

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.



Writing

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 Writing lesson plan from grammar and punctuation skills to vocabulary applications.

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

Sample Use Cases: Writing

Applying New Vocabulary

Activity Time: 5-10 minutes

Use Short Answer to have students create sentences with newly learned vocabulary words.

Sample Questions

- Use “inclement” in a sentence that describes the weather.
- How would you use “radiant” in a sentence?
- Write your definition of “bashful.”

Feedback Criteria: appropriate use; creative; unique; descriptive

Standards Alignment Examples

- Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding. *(CC, Foundational Skills)*
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate. *(CC, FS)*
- Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression. *(CC, FS)*

Grammar and Syntax

Activity Time: 5-10 minutes

Have students input any short form writing into Short Answer while emphasizing attention to form and mechanics over content.

Sample Questions:

- What is one interesting thing that happened to you last weekend?
- Tell us about the most interesting thing you learned in class yesterday.

Feedback Criteria: correct punctuation; appropriate syntax; correct spelling; proper grammar, proper capitalization, subject/verb agreement, use of active voice

(Note: these feedback criteria can be inserted into any Short Answer question to focus on both content and structure!)

Standards Alignment Examples

- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. *(CC, Foundational Skills)*