

**ALSO...**

- I’ve included a handout, but the students could also use their own notebook or scratch paper to make the lists.

- If you want a variety of lists, I’ve included a page of “cards” that can be printed and cut in which students could “draw” a list.

- I usually allow the lists to be done in groups or partners, but they can be assigned individually as well.

- Examples of lists my students have created are included at the end of this document. Some are funny, some are sarcastic, some are clearly trying to suck up, and some told me a little too much information. But I certainly learn a lot about the students when we do this activity!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOP 10 Reasons</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## “Back to School” Lists Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 10 reasons why high school is better than middle school</th>
<th>Top 10 reasons why our school is better than (insert your favorite rival school)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top 10 reasons why our school is the best</td>
<td>Top 10 reasons why it’s great to be a (insert your grade level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 10 reasons why it’s great to be back in school</td>
<td>Top 10 reasons why it’s better to be a (insert your grade level) than (insert another grade level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 10 reasons why being in high school is better than working</td>
<td>Top 10 reasons why being a student is better than being a teacher (or insert another occupation here)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your choice / write your own Top 10 reasons why...</td>
<td>Your choice / write your own Top 10 reasons why...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TOP 10** “Back to School” Lists Activity

*Past examples compiled by students in my English classes…*

**TOP 10 REASONS WHY IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK IN SCHOOL…**
10. We get to see all our teachers.
9. One year closer to graduation.
8. Our phone bill goes down.
7. We’re not at home bored.
6. We get to hang out in town/with friends more often.
5. It keeps us out of trouble.
4. Our siblings are further away.
3. We get to see all our friends.
2. We have a good reason to buy new clothes.
1. We get away from our parents!

**TOP 8 REASONS WHY IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK IN SCHOOL…**
8. You get to see your friends.
7. You won’t be playing XBox all day.
6. So you can learn something & get an education.
5. So we can get our driver’s license.
4. So we can play sports.
3. So we can stay out of trouble.
2. To make us smarter.
1. So we can take English II!

**TOP 10 REASONS WHY BEING BACK IN SCHOOL IS GOOD…**
10. Driver’s Ed.
9. Class Olympics
8. Going to the media center during study-hall to hang out.
7. Field Trips
6. English class
5. Snow days
4. Vacation
3. Cheerleading
2. Football games
1. Homecoming week

**TOP 10 REASONS TO COME BACK TO SCHOOL…**
10. Get to play sports.
9. Get to eat school lunch.
8. We get to learn & become smarter.
7. We’re one year older.
6. We’re one year closer to “real” life.
5. We get to see our friends.
4. No sitting home & doing nothing.
3. No babysitting all day.
2. No cleaning all day.
1. No going to work!

**TOP 9 REASONS WHY IT'S GREAT TO BE IN HIGH SCHOOL…**
9. We’re in a new school
8. There’s more space
7. Ala cart lunches
6. See our old friends again
5. Finally get to be a cheerleader
4. More freedom
3. We get to pick our own classes
2. Homecoming
1. Meet guys

**TOP 5 REASONS WHY IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK IN SCHOOL…**
5. Instead of “Happy Meals” we get Mystery Meals!
4. We get real exercise instead of video game finger-aerobics.
3. We get to catch up on our sleep.
2. We get to buy school supplies instead of stuff that really matters.
1. We get to see how ugly everyone has gotten over the summer.

**TOP 10 REASONS IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK IN SCHOOL…**
10. We get to see our teachers
9. Nachos!
8. Learn new things
7. Stay out of trouble
6. Get to go school shopping
5. Closer to graduation
4. Sports
3. See our boyfriends/girlfriends
2. Meet new people
1. See our friends

**TOP 5 REASONS WHY IT'S *TOTALLY* AWESOME TO BE BACK IN SCHOOL…**
5. Totally rad school supplies
4. Totally fetch new book bag
3. Totally tubular new cell phone
2. Totally smokin' hot new clothes

*And the number one reason it's *totally* awesome to be back in school…*
1. Totally hot senior guys!!

*Continued on next page…*
TOP 10 REASONS WHY BEING A SOPHOMORE IS BETTER THAN BEING A FRESHMAN...
10. We know where our classes are.
9. We’re not scared on the first day of school.
8. We can cut in the lunch line (at least in front of the freshmen!).
7. People actually come to watch our sporting events.
6. We actually might win a tug-of-war this year.
5. We already know where we’re going to sit in the cafeteria on the first day of school.
4. Field trips this year!
3. We know which classes get cellular service.
2. We know which teachers we can get off topic.
1. We’re no longer “stupid freshmen”!

TOP 5 REASONS WHY BEING A SOPHOMORE IS BETTER THAN BEING A FRESHMAN...
5. We get our driver’s license sooner.
4. We’re not noticed in school.
3. We’re closer to getting out of school.
2. We can’t be initiated.
1. We can’t be called “stupid freshmen”.

TOP 7 REASONS WHY HIGH SCHOOL IS BETTER THAN MIDDLE SCHOOL...
7. One lunch
6. Intermixed [by grade level] classes
5. No more ISATs
4. Get to be Cardinals/Panthers
3. Food is better
2. Mr. W
1. Mrs. R

TOP 10 REASONS WHY HIGH SCHOOL IS BETTER THAN MIDDLE SCHOOL...
10. School lunches
9. Sports
8. See our friends more
7. Nicer locker rooms
6. Can have cell phones in our pockets
5. More freedom
4. Industrial tech classes
3. Another year closer to being out of high school
2. One year closer to driver’s ed
1. Get to meet new girls

Keep a copy of the lists the students compile in a three-ring binder. You can use them as examples for future classes, or share with the students at the end of the year to remind them that being in school isn’t all that bad!