Formative Assessment Checklist

Quick, practical formative assessment strategies to monitor student learning in real-time.

ASSESSMENT

Formative Assessment Checklist

CONTENTS

> *"Assessment **for** learning, not **of** learning."*
> *This checklist provides immediate strategies to check understanding and adjust instruction.*

What Makes Formative Assessment Effective

Core Principles

- **Immediate:** Provides real-time feedback

- **Actionable:** Results inform next instructional steps
- **Low-stakes:** No grades, just learning information
- **Student-friendly:** Helps learners understand their progress
- **Efficient:** Quick to implement and analyze

The Assessment Cycle

1. **Plan:** Choose technique based on learning objective
2. **Implement:** Use during or right after instruction
3. **Analyze:** Look for patterns in responses
4. **Adjust:** Modify teaching based on results
5. **Follow-up:** Check if adjustments helped

Quick Check Techniques (0-5 minutes)

✓ Thumbs Up/Down/Sideways

When to use: After explaining a concept
How: Students show thumbs up (got it), down (confused), sideways (sort of)
Next steps: Thumbs down → reteach differently; Sideways → provide examples

✓ Exit Tickets

When to use: Last 3 minutes of class
How: One question on paper or digital platform
Sample questions:

- "What's one thing you learned today?"
- "What's still confusing?"
- "Rate your confidence 1-5 and explain why"

✓ Fist to Five

When to use: Check confidence levels
How: 0 fingers (no understanding) to 5 fingers (could teach someone else)
Follow-up: 0-2 need reteaching; 3-4 need practice; 5 can peer tutor

✓ One Word Summary

When to use: End of lesson or unit
How: Students write one word that captures the main idea
Analysis: Look for patterns, misconceptions, or gaps

✓ 3-2-1 Reflection

Format:

- 3 things I learned
- 2 things I found interesting
- 1 question I still have

✓ Think-Pair-Share Response

Steps:

1. Pose question (30 seconds thinking)
2. Share with partner (2 minutes)
3. Listen to sample responses
4. Note common misconceptions

Observation Strategies

✓ Gallery Walk

Setup: Post student work around room
Process: Students view work, leave feedback on sticky notes
Teacher role: Observe discussions, note common errors

✓ Traffic Light Self-Assessment

Red: I don't understand and need help
Yellow: I'm getting there but need practice
Green: I understand and can help others

Implementation: Use colored cards, digital polls, or hand signals

✓ Learning Stations Monitoring

Strategy: Rotate through stations during independent work
Focus areas:

- Who's struggling with which concepts?
- What questions keep coming up?
- Which students can peer tutor?

✓ Strategic Questioning

Instead of "Any questions?" try:

- "What questions do you have?"
- "Which part needs more explanation?"
- "Who can explain this in their own words?"

Digital Tools & Techniques

✓ Real-Time Polling

Tools: Mentimeter, Poll Everywhere, Kahoot
Best for: Multiple choice, true/false, word clouds
Advantage: Anonymous responses increase participation

✓ Digital Exit Tickets

Tools: Google Forms, Padlet, Flipgrid
Questions to try:

- "On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you with today's objective?"
- "What would you like more practice with?"
- "Explain today's concept to a friend in one sentence"

✓ Collaborative Documents

Platform: Google Docs, Padlet, Jamboard
Use: Students add responses to shared document
Monitor: Watch entries in real-time, identify patterns

✓ Quick Quizzes

Tools: Quizizz, Blooket, Gimkit
Format: 3-5 questions, immediate results
Focus: Current lesson objectives, not cumulative content

Subject-Specific Strategies

Mathematics

✓ SHOW YOUR WORK CHECKS

- Circulate during problem-solving
- Look for process, not just answers
- Note common calculation errors

✓ MATH TALK PROTOCOLS

- "I agree/disagree because..."
- "I'd like to add to ___'s idea..."
- "Can you explain your thinking?"

✓ ERROR ANALYSIS

Present incorrect solution, ask students to find and fix mistakes

✓ NUMBER LINE STRATEGIES

Students place their confidence on a number line (0-10)

Science

✓ PREDICT-OBSERVE-EXPLAIN

Before demonstrations:

1. Students predict outcomes
2. Observe what happens
3. Explain discrepancies

✓ CONCEPT SKETCHING

Draw and label scientific processes or structures

✓ HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Quick experiments with immediate result analysis

✓ SCIENCE TALKS

"What do you notice?" and "What makes you say that?"

Language Arts

✓ READING COMPREHENSION CHECKS

- Summarize paragraph in 10 words
- Predict what happens next
- Identify main idea vs. details

✓ WRITING PROCESS CHECKS

- Beginning, middle, end assessment
- Peer feedback protocols
- Self-editing checklists

✓ VOCABULARY CHECKS

- Use new word in a sentence
- Draw the word's meaning
- Connect to personal experience

✓ DISCUSSION PROTOCOLS

- Turn and talk stems
- Building on others' ideas
- Asking clarifying questions

Social Studies

✓ PERSPECTIVE TAKING

"How might _____ view this event?"

✓ CAUSE AND EFFECT MAPPING

Quick graphic organizers during content delivery

✓ CURRENT CONNECTIONS

"How does this relate to today?"

✓ TIMELINE POSITIONING

Place events or concepts on class timeline

Assessment Planning Matrix

Learning Objective	Quick Check	During Activity	Reflection
Understand main idea	Thumbs check	Turn and talk	Exit ticket
Apply math concept	Show work scan	Error analysis	Confidence scale
Recall vocabulary	Word association	Peer quiz	3-2-1
Analyze text	Think aloud	Annotation check	Summary writing

Implementation Schedule

Week 1-2: Foundation Building

- [ ] Choose 2 quick check techniques
- [ ] Try exit tickets daily

- [ ] Practice thumbs up/down signals
- [ ] Introduce confidence scales

Week 3-4: Expand Toolkit

- [ ] Add digital polling tool
- [ ] Try 3-2-1 reflections
- [ ] Implement think-pair-share
- [ ] Use traffic light system

Week 5-6: Subject Integration

- [ ] Choose subject-specific strategies
- [ ] Plan weekly assessment calendar
- [ ] Try gallery walks
- [ ] Use strategic questioning

Week 7-8: Refinement

- [ ] Analyze what's working best
- [ ] Streamline favorites
- [ ] Train students on protocols
- [ ] Create assessment routine

Student Self-Assessment Tools

✓ Learning Target Tracker

Students rate their progress toward daily objectives:

- Not yet (1)
- Getting there (2)
- Got it (3)
- Can teach it (4)

✓ Reflection Stems

- "I'm proud that I..."
- "I'm still working on..."
- "Next time I will..."

- "I need help with..."

✓ Goal Setting Sheets

Weekly goals with daily progress monitoring

✓ Portfolio Reflections

Students choose best work and explain why

Data Collection & Analysis

Simple Tracking Systems

CLASS OVERVIEW GRID

Student	Concept A	Concept B	Concept C	Notes
Alex	✓	?	✓	Needs support with B
Jamie	✓	✓	-	Absent for C

TRAFFIC LIGHT SPREADSHEET

Color-code student understanding:

- Green: Understands, can move forward
- Yellow: Partially understands, needs practice
- Red: Doesn't understand, needs reteaching

WEEKLY PATTERNS LOG

Track which concepts need reteaching most often

Making Data Actionable

SAME DAY ADJUSTMENTS

- **High confusion:** Stop and reteach differently
- **Mixed understanding:** Pair strong with struggling students
- **Most understand:** Move forward, provide extension

NEXT LESSON PLANNING

- **Common misconceptions:** Address explicitly
- **Missing prerequisite:** Back up and fill gaps

- **Ready for challenge:** Prepare extension activities

SMALL GROUP FORMATION

Use assessment data to create flexible groups:

- **Intervention groups:** Students with similar gaps
- **Practice groups:** Students needing more time
- **Extension groups:** Students ready for challenge

Troubleshooting Common Issues

"Students won't respond honestly"

Solutions:

- Emphasize no grades attached
- Use anonymous digital tools
- Model that confusion is normal
- Celebrate questions as learning opportunities

"Takes too much time"

Solutions:

- Start with 30-second techniques
- Use digital tools for instant collection
- Incorporate into existing routines
- Focus on one technique until automatic

"Don't know what to do with information"

Solutions:

- Plan 2-3 response options in advance
- Use simple tracking systems
- Focus on patterns, not individual responses
- Start small with obvious next steps

"Students give expected answers"

Solutions:

- Use varied question formats

- Ask for explanations, not just answers
- Create safe spaces for admitting confusion
- Use peer assessment opportunities

Building Assessment Culture

Student Ownership

- Teach students why formative assessment helps them
- Involve them in creating success criteria
- Have them track their own progress
- Celebrate growth over achievement

Feedback Loops

- Share class trends (without names)
- Explain how their responses changed your teaching
- Ask students what assessment methods work best for them
- Adjust techniques based on effectiveness

Colleague Collaboration

- Share successful techniques with team
- Observe others using formative assessment
- Plan cross-curricular assessment strategies
- Create shared bank of effective prompts

Quick Reference Guide

Daily Must-Haves

- [ ] One quick check during instruction
- [ ] One end-of-lesson reflection
- [ ] Response plan for next day

Weekly Essentials

- [ ] Review assessment data patterns
- [ ] Plan adjustments for struggling concepts

- [ ] Try one new technique
- [ ] Student self-assessment opportunity

Monthly Reflection

- [ ] Which techniques work best with your students?
- [ ] What patterns do you notice in learning gaps?
- [ ] How has your instruction changed based on data?
- [ ] What new strategies will you try?
