

Formative Assessments

Checking for Understanding Strategy	Description
1. Hand Signals Thumbs Up/Down 3, 2, 1 Fingers Fist to Five (Degrees of understanding)	Ask students to display a designated hand signal to indicate their understanding of a specific concept, principal, or process: - I understand _____ and can explain it (e.g., <i>thumbs up</i>). - I do not yet understand _____ (e.g., <i>thumbs down</i>). - I'm not completely sure about _____ (e.g., <i>wave hand</i>).
2. Index Card Summaries and Questions	Periodically, distribute index cards and ask students to write on both sides, with these instructions: (Side 1) Based on our study of (<i>unit topic</i>), list a big idea that you understand and word it as a summary statement. (Side 2) Identify something about (<i>unit topic</i>) that you do not yet fully understand and word it as a statement or question.
3. Question Box or Board	Establish a location (e.g., question box, bulletin board, or e-mail address) where students may leave or post questions about concepts, principals, or processes that they do not understand. This technique may benefit students who are uncomfortable saying aloud that they do not understand.
4. Analogy Prompt	Periodically, present students with an analogy prompt: (<i>A designated concept, principle, or process</i>) is like _____ because _____ _____
5. Visual Representation (Web or Concept Map)	Ask students to create a visual representation (e.g., web, concept map, flow chart, or time line) to show the elements or components of a topic or process. This technique effectively reveals whether students understand the relationships among the elements.
6. Oral Questioning	Use the following questions and follow-up probes regularly to check for understanding: - How is _____ similar to/different from _____? - What are the characteristics/parts of _____? - In what other ways might we show show/illustrate _____? - What is the big idea, key concept, moral in _____? - What ideas/details can you add to _____?

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	<p>_____?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does _____ relate to _____? - Give an example of _____? - What is wrong with _____? - What might you infer from _____? - What conclusions might be drawn from _____? - What question are we trying to answer? What problem are we trying to solve? - What are you assuming about _____? - What might happen if _____? - What criteria would you use to judge/evaluate _____? - What evidence supports _____? - How might we prove/confirm _____? - How might this be viewed from the perspective of _____? - What alternatives should be considered _____? - What approach/strategy could you use to _____? <p>Follow-Up Probes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why? - What do mean by _____? - How do you know? - Could you give an example? - Do you agree? - Tell me more. - Explain. - Can you find that in the text? - Give your reasons. - What data support your position? - But what about _____?
7. 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.

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8. Misconception Check	Present students with common or predictable misconceptions about a designated concept, principle, or process. Ask them whether they strongly agree or strongly disagree and explain why. The misconception check can also be presented in the form of a multiple-choice or true-false quiz.
9. ABCD Whisper	Students get into groups of four where one student is A, the next is B, etc. Each student will be asked to reflect on a concept and draw a visual of his/her interpretation. Then they will share their answers within their group. Choose one student's representation from each group to share out with the whole class.
10. 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.
11. Decisions, Decisions or Four Corners	Given a prompt, class members go to the side that corresponds to their opinion on the topic, sides share out reasoning, and students are allowed to change sides after discussion.
12. Entrance or Exit Tickets	Each student will be given a ticket to complete before leaving the room answering: What is the most important think I learned today? What question(s) do I still have? 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.
13. Every Pupil Response	Each student receives a pink and yellow card. Each color represents a specific response. Students raise the card to provide the correct response to a teacher directed question.
14. Example/Non-example	Given a concept, students sort or write various examples/non-examples.
15. Fill in Your Thought	Written check for understanding strategy where students fill in the blank. (Another term for rate of change is _____.)
16. Flag It	Students use this strategy to help them remember information that is important to them. They will "flag" it on a sticky note.

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17. Give One, Get One	Cooperative activity where the students write response to a prompt, meet up with another student and share ideas so that they leave with something to add to their list.
18. Handprint	Draw your handprint. In each finger, write on thing your learned today. (Can be used as a stop and reflect periodically during the day to capture an all day summary of learning.)
19. Onion Ring	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.
20. POP it! (Bubble Wrap)	Students write what they want to know about a topic on a dot sticker. Place each sticker on the bubble wrap. When a topic is covered, the student POPS the bubble.
21. Quick Writes	A timed writing in response to a question or prompt (teacher generated or student generated). Can be used before, during, or after instruction.)
22. Rubric	A scoring guide using subjective assessments that is generally composed of dimensions for judging student performance.
23. Somebody/Wanted/ But/So	Students respond to narrative text with structured story grammar either orally, pictorially, or in writing. (Character(s)/Event/Problem/Solution)
24. 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.
25. Student Data Notebooks	A tool for students to track their learning: Where am I going? Where am I now? How will I get there? (Goal Setting)
26. Word Sort	Given a set of vocabulary terms, students sort into given categories or create their own categories for sorting. (Clozed or Open sorts)
27. Equity Sticks	Write each student’s name on a tongue depressor or Popsicle stick. Place all of the sticks in a jar. When you are ready to select a student, randomly pull one stick.

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28. White Boards	Students write responses and show work on a board that they hold up.
29. Think-Pair -2) - (Pair -4) Share	In partners or in fours, check for understanding through posed questions by the teacher based on the instructional objective(s).
30. Journal Reflections	Students write their reflections on the day's lesson, such as: what they learned, what caused them difficulty, strategies they found helpful, or other lesson-related topics defined by the teacher. A <i>dialogue journal</i> between classmates and/or teachers allows for sharing of thoughts, feelings, and reactions to what they have been reading.
31. Think Aloud	A Think-Aloud is an effective method for monitoring comprehension of either narrative or expository material. A teacher models aloud what good readers do to improve comprehension. By using this strategy, students learn to generate questions as they read, ensuring a higher level of understanding. Critically checking on your thinking throughout a reading assignment requires thinking aloud before, during, and after reading.
32. One-Word Note taking	Teacher's oral lectures and/or text reading need student focus in order to retain the important information. One word note-taking on the topic proves to add in reinforcing information. Fold the notepaper in half and write the important terms in sequence down the middle of the page. Go back and fill in the terms with phrases to connect the summary. Partner share each other's summary and add or delete information thru consensus.

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Bibliography for Checking for Understanding Strategies

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Generic

Index Card – Summaries and Questions

Question Box or Board

Analogy Prompt

Oral Questioning

Circle, Triangle, Square

Fill In Your Thought

Flag It

Handprint

Onion Ring

POP It!

Equity Sticks

White Board

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Resources:

URL: <http://www.christina.k12.de.us/LiteracyLinks/elemresources/comprehension/techniques.pdf>
(From Understanding by Design by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (pgs 166 and 167))

URL:
<http://daretodifferentiate.wikispaces.com/file/view/strategies.pdf>

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