

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.



Psychology

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 Psychology lesson plan from lectures to research papers.

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| 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 a research 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 Psychology use cases with example questions, feedback criteria for students to evaluate responses with, and standards alignments.

Sample Use Cases: Psychology

Mid-Lesson Content Review

Activity Time: 5-10 minutes

Use Short Answer to assess whether students understand new material. Results from the feedback activity inform whether content needs to be re-explained or if the class is ready to move on.

Sample Questions

- What are the differences between Piaget and Vygotsky's theories of development?
- What do studies of identical twins tell us about nature vs. nurture? In your opinion, is there one that weighs more heavily than the other?
- Why did the behaviorism fall out of favor in comparison to other perspectives such as cognitive psychology?

Feedback criteria: support of argument with facts; accurate; strong examples

Standards Alignment Examples

- Synthesize information from a range of sources (e.g., texts, experiments, simulations) into a coherent understanding of a process, phenomenon, or concept, resolving conflicting information when possible. (*CC, 11-12.9*)
- Analyze the structure of the relationships among concepts in a text, including relationships among key terms (*CC, RST.9-10.5*)

Discussing Experiments and Ethics

Activity Time: 15-20 minutes

Introduce real-life scenarios to have students hypothesize about what results indicate and how ethics were maintained in the experiment. Or, have students come up with their own experimental procedures for gathering data.

Sample Questions:

- What made the Milgram experiment unethical and harmful?
- How would you design a modern version of the Asch Conformity test to see whether the phenomenon is present in our school?

Feedback Criteria: detailed procedure; ethical mindset; support of inferences with results

Standards Alignment Examples

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to response a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. (*CC, WHST.11-12.7*)
- Compare and contrast the information gained from experiments, simulations, video, or multimedia sources with that gained from reading a text on the same topic. (*CC, RST.6-8.9*)
- Compare and contrast findings presented in a text to those from other sources (including their own experiments), noting when the findings support or contradict previous explanations or accounts. (*CC, RST.9-10.9*)