

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING/STUDENT ASSESSMENT

A teacher checks for understanding by **continually verifying** that students are learning what is being taught while it is being taught.

Checking for understanding:

- Allows the teacher to make instructional decisions during the lesson.
- Monitors student progress in real time so as not to wait until formal assessments are given in order to revise lessons.
- Ensures that students are not practicing and reinforcing mistakes.

Tips

- **Avoid yes/no questions** and phrases like “Does this make sense?” In response to these questions, students usually answer “yes”. So of course it’s surprising when several students later admit that they’re lost. To help students grasp ideas in class, ask pointed questions that require students to explain more clearly or demonstrate more precisely their understanding.
- **Consider your language target** to be sure the assessment prompts for enough language to accurately assess students language level
- **Use frequent checks** throughout the lesson to be sure students understand what is going on and what is expected of them.
- **Use a variety** of individual and whole group techniques to check understanding that they accurately know what all students know.
- **Make sure it is useful** to give you the information needed to adjust your instruction to help more students understand.

PRACTICE MAKES PERMANENT

Check for Understanding Strategy	Description
Choral Response	In response to a cue, all students respond verbally at the same time. The response can be either to answer a question or to repeat something the teacher has said.
Debriefing	A form of reflection immediately following an activity.
Digital Tools and Apps	Digital tools and apps that give instant feedback and data (clickers, Padlet, AnswerGarden, Answer Pad, Dotstorming, Kahoot, NearPod, etc.)
Four Corners	Four corners provides an opportunity for student movement while permitting the teacher to monitor and assess understanding. Students choose a corner based on their level of expertise of a given subject. Based on your knowledge of _____, which corner would you choose? Corner 1: The Dirt Road (There’s so much dust, I can’t see where I’m going! Help!!) Corner 2: The Paved Road (It’s fairly smooth, but there are potholes along the way.) Corner 3: The Highway (I feel fairly confident but have an occasional need to slowdown.) Corner 4: The Interstate (I’m traveling along and could easily give directions to someone else.) Once students are in their chosen corners, allow students to discuss their progress with others. Questions may be prompted by teacher or peer tutoring could occur by having Corner 1 pair with Corner 4; Corner 2 pair with Corner 3.
Gallery Walk	After teams have generated ideas on a topic using a piece of chart paper, they appoint a “docent” to stay with their work. Teams rotate around examining other team’s ideas and ask questions of the docent. Teams then meet together to discuss and add to their information so the docent also can learn from other teams. <i>Graffiti Version</i> – Groups receive a large piece of paper and felt pens of different colors. Students generate ideas in the form of graffiti. Groups can move to other papers and discuss/add to the ideas.
Hand Signals • Fist to Five (3-2-1) • Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down	Students display a designated hand signal to indicate their understanding of a specific concept, principal, or process. Fist to Five (3-2-1) - Students can show anywhere from three to five fingers to signal maximum understanding down to a fist or one finger to signal minimal understanding. Thumbs up/Thumbs Down - I understand and can explain it (e.g., thumbs up). - I do not yet understand (e.g., thumbs down). - I’m not completely sure about (e.g., wave hand). These strategies require engagement by all students and allows the teacher to check for understanding within a large group.
Kinesthetic Demonstrations	Students demonstrate their knowledge of transformations of functions by physically moving their arms and body.

K-W-L & KWL+	Students respond as whole group, small group, or individually to a topic as to “What they already Know, what they want to learn, what they have learned”. PLUS (+) asks students to organize their new learnings using a concept map or graphic organizer that reflects the key information. Then, each student writes a summary paragraph about what they have learned.
Numbered Heads Together	Students sit in groups and each group member is given a number. The teacher poses a problem and all four students discuss. The teacher calls a number and that student is responsible for sharing for the group.
Response Cards & Whiteboards	Index cards, colored cards, signs, whiteboards, magnetic boards, or other items are simultaneously held up by all students in class to indicate their response to a question or problem presented by the teacher. Each card, color, sign etc. represents a specific response. Using response devices, the teacher can easily note the responses of individual students while teaching the whole group.
Slap It (Flyswatter)	Students are divided into two teams to identify correct answers to questions given by the teacher. Students use a fly swatter to slap the correct response posted on the wall.
Take and Pass	Cooperative group activity used to share or collect information from each member of the group; students write a response, then pass to the right, add their response to next paper, continue until they get their paper back, then group debriefs.
Teach, Teach (Peer instruction)	Perhaps the most accurate way to check for understanding is to have one student try to teach another student what she’s learned. If she can do that successfully, it’s clear she understood your lesson.
Think-(Ink)-Pair-Share	Students take a few minutes to think about the question or prompt. Next, they pair with a designated partner to compare thoughts before sharing with the whole class. (The second step could be to have them write their thinking before sharing—“ink”.)
Word Sort	Given a set of vocabulary terms, students sort in to given categories or create their own categories for sorting.
Activities	Description
Choral Reading	Students mark the text to identify a particular concept and chime in, reading the marked text aloud in unison
Circumlocution	Students describe something (linguistic, cultural or content oriented) with as much language as they can and without using the word or any derivative of the word until another person guesses the word.
Cubing	Display 6 questions from the lesson. Have students form groups of 4. Each group has 1 die. Each student rolls the die and answers the question with the corresponding number. If a number is rolled more than once the student may elaborate on the previous response or may roll again. Responses may also be written.
Decisions, Decisions	Given a prompt, class goes to the side that corresponds to their opinion on the topic, side shares out reasoning, and students are allowed to change sides after discussion.
Flag It	Students use this strategy to help them remember information that is important to them. They will "flag" their ideas on a sticky note or flag die cut.
Four corners	The teacher poses a question or makes a statement. Students then move to the appropriate corner of the classroom to indicate their response to the prompt. For example, the corner choices might include “I strongly agree,” “I strongly disagree,” “I agree somewhat,” and “I’m not sure.” At the corner they discuss with a partner their choice.
Give One, Get One	Cooperative activity where the students write response to a prompt, meet up with another student and share ideas so that each leaves with something to add to their list.
I Have the Question. Who Has the Answer?	The teacher makes two sets of cards. One set contains questions related to the unit of study. The second set contains the answers to the questions. Distribute the answer cards to the students and either you or a student will read the question cards to the class. All students check their answer cards to see if they have the correct answer. <i>A variation is to make cards into a chain activity:</i> The student chosen to begin the chain will read the given card aloud and then wait for the next participant to read the only card that would correctly follow the progression. Play continues until all of the cards are read and the initial student is ready to read his card for the second time.
Likert Scale	Provide 3-5 statements that are not clearly true or false, but are somewhat debatable. The purpose is to help students reflect on a text and engage in discussion with their peers afterwards. These scales focus on generalizations about characters, themes, conflicts, or

	<p>symbolism. There are no clear-cut answers in the book. They help students to analyze, synthesize and evaluate information). One question might look like this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The character (name) should not have done (action). strongly agree disagree agree strongly agree
One Question and One Comment	Students are assigned a chapter or passage to read and create one question and one comment generated from the reading. In class, students will meet in either small or whole class groups for discussion. Each student shares at least one comment or question. As the discussion moves student by student around the room, the next person can answer a previous question posed by another student, respond to a comment, or share their own comments and questions. As the activity builds around the room, the conversation becomes in-depth with opportunity for all students to learn new perspectives on the text.
Onion Ring (Inside-Outside Circle)	Students form an inner and outer circle facing a partner. The teacher asks a question and the students are given time to respond to their partner. Next, the inner circle rotates one person to the left. The teacher asks another question and the cycle repeats itself. Another option: Student quiz each other with questions they have written.
ReQuest / Reciprocal Questioning	ReQuest, or reciprocal questioning, gives the teacher and students opportunities to ask each other their own questions following the reading of a selection. The ReQuest strategy can be used with most novels or expository material. It is important that the strategy be modeled by the teacher using each genre. A portion of the text is read silently by both the teacher and the students. The students may leave their books open, but the teacher's text is closed. Students then are encouraged to ask the teacher and other students questions about what has been read. The teacher makes every attempt to help students get answers to their questions. The roles then become reversed. The students close their books, and the teacher asks the students information about the material. This procedure continues until the students have enough information to predict logically what is contained in the remainder of the selection. The students then are assigned to complete the reading
Say Something	Students take turns leading discussions in a cooperative group on sections of a reading or video.
Socratic Seminar	Students ask questions of one another about an essential question, topic, or selected text. The questions initiate a conversation that continues with a series of responses and additional questions.
Talk a Mile a Minute	In partners, students take turns being a giver and a receiver. (Like Password or Pyramid) Both know the category, but the "receiver" has his/her back to the board/screen. A set of terms will appear based on the category – "giver" gives clues, while receiver tries to guess the terms. The first team done stands up.
Tic-Tac-Toe/ Think-Tac-Toe	A collection of activities from which students can choose to do to demonstrate their understanding. It is presented in the form of a nine square grid similar to a tic-tac-toe board and students may be expected to complete from one to "three in a row". The activities vary in content, process, and product and can be tailored to address DOK levels.
Timed Pair Share	Given a prompt, students pair up and share their perspective for a given amount of time, taking turns (A talks, B listens, then B talks, A listens).
Whip Around	Teacher poses a question or task and students individually respond on a scrap of paper three thoughts/responses/statements. When all students are done, they stand up. The teacher then randomly calls on a student to share one of his or her ideas from the paper. Students check off any items that are said by another student and sit down when all of their ideas have been shared with the group, whether or not they were the one to share them. The teacher continues to call on students until they are all seated. As the teacher listens to the ideas or information shared by the students, he or she can determine if there is a general level of understanding or if there are gaps in students' thinking."
Assessments	Description
4-3-2-1 Scoring Scale	A posted scale that can be used either as a quick check with hand or a numerical value for students to self-assess on a written assignment.
3- Minute Pause	<p>The Three-Minute Pause provides a chance for students to stop, reflect on the concepts and ideas that have just been introduced, make connections to prior knowledge or experience, and seek clarification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I changed my attitude about... I became more aware of... I was surprised about... I felt... I related to... I empathized with...

3-2-1 (like Circle, Triangle, Square)	Students reflect on the lesson and consider what they have learned. At the end of the lesson, they respond to the following prompts: 3 things you found out, 2 things you want to know more about, 1 question you still have 3 differences between, 2 effects of on, 1 question you still have about the topic 3 important facts, 2 interesting ideas, 1 insight about yourself as a learner 3 key words, 2 new ideas, 1 thought to think about Write 3 questions about the text (unfamiliar words, confusing passages or ideas, Write 2 predictions based on the text (what will happen next based on the reading), Make one connection based on the text (connect to something you know or have experienced)
Analogy prompt	Periodically, present students with an analogy prompt: "the concept being covered is like ___ because ___."
Circle, Triangle, Square	(Circle) Something that is still going around in your head. (Triangle) Something pointed that stood out in your mind. (Square) Something that "Squared" or agreed with your thinking.
Digital Tools and Apps	Digital tools and apps to assess. (Kahoot, Chatzy, Animoto, Edpuzzle, etc.)
Entrance/Exit ticket	Exit tickets are written student responses to questions posed at the end of a class or learning activity or at the end of day. These tickets can be given to the teacher when exiting the room or upon entering the next day. The teacher uses this information to guide the instruction.
Example/Non-Example	Given a concept, students sort or write various examples/non-examples. Or vice versa - given examples/non-examples, students determine concept
Human Graph	A kinesthetic activity where students in the class physically move to create a histogram, where each student represents a data point rating their view
Idea Spinner	The teacher creates a spinner marked into 4 quadrants and labeled "Predict, Explain, Summarize, Evaluate." After new material is presented, the teacher spins the spinner and asks students to answer a question based on the location of the spinner. For example, if the spinner lands in the "Summarize" quadrant, the teacher might say, "List the key concepts just presented."
Index Card Summaries/ Questions	Periodically, distribute index cards and ask students to write on both sides, with these instructions: (Side 1) Based on our study of (unit topic), list a big idea that you understand and word it as a summary statement. (Side 2) Identify something about (unit topic) that you do not yet fully understand and word it as a statement or question.
Journal reflections	Students record in a journal their understanding of a topic, concept or lesson taught. The teacher reviews the entry to see if the student has gained an understanding of the topic, lesson or concept. They can also identify class and individual misconceptions and successes.
Misconception check	Present students with common or predictable misconceptions about a concept, principal, process, grammar point or cultural concept. Ask them whether they agree or disagree and to explain why. The misconception check can also be presented in the form of a multiple-choice or true-false quiz.
Muddiest (or Clearest) Point	This is a variation on the one-minute paper, though you may wish to give students a slightly longer time period to answer the question. Here you ask (at the end of a class period, or at a natural break in the presentation), "What was the "muddiest point" in today's lecture?" or, perhaps, you might be more specific, asking, for example: "What (if anything) do you find unclear about the concept of 'personal identity' ('inertia', 'natural selection', etc.)?".
Newspaper Headline	Create a newspaper headline that may have been written for the topic we are studying. Capture the main idea of the event.
Observation	Walk around the classroom and observe students as they work to check for learning. Strategies include: • Anecdotal records • Conferences • Checklists
One Minute Essay	A one-minute essay question (or one-minute question) is a focused question with a specific goal that can, in fact, be answered within a minute or two
One question quiz	Ask a single focused question with a specific goal that can be answered within a minute or two. You can quickly scan the written responses to assess student understanding
One Sentence Summary	Students are asked to write a summary sentence that answers the "who, what where, when, why, how" questions about the topic.
Portfolio Check	Check the progress of a student's portfolio. A portfolio is a purposeful collection of significant work, carefully selected, dated and presented to tell the story of a student's achievement or growth in well-defined areas of performance, such as reading, writing, math, etc. A portfolio usually includes personal reflections where the student explains why each piece was chosen and what it shows about his/her growing skills and abilities
Quick Writes	The strategy asks learners to respond in 2–10 minutes to an open-ended question or

	prompt posed by the teacher before, during, or after reading (or instruction).
Rubric	A scoring guide using subjective assessments that is generally composed of dimensions for judging student performance.
Self-Assessment	A process in which students collect information about their own learning, analyze what it reveals about their progress toward the intended learning goals and plan the next steps in their learning.
Sentence Frames / Summary Frames / Writing Frames	<p>Description: A _____ is a kind of _____ that _____.</p> <p>Compare/Contrast: _____ and _____ are similar in that they both _____ but, _____ while, _____.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: _____ wanted _____, but _____, so _____</p> <p>Cause/Effect: _____ happened because _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Problem/Solution Paragraph</p> <p>_____ present(s) a dilemma that is _____. The problem is _____. This has/have occurred because _____. A resolution is/was possible. To solve it/this, it <i>will be/has been necessary to</i> _____. The solution(s) include(s) _____.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Compare and Contrast Paragraph</p> <p>There are several differences between _____ and _____. They _____ . In contrast to _____, _____ has _____. Unlike _____, _____ does not _____. On the other hand, _____.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Description Paragraph</p> <p>Have you ever _____ ? _____ <i>has/have</i> very interesting characteristics. <i>It/they has/have</i> _____. For instance <i>it/they has/have</i> _____ which enhances _____. <i>It/they</i> also _____. For these reasons, _____.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cause and Effect Paragraph</p> <p>_____ is influenced by _____. Since _____ happened, then _____. Therefore, _____. This provides explanation for _____ and _____. The impact is _____.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sequence Paragraph</p> <p>The <i>events/process</i> of _____ is _____. The first _____. Then, _____. Next, _____. Finally _____.</p>
Student Conference	One on one conversation with students to check their level of understanding.
Student Data Notebooks / Can Do Goal Sheets / Bubble Sheets	A tool for students to track their learning: Where am I going? Where am I now? How will I get there? Or Can do with help, Can do on own, Not yet
Summarize	Have students summarize or paraphrase important concepts and lessons. This can be done orally, visually, or otherwise.
Talk a Mile a Minute	In partners, students take turns being a giver and a receiver. Both know the category, but the “receiver” has his/her back to the board/screen. A set of terms will appear based on the category – “giver” gives clues, while receiver tries to guess the terms. The first team done stands up.
Web or Concept Map	Any of several forms of graphical organizers which allow learners to perceive relationships between concepts through diagramming key words representing those concepts. http://www.graphic.org/concept.html