

Check for Understanding and Choose the Next Step

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Use a brief response as one piece of evidence for a specific next instructional move. Separate the learner's observable response from your interpretation, name what the evidence does and does not show, and recheck the same target after the next step. One short response is not a diagnosis or a general measure of mastery.

Use the evidence before choosing a next step

Use one record for one target and one check. First write what the learner actually said, wrote, selected, or did. Then interpret that evidence in relation to the target. Keep observation and interpretation separate.

Choose a next step that responds to the evidence you have. If the response is blank or hard to interpret, first check directions, reading access, language demands, time, and response mode; a blank response alone does not identify the reason. A brief oral or pointing response may help clarify the thinking only when that mode still allows the target to be observed. Record what that alternate mode can and cannot show.

Treat a next-step choice as a starting point you can revisit. One brief response can show what happened on this task, but it cannot by itself establish a stable learner trait, diagnose a cause, or prove general mastery. Use other work and a fresh check before making a broader instructional decision. Avoid student names and personal records in examples or notes.

Practice check · The Missing Garden Label

Invented instructional example.

Before the garden club met, Milo noticed that a label had fallen from one seedling tray. He shrugged and said, "It can wait until next week." During the meeting, two students asked which trays were ready to move. Milo compared the trays with the planting chart, found the missing label in a supply drawer, and wrote it on a new card. Then he asked one student to check whether the card matched the right tray. At the end, he placed a pencil beside the chart for the next check.

Quick check

Quick check · Read "The Missing Garden Label." In 2–3 sentences, describe what Milo's actions suggest about how he responds to an unclear problem. Include one detail from before he acts and one from after, and explain how both details support your idea.

Fresh recheck · The Tray at the Table

Invented instructional example.

Before the after-school art table opened, Ana saw pencils rolling off the edge. She said, “The box is probably enough.” During the first activity, she picked up three pencils twice. She put a shallow tray beside the box and asked a classmate to check whether it stayed in place. At the end, only one pencil had rolled away.

Fresh recheck · Read “The Tray at the Table.” In 2–3 sentences, describe what Ana’s actions suggest about how she responds to a small problem. Include one detail from before she acts and one from after, and explain how both details support your idea. Use this different passage after the next step rather than reusing the original response.

Blank record · one response and one next step

1 · Target, task, and stimulus reference

Write the specific learning target and exact short-check prompt. Identify the learner-facing text or problem by title and source/location; attach or reference the full stimulus when it is too long to copy. Keep the target narrow enough that the response can show it.

2 · Check conditions

Note when and how the check was given, the directions, time, and response mode. Record relevant access or language supports without adding personal details.

3 • Observable response evidence

Copy a brief de-identified excerpt or describe the work exactly. Separate what was said, written, selected, or done from your interpretation. Do not add a learner name.

4 • What does it show—and not show?

Interpret the observed evidence against the target: state what is present, what is missing or uncertain, and what one short response cannot establish. Consider more than one text-supported answer; save the next-step choice for Field 5.

5 • Possible next step

Name a possible action that follows from the evidence: reteach, guided practice, independent practice, extend, clarify the conditions, or gather another check. More than one may fit; choose one and give its evidence-based reason in Field 6. Put the teaching move and fresh recheck in Field 7.

6 • Evidence-based reason

Name the exact observed response feature that makes the Field 5 choice fit. If the response is missing or unclear, do not assign a cause; state why you need to check conditions or gather usable evidence first.

7 • Next move and recheck

Write the brief teaching/practice move and a fresh way to recheck the same target. Keep the key thinking demand while changing support only as needed.

8 • Review the interpretation

Before using the decision beyond this task, check the directions, text access, language and response demands, time, other work, and any locally relevant support plan. Note what remains unverified.

Use checklist

Before relying on a next step, mark each item Yes or Not yet. If an item is Not yet, return to the record and clarify the evidence or conditions.

[] Criterion 1 · The target names the intended learning and matches what the check asks the learner to show.

[] Criterion 2 · The recorded response evidence describes what the learner actually said, wrote, selected, or did before interpreting it.

[] Criterion 3 · The interpretation links evidence to the target and names what remains missing or uncertain.

[] Criterion 4 · The next step addresses the evidence shown, rather than completion, speed, behavior, or an assumed cause.

[] Criterion 5 · A blank, partial, or unsupported response is treated as limited evidence, not proof of a stable ability or misconception.

[] Criterion 6 · Any alternate response mode preserves the target or clearly names what it no longer measures.

[] Criterion 7 · The next move includes a fresh recheck of the same target after instruction or support.

[] Criterion 8 · The teacher checks context and access conditions and avoids diagnosis or broad claims from one short response.

This fictional practice check and blank record are teacher tools. Do not enter student names or identifying records.