



# 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.



## Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

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 SEL lesson plan from decision-making scenarios to practice with identifying emotions.

<b>Bellringer</b>	Get students warmed up and engaged by using Short Answer to prompt written responses about what stands out from yesterday's class.
<b>Check for understanding</b>	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.
<b>Guided practice</b>	Group students together to write responses and give feedback to other groups, or provide a model response in Short Answer.
<b>Independent practice</b>	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.
<b>Writing revision</b>	Have students copy-and-paste portions of a writing assignment (e.g. personal reflection) into Short Answer. Then, conduct peer feedback activities to help students revise their work before final submission.
<b>Exit Ticket</b>	Complete a quick, one-round Short Answer activity to leave students thinking about the most important points of the day.
<b>Homework</b>	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 SEL use cases with example questions, feedback criteria for students to evaluate responses with, and standards alignments. Also view our SEL-related lesson plans: [Empathetic Feedback](#) and [The Power of Peer Feedback](#).

# Sample Use Cases: SEL

## Developing Self-Management Skills and Coping Strategies with Scenarios

**Activity Time:** 10-15 minutes

Pose scenarios that enable students to recognize common emotions and identify strategies to manage those emotions. Use peer feedback activities to crowdsource common or creative coping strategies while fostering empathy among the class.

### Sample Questions

- Marithza is having trouble managing nerves and jitters before the big test. What strategies can Marithza use before walking into class to ease those feelings?
- Alex is terrified of flying and is about to get on a plane for the first time. What emotions, bodily sensations, and thoughts might Alex be having? What can he do to feel more at ease in the situation?
- How do you know when you are angry about something? What do you think, do, or feel in your body? Explain a strategy you can use to diffuse the intensity of your anger.

**Feedback criteria:** helpful; self-caring; empathetic; practical; brave

### Standards Alignment Examples

- Self-Awareness: students understand their own emotions, thoughts, and values, and how they influence behavior across contexts. (CASEL)
- Self-Management: students can manage emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations to achieve goals. (CASEL)

## Developing Social Awareness and Relationship Skills with Scenarios

**Activity Time:** 10-15 minutes

Pose scenarios that focus on CASEL's interpersonal social emotional skills and lead a discussion about different approaches students take to maintaining strong relationships.

### Sample Questions:

- Tran notices her best friend Zoha has been avoiding her all day and giving mean looks, but isn't sure why. If you were Tran, how would you approach Zoha to find out what was going on? What would you say and do?
- You see Malika and Tonya tease a new student, Gabi, about what she eats for lunch every day. Malika is your close friend. How would you handle this situation?

**Feedback Criteria:** friendly; empathetic; practical; respectful; brave; caring

### Standards Alignment Examples

- Relationship skills: students can establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups. (CASEL)
- Social awareness: students understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. (CASEL)