

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES, DEFINITIONS, EXAMPLES

1 Minute Essay	Give students an open-ended question and one to three minutes to write their answers. Good questions: What is the most important thing we discussed today? Or What was the most confusing idea presented today? Collect the papers and use for promoting discussion, identifying misconceptions, or confusion. Photocopy samples of the papers to use with your reflections.
1 Sentence Summary	Students are asked to write a summary sentence that answers the “who, what, where, when, why, how” questions about the topic.
1 Word Summary	Students select or invent one word which best summarizes a topic.
3- 2 -1 Summarizer	Ask students to write 3 Facts they learned; 2 Questions they have about the topic; 1 Personal connection they can make to the information learned. These 3 items can be changed to any kind of information that you want to gather from students.
3 Minute Pause	The Three-Minute Pause provides a chance for students to stop, reflect on the concepts and ideas that have just been introduced, make connections to prior knowledge or experience, and seek clarification. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I changed my attitude about... - I became more aware of... - I was surprised about... - I felt... - I related to... - I empathized with... -
4 More	Have students fold a sheet of paper into 6 squares. Ask students to summarize what they learned today by writing 2 key ideas in the 2 top boxes on the paper. Then ask students to interview 4 different students and gather 4 more key ideas about the topic. Students should then write the 4 more new key ideas in the remaining 4 boxes on the paper. At the end of the formative assessment, students will have 6 key ideas about the topic that they can use as a study guide or review sheet.
A B C Summaries	Each student in the class is assigned a different letter of the alphabet and they must select a word starting with that letter that is related to the topic being studied.
Analogy Prompt	Periodically, present students with an analogy prompt: (A designated concept, principle, or process) is like _____ because _____.
Anticipation Guide	The teacher prepares a guide with a list of statements or questions about the topic that will be taught. Students respond to the first section of the guide prior to reading or instruction. Students’ responses to the items are discussed in class. After the reading or instruction, students review their initial responses to the statements and questions and revise their responses as needed. This gives the teacher a better understanding of the depth of the students’ prior knowledge.
Application Card	After teaching a specific topic, the teacher asks students to write down 1 real world application that applies to the topic on a 3x5 index card. Students then share their cards and ideas with a partner.
Carousel Brainstorming	This is a powerful summarizing activity that engages all learners. Create list of important subtopics related to the theme or main topic of the unit. Write each subtopic on a separate piece of chart paper and display them around the room. Number the charts to indicate the order in which the students should move from chart to chart. Give each group a differed color marker and use it to write the facts that they know about the topic on the chart. Allow 2-3 minutes per chart and then bring all the students together for a whole class report out. As students “carousel” from chart to chart, they record ideas, details and illustrations that show their understanding of a particular topic or concept. In heterogeneous groups, students brainstorm together for a few minutes about a topic or question before they “carousel” to the next chart.
Choral Response	In response to a cue, all students respond verbally at the same time. The response can be either to answer a question or to repeat something the teacher has said.

Click Clunk Cards	Students receive 2 index cards attached to a popsicle stick. On card reads “Click.” The other reads “Clunk.” When the teacher asks whether students understand the topic being discussed, students raise “Click” to demonstrate full understanding. Or they raise “Clunk” to indicate confusion and the need for more instruction or explanation.
Concept Mapping	Provide small groups of students with a list of about 15 related words that might fit well in an outline. Give them small sticky notes to write the words on. Ask them to create a concept map by moving the sticky notes around on a piece of paper until they have them in the right place. Model for them on the board how to draw connections between words and emphasize that the connections should be labeled with words describing the nature of the relation (leads to, is an example of, sometimes goes with, can’t happen without, etc.). Walk around while students are creating their concept maps-ask questions about why they are placing words where they do. Keep in mind that the purpose of this exercise at this point is to find out what they are thinking, not for them to get the right answer. So don’t prompt them with correct answers. Collect the papers, analyze them to find out what students know, don’t know, and what their misconceptions are. Do not write on the concept maps, though you may want to photocopy one or two for your portfolio. If you do this, select interesting examples that helped you adapt your teaching. Create your own concept map- perhaps on overhead transparency. The next day-hand back the concept maps and show your concept map to the class. Emphasize that there is more than one way to organize a group of related terms. Ask groups of students to compare theirs to yours and explain how theirs are different and whether and in what ways they think they should change theirs.
Debriefing	A form of reflection immediately following an activity. Can be done individually, in pairs or small groups.
Exit Cards	Exit cards are written student responses to questions posed at the end of a class or learning activity or at the end of a day.
Exit Tickets	Give students “tickets” – small pieces of paper designed to look like tickets, but with space for writing. Ask students two questions. One that requires a factual answer about the big idea of today’s lesson, but in their own words. A second question should require more explanation of a concept. Give students five minutes at the end of class to write their answers. Their names do not go on these exit tickets. They must give you an Exit Ticket to leave class for the day. Analyze the tickets to learn how many students got the big idea and how they understand it or misunderstand it. Photocopy 4-6 on a single sheet of paper for your portfolio. Select ones that you learned something about your students from that you didn’t know before reading the Exit Tickets.
Fact Storming	This is a summarization activity that begins with a whole class review and leads to individuals, pairs or small groups reworking the information to make it their own. Write a topic on the board that students have been studying such as immigration, birds or poetry. Then ask students to generate terms related to the topic either on the chalkboard, a whiteboard or overhead transparency. This is a form of brainstorming structured around specific topics that are being studied.
Gallery Walk	Post 3-5 chart papers on the walls with a question or topic on each. Have students respond to the question or topic with written comments or questions. After all student have make their comments in a first round, students then make a second round to read others’ comments and make additional comments. This is a good way to find out what students know about a topic.
Hands On Activities	Assign students to show a partner, a small group of students or you as the teacher what they learned by demonstrating or modeling it. This could be anything from solving a math problem at the board to showing another student how to set up for a lab to gathering the ingredients for a recipe to building a product.
Hand Signals	Ask students to display a designated hand signal to indicate their understanding of a specific concept, principal, or process: - I understand _____ and can explain it (e.g., thumbs up). – I do not yet understand _____ (e.g., thumbs down). – I’m not completely sure about _____ (e.g., wave hand).

Homework Quizzes Tests	The easiest form of information to collect or analyze about your student’s learning is their regular work in the form of homework, quizzes, and tests. This information will be richer if you include questions that require students to explain their thinking. It is especially helpful to ask questions that require students to apply their thinking to a new situation that you have not discussed in class. This requires flexible thinking on their part and should reveal how they are thinking better than questions that allow them to say back what they have memorized.
Idea Spinner	The teacher creates a spinner marked into 4 quadrants and labeled “Predict, Explain, Summarize, Evaluate.” After new material is presented, the teacher spins the spinner and asks students to answer a question based on the location of the spinner. For example, if the spinner lands in the “Summarize” quadrant, the teacher might say, “List the key concepts just presented.”
Index Card Summary	Periodically, distribute index cards and ask students to write on both sides, with these instructions: (Side 1) based on our study of (unit topic), list a big idea that you understand and word it as a summary statement. (Side 2) Identify something about (unit topic) that you do not yet fully understand and word it as a statement or question.
Inside Outside Circle	Inside and outside circles of students face each other. Within each pair of facing students, students quiz each other with questions they have written. Outside circle moves to create new pairs. Repeat.
Jigsaw Groups	Students are arranged in groups to learn about, read and discuss a specific topic. The teacher moves about to listen to and observe the conversation and interrelationships among the students.
Journal Entry	Students record in a journal their understanding of the topic, concept or lesson taught. The teacher reviews the entry to see if the student has gained an understanding of the topic, lesson or concept that was taught.
Learning Log	Students maintain a simple log to record at the end of each day what they learned that day. They may record 1 -3 sentences or a bulleted list based on the teacher’s direction.
Left Elbow Partner	After the teacher’s presentation, students turn to the person at their left elbow to talk about the topic, ask a question or discuss the ideas the teacher presented.
List Group Label	This strategy helps students to make sense of information and develops vocabulary. It requires students to list and sort terms to activate prior knowledge or review concepts after a unit of study. Choose a topic. Write it on the chalkboard, white board or overhead transparency. Ask student to generate a List of as many terms as they can about the topic. Provide students with categories to sort their terms. For example: British actions against the Colonists; Colonists’ reactions, Battles, Spies. Ask partners to Group the terms into the most appropriate categories. Finally ask students to Label the Groups and to explain their connections to one another: all causes of the American Revolution; All actions taken by the King against the Colonists.
Misconception Check	Present students with common or predictable misconceptions about a designated concept, principle, or process. Ask them whether they agree or disagree and explain why. The misconception check can also be presented in the form of a multiple-choice or true-false quiz.
Muddiest Point	At the end of a lesson students write one thing that they least understood, that is muddy, from what was taught on a 3x5 index card. Teacher collects and reviews the cards to determine what needs to be retaught or clarified the next day.
Numbered Heads Together	Each student is assigned a number. Members of a group work together to agree on an answer. The teacher randomly selects one number. Student with that number answers for the group.
Observation	Walk around the classroom and observe students as they work to check for learning. Strategies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anecdotal Records - Conferences - Checklists -

Oral Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is _____ similar to/different from _____? - What are the characteristics/parts of _____? - In what other ways might we show show/illustrate _____? - What is the big idea, key concept, moral in _____? - How does _____ relate to _____? - What ideas/details can you add to _____? - Give an example of _____? - What is wrong with _____? - What might you infer from _____? - What conclusions might be drawn from _____? - What question are we trying to answer? What problem are we trying to solve? - What are you assuming about _____? - What might happen if _____? - What criteria would you use to judge/evaluate _____? - What evidence supports _____? - How might we prove/confirm _____? - How might this be viewed from the perspective of _____? - What alternatives should be considered _____? - What approach/strategy could you use to _____?
Pass Card	<p>Students receive a 3x5 index card with the word “Pass” written on it. This card may be used when a student wants a “Pass.” This might be used in a situation when a student is asked a question and doesn’t know the answer and asks to “Pass.” Teacher may identify other situations when students may use the “Pass” card.</p>
Peer Interviews	<p>Students interview one another about what they have learned about a particular topic or subject that is being studied.</p>
Popsicle Sticks	<p>Teacher has a wooden popsicle stick or tongue depressor for each student. The sticks may have a student’s name on each one of them or they may have a number on them that represents each student. The sticks are kept in a pencil container or can of some sort. When the teacher asks a question, one stick is selected that has a student’s name on it or a number that has been assigned to the student. After the stick is selected, it may be placed back in the container or set aside. This ensures that all students have an opportunity to respond to the teacher’s questions. Sticks may be color-coded to represent a group of students or a number may represent a group or an individual within a group.</p>
Portfolio Check	<p>Check the progress of a student’s portfolio. A portfolio is a purposeful collection of significant work, carefully selected, dated and presented to tell the story of a student’s achievement or growth in well-defined areas of performance, such as reading, writing, math, etc. A portfolio usually includes personal reflections where the student explains why each piece was chosen and what it shows about his/her growing skills and abilities.</p>
Problem Solving Observation	<p>Give the class a complex problem to solve. Ask them to work in pairs. Good problems will have more than one part and will require students to explain their thinking to each other. It may be helpful to use problems that require students to show their thinking in more than one way. Examples of showing their thinking in more than one way might include graphing, diagramming, explaining how someone with a different perspective might answer the question, and generating examples. Join one of the groups while they work. Have in mind that you are observing and focus in a way that you can write down later what you observed. You may find it helpful to jot down 2 or 3 words during this observation to prompt your recall later. Prompt students to explain their thinking to each other. Ask them to say aloud what they are thinking while they are solving the problem. Prompt them with questions such as “Why” “how are you deciding to” or “What were you thinking about when you did that.” As soon as practical jot down notes about what you observed-especially including notes about a student’s problem solving process and what they understand about the process.</p>
Question and Answer	<p>Students write a question on one side of an index card and then select a partner who writes the answer to the question on the other side of the card. This can be done several times with students exchanging cards and adding more indepth responses to the original answers that were written by other students.</p>

Quick Quiz	Teacher asks 3-5 quick response questions on a particular topic. Student may either write their answers or respond orally.
Quick Write	Teachers asks 1 question and students quickly write their response on a 3x5 index card. Teacher checks the responses stopping at students' desks or students raise their cards for the teacher to view.
Quiz	Quizzes assess students for factual information, concepts and discrete skill. There is usually a single best answer. Some quiz examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple Choice - True/False - Short Answer - Paper and Pencil - Matching - Extended Response
Right Elbow Partner	After the teacher's presentation, students turn to the person at their right elbow to talk about the topic, ask a question or discuss the ideas the teacher presented.
Self-Assessment	A process in which students collect information about their own learning, analyze what it reveals about their progress toward the intended learning goals and plan the next steps in their learning.
S O S Summary	Teacher presents a Statement (S) and asks students to express their Opinion (O) as to whether they agree or disagree with the teacher's statement. Then the students have to Support (S) their opinion with specific evidence.
Smart Cards	These are student written summaries and illustrations on index cards about the Big Ideas and Enduring Understandings, the key concepts and topics related to one unit of study. Each student creates their own Smart Card. Students then pair up and share their cards with one another. They can also be stacked and shared again before a quiz or test.
Student Conference	Teacher has a one on one conversation with students to check their level of understanding.
Survey Students	Although this is not strictly a formative assessment of student learning, you can learn a great deal by surveying students. A survey may consist of 3-5 questions on a particular topic of study or on their opinion about classroom routines, rules or on their interests and pastimes.
Ticket to Leave	Closing activity where students respond in writing or verbally to short assignments.
Think Pair Share	Students think individually, then pair (discuss with partner), then share with the class.aba
Turn 'n Talk	This strategy encourages student conversation about what they're learning. Students listen to the teacher's presentation on a topic for 10 minutes and then turn to a partner and talk about the topic for 2 minutes. They can share notes and ideas about the topic. This can be done several times during a lesson. At the end of the lesson students can be brought together to summarize their key understandings and to clear up any misconceptions.
Turn to Your Partner	Teacher gives direction to students. Students formulate individual response, and then turn to a partner to share their answers. Teacher calls on several random pairs to share their answers with the class.
Web or Concept Map	Any of several forms of graphical organizers which allow learners to perceive relationships between concepts through diagramming key words representing those concepts. http://www.graphic.org/concept.html

