



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.



U.S. History

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 History lesson plan from lectures to research papers.

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 U.S. History use cases with example questions, feedback criteria for students to evaluate responses with, and standards alignments.

Sample Use Cases: U.S. History

Conceptual Connections

Activity Time: 5-10 minutes

With the aid of primary and secondary sources, use Short Answer to have students connect knowledge from prior units to the current one and reflect on recurrent themes throughout U.S. history.

Sample Questions

- What are notable similarities and differences between the cultures of the Cherokee and Navajo tribes?
- What are the differences between W.E.B DuBois and Booker. T Washington's views on Black civil rights?
- How did the Monroe Doctrine break with previous precedent in American foreign policy?"

Feedback criteria: support of argument with facts; historical accuracy; creativity

Standards Alignment Examples

- Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions. *(CC, RH.6-8.2)*
- Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources *(CC, 11-12.9)*
- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information. *(CC, RH.9-10.1)*

Peer-Driven Feedback on Written Work

Activity Time: 15-20 minutes

Have students develop their research 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 qualities of strong writing & convincing arguments.

Sample Questions:

- Write a thesis statement making an argument about whether John Brown was a "hero" or "terrorist." Provide two topic sentences that serve as justifying evidence.
- Compare the two body paragraphs in front of you, paying close attention to how they use historical evidence to support claims.

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

Standards Alignment Examples

- Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes. *(CC, WHST.6-8.2)*
- Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence. *(CC, RH.11-12.6)*