



Short Answer

Teaching Tips



To help foster a supportive environment for feedback, introduce the [importance of feedback](#) and [how to give empathetic feedback](#) with our mini-lessons.



The best questions are open-ended and ask students to **justify** opinions, **analyze** material, **articulate** a thought process, or **evaluate** a claim.



Avoid fact-based recall questions.



The best feedback criteria are **positively oriented** and relevant to learning objectives. Criteria can focus on both **content knowledge** and **writing structure**.

- Make students aware of the criteria so they know how to craft their response. Or, have students decide what appropriate criteria would be.
- Emphasize that students have to make a choice about assigning feedback. *Both* or *neither* aren't options!



The best discussion questions ask students to **verbalize their thought process** about the feedback they gave. For example: "93% you said Response 1 explained the concept of photosynthesis better. Can someone share what aspect of the response made you think that?"

- Have students **predict** what results will be.
- Focus discussion on the qualities of the **responses** rather than on the students who wrote the responses.



To promote students' **metacognitive development**:

- Encourage students to **ask themselves questions** during the activity:
 - "Does my response meet all the criteria?"
 - "How did giving feedback improve my understanding of the content?"
 - "How can I improve my response using the feedback I got?"
- Provide clear **time signals** throughout the activity.



To **incorporate feedback in the moment**, ask students to reflect on how they can improve their response after receiving feedback. You may want to take time to have them **revise** their responses, either in class or for homework.

English/Language Arts

In all Short Answer activities, your students **create** responses, **compare** peer responses and provide scaffolded feedback, then **converse** results as a class.

Short Answer gets your students the immediate feedback they need through social, engaging peer feedback activities and gets you deeper insight into what your students know.

Short Answer can be used at every stage of your English lesson plan from foundational writing skills to literary analysis.

Bellringer	Get students warmed up and engaged by using Short Answer to prompt written responses about what stands out from yesterday's class.
Check for understanding	Break up lectures with quick feedback activities that get students interacting with one another. Deepen understanding while getting a quicker, more accurate pulse of what they know on an individual level.
Guided practice	Group students together to write responses and give feedback to other groups, or provide a model response in Short Answer.
Independent practice	During Short Answer activities, encourage students to reflect on how their response matches up to the ones voted as the strongest by the class. Invite revision and iteration of responses as another in-class activity, exit ticket, or homework.
Writing revision	Have students copy-and-paste portions of an essay or writing assignment (e.g. thesis, intro paragraph) into Short Answer. Then, conduct peer feedback activities to help students revise their work before final submission.
Exit Ticket	Complete a quick, one-round Short Answer activity to leave students thinking about the most important points of the day.
Homework	Have students complete writing assignments about core content and bring them in next class for peer feedback activities and discussion to deepen understanding.



See the following page for two detailed English use cases with example questions, feedback criteria for students to evaluate responses with, and standards alignments.

Sample Use Cases: English/Language Arts

Exploring Literary Themes

Activity Time: 5-10 minutes

Use Short Answer to have students analyze a passage and reflect on major themes before opening the floor to whole-class feedback and discussion.

Sample Questions

- After 5 chapters of *Beloved*, what themes do you see arising? Point to specific instances in the text when forming your response.
- Which characters in *Pride and Prejudice* most embody the theme of pride? Why do you think so?
- “All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” What do you think Tolstoy wants to convey with his opening line of *Anna Karenina*?

Feedback Criteria: use of textual evidence to support argument; convincing point of view

Standards Alignment Examples

- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. (CC, RL.8.2)
- Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. (CC, RL.8.3)
- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. (CC, RL.11-12.1)

Peer-Driven Feedback on Written Work

Activity Time: 15-20 minutes

Have students begin developing their essay in class or copy-and-paste a portion of their writing assignment into Short Answer for in-depth peer review and opportunities for revision. The class can collaboratively determine what qualities make for strong writing and convincing arguments.

Sample Questions:

- Write a strong thesis statement that makes a unique argument about *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.
- Compare the two intro paragraphs in front of you. What qualities make one more compelling than the other?

Feedback Criteria: unique thesis; compelling hook; ability to back argument with evidence

Standards Alignment Examples

- Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically. (CC, W.8.1.A)
- With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. (CC, W.6.5)