day one

Wait?!?! They're here?! Deep breaths... deep breaths. Introduce yourself. Go over your syllabus. Disseminate important papers. Go over areas of the classroom. Do an icebreaker like "find someone who..." or a science-themed activity like these science avatars. Day 1 and 2 were always shortened schedules, so sometimes we wouldn't get to the avatars and icebreakers until the next day.

day two

Alright, we made it through day one. Now what? Oh yeah, teach science. We take day two as an opportunity to continue the conversation from day one. Work on science avatars, do some science icebreakers, go over your timeline for the semester. Have students complete a science inventory, pre-assessment, or a KWL.

day three

Let's get down to the meat of the class. By day three, registration stragglers and newcomers have somewhat subsided. As kids walk in today, they should be ready to learn. Have your bell work on the board or a warm-up activity on the table. If you have a handout for students, have it ready to grab on a front desk or in an easily accessible bin. If you didn't get a chance to read our blog on Top Ten Tips for Back to School and buy your notebooks in bulk for your kiddos, then hopefully they have been able to grab one by day three. Go over how a lesson looks in your class, your notebook set-up and your daily expectations. Have students decorate their covers for homework.

day four

Take today to reinforce your style of teaching from yesterday. Continue the same procedures - warm-up ready to go, handouts available in your designated area. Students should start to see that there is a structure to your class (which is very important for easily distracted middle school students). We would spend today talking about how the notebook is used - since we were early adopters of the interactive notebook, we feel like we've mastered our left-side/right-side methodologies. We also gave out our root words pages, we referred to CONSTANTLY in life science.

day five

Take today to reinforce your style of teaching from yesterday. Go over lab safety rules. Hand out your lab safety contract and make sure students understand the implications of not following the rules. Take students on a tour of the various lab equipment available for use in your class. Review procedures with a fun activity like a lab safety violation scavenger hunt, story or comic. Brush up on equipment identification and use with some measurement activities. BOOM. You're done.