Token Economies:
A Proactive Intervention for the Classroom

Please read the following scenario:

Mark constantly forgets to raise his hand before speaking in class. He blurts out answers during class lessons and discussions, and he makes loud comments and requests for help during independent work time. Mark’s teacher is always reminding him to respect the other people in the room by raising his hand before speaking. After a reminder from the teacher, Mark often remembers to raise his hand before speaking for about 30 minutes. Then he usually returns to his old habits.

Suppose you are the paraprofessional in Mark’s class, and the teacher asks you to set up a token economy to help Mark learn to raise his hand before speaking. Based on what you have learned in this lesson, answer the following questions to describe how you could set up a token economy for Mark.

1. Describe Mark’s challenging behavior.

2. What behavioral goal would you set for Mark? In other words, what behavior do you want to see?

3. Would you use a token or point system? How many points/tokens would Mark get for achieving his goal?

4. At what intervals would you judge whether Mark has met his goal? How or why would you choose that interval?
5. How would you keep track of the points or tokens Mark has earned? Why would you choose that method?

6. What would you allow Mark to “buy” with his tokens or points? Why would you choose that reward?

7. How would you phase out the token economy for Mark?