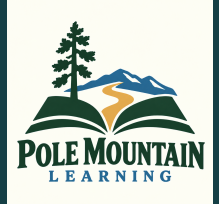


CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

CHECK / INTERPRET / RESPOND

Choose the next teaching move from learner evidence.



A first adjustment is not always enough.

A fictional math lesson follows the same 20 usable records through three checks. The teacher keeps the first return visible, then changes the teaching.

9 / 20

FIRST CHECK

Starting value overlooked

12 / 20

AFTER A REMINDER

A gap still remains

17 / 20

AFTER A COMPARISON

Recheck with support recorded

Supported in-lesson checks; 20 matched records.

Five tools. One decision cycle. Two subjects.

For secondary coaches and mentors. Worked math and science examples, student slips and a teacher handout; use with Shared Coaching Core C01-C05.



AGREE

Name the criterion



OBSERVE

Collect the evidence



TRY

Teach from the pattern



RETURN

Check again

AGREE

OBSERVE

TRY

RETURN

Choose a check that can change the lesson

For coaches and mentors supporting secondary teachers at any experience level. This section is about short checks during a lesson and the teaching decisions that follow. It is not a common-assessment or PLC scoring system. Use it with the included Shared Coaching Core.

Need	Focus tool
Design the check and possible teaching decisions	CF01 Check design and decision plan
Capture coverage and the actual response	CF02 Evidence collection and coverage
Choose a teaching move from the pattern	CF03 Evidence to teaching move
Compare the recheck with help recorded	CF04 Matched recheck and next decision
Invite an answer, reason and uncertainty	CF05 Student quick-check slip / two per sheet

Shared Core C01-C05 supplies the working agreement, conversation, week planner, reflection and optional teacher-reviewed summary. Use C01 for the note audience and storage; keep local identifiers secure.

Find the short route and examples

Small first cycle p3; check design and collection pp4-5; math case pp6-10; science example p11; teacher introduction/team protocol p12 and a separate handout; completed CF01-CF05 pp13-17.

Original Pole Mountain Learning forms and fictional cases reflect Mike McManamen's coaching experience. TeachingWorks is optional professional background; no university, publisher or district affiliation or endorsement is claimed.

Further reading: TeachingWorks, High-Leverage Practices.

<https://www.teachingworks.org/high-leverage-practices/>

A small first checking cycle

Stage	Start with this useful route
Agree / C01 and CF01	Choose one idea and the evidence criterion. Rehearse a check and two different responses, then plan possible teaching moves.
Observe / CF02	Collect a response from each invited learner where feasible. Record access, received and usable counts, and a few exact excerpts.
Try / CF03 and CF05	Clarify an uncertain interpretation. Choose a teaching response from the pattern, then offer a new check on the same idea.
Return / CF04 and C02	Compare usable records with teaching and help visible. Name the next move, use C03 to arrange it, and C05 only for an agreed summary.

A short visit can still produce a useful decision

You do not need to collect every kind of evidence or finish the full cycle in one visit. Inspect two or three responses together if that is the available sample. Record how they were chosen and describe only that sample; do not turn three selected papers into a class percentage.

Choose the opportunity, not a speed target
Allow thinking and response time that fit the content and learners. Preserve accommodations, oral or scribed responses, and alternatives to public voting. A quick check should not become a race.

Use the teacher introduction on p12 before the visit. Blank PDFs are for handwriting; editable Word cells expand with typed entries, so check pagination before printing. Student slips support writing, drawing, explanation or a planned oral response.

AGREE

OBSERVE

TRY

RETURN

Design a check that distinguishes ideas

Start with a specific content decision: what do you need to know before moving on? Match the check to the criterion. An answer can be correct by guessing or copying; confidence can be high while an idea is wrong. Ask for evidence that can distinguish the explanations you anticipate.

Check option	What to plan before using it
Choice plus a reason	Use alternatives that reflect different interpretations. Ask learners to justify the choice; do not diagnose from a letter alone.
Whiteboard or quick sketch	Plan when boards are shown, where you can see them, and how you will preserve a few explanations. Copying a neighbor limits the inference.
Brief written or oral response	Keep the criterion visible. Arrange a private or scribed response where appropriate and distinguish no response from wrong reasoning.
Worked comparison	Ask what changes and what stays the same. Keep the answer open until the initial response is collected.
End-of-lesson slip	Use the result to plan the next lesson. If there is no chance to act today, record when teaching and a new check will happen.

Choice plus a reason: a quick example

For A: $y = 3x + 2$ and B: $y = 3x$, choose:

1. B only.
2. Both, because both rise by 3.
3. A only, because 2 is the parcel rate and 3 the fee.

Show choices together, then explain with the zero row and a nonzero pair. Choice 2 suggests a constant-increase confusion; choice 3 suggests swapped quantities. Inspect the reason before choosing a teaching move.

AGREE

OBSERVE

TRY

RETURN

Collect evidence before choosing a response

Count or record	What it tells you
Enrolled and present	The class context. Absence does not show lack of understanding.
Invited and received	The opportunity offered and what was actually collected. A raised hand or nod is not a usable content explanation.
Usable and incomplete	Which responses show enough to inspect the criterion. Define usable for this task; keep partial evidence without inventing a judgment.
Matched records	Whose work appears at each compared check. Use the matched denominator; do not silently compare different groups.
Teaching and help	What occurred between checks: reminder, explanation, model, peers, materials and access supports.

Evidence first, interpretation second, teaching next

Learner evidence
Both are proportional because the cost goes up 3 each time.

Tentative interpretation and a probe
The learner may equate a constant increase with proportionality. Ask what each plan costs at zero parcels and what that means before deciding.

The actual response might expose a concept gap, a task-language issue or a missing opportunity to respond. Use CF03 to record an alternative explanation. Offer another response mode when the evidence is unavailable; use teaching when the content idea is missing.

AGREE

OBSERVE

TRY

RETURN

Math case: a rate is not the whole relationship

All people, times, records and results are fictional. On Tuesday Nov 3, 2026, Noah Morgan and coach Casey Lee use a 10:00-10:50 Grade 9 lesson. Checks fall near the start, middle and end. Each uses new delivery-plan numbers with the same reasoning criterion; the correct plan changes from B to A on the last check.

The content criterion
Identify the proportional plan; use its zero row and a nonzero pair to show cost = rate x parcels; explain why a plan with a starting fee is not proportional.

Parcels x	Plan A: $y = 3x + 2$	Plan B: $y = 3x$
0	2	0
1	5	3
2	8	6

First check / individual responses
Delivery plans A and B use these total costs. Which is proportional to the number of parcels? Explain using $x = 0$ and one nonzero row.

What counts as an explanation

B costs 0 at zero parcels and 6 at 2 parcels: $6 = 3 \times 2$. A starts at 2 and adds 3 per parcel. Both have a constant increase, but only B has $y = 3x$. For positive x , B has $y/x = 3$; A has ratios 5 at $x = 1$ and 4 at $x = 2$. Do not divide by $x = 0$.

Noah and Casey quickly scan selected explanations during the lesson; Casey codes all slips afterward. Exact counts and codes on pp7-10 come from that later coding. At each check: 26 enrolled, 2 absent, 24 invited, 22 received and 20 usable. S01-S20 are the same usable matched records across the three checks. S21-S22 are incomplete, S23-S24 not returned and S25-S26 absent; none is counted wrong.

🔍 AGREE

🔍 OBSERVE

↶ TRY

↻ RETURN

Keep the first return visible

First check / before explanation



First return / after verbal reminder



Revised return / after table comparison



Each bar totals 20 usable matched records. Left to right: criterion visible (dark teal), starting value unexplained (gold), quantities confused (rust). Labels and segment order also identify the categories in grayscale.

Check / task	Teaching and response conditions
10:05 / $A = 3x + 2$; $B = 3x$	Start: individual responses. A quick scan informs the reminder; later coding finds 9/20 show the criterion.
10:22 / $A = 4x + 3$; $B = 4x$	Middle: after the reminder and practice, a fresh check. Selected explanations still confuse starting cost or quantities; later coding finds 12/20.
10:42 / $A = 2x$; $B = 2x + 5$	End: after comparing tables, zero rows, fixed cost and rate. A fresh individual slip follows; later coding finds 17/20.

A limited conclusion

Casey codes all three sets after the lesson. Noah acts on quick scans of selected explanations, not a live count of all 22 slips. The same 20 usable records are compared. Later responses follow teaching and visible models; they do not prove causation or independent transfer. These times describe this case, not a recommended pace.

AGREE

OBSERVE

TRY

RETURN

Inspect the matched response matrix

Every usable record is shown. The codes describe the response at that check, not a permanent label for a learner. V = criterion visible; Z = starting value unexplained; X = quantities confused. Recheck tasks and support differ as described on p7.

V requires all criterion parts. X marks a swapped fee/rate explanation; Z marks a missing starting-value link. Other response patterns would need different codes.

Code	First check	After reminder	After comparison
S01	V	V	V
S02	V	V	V
S03	V	V	V
S04	V	V	V
S05	V	V	V
S06	V	V	V
S07	V	V	V
S08	V	V	V
S09	V	V	V
S10	Z	V	V
S11	Z	V	V
S12	Z	V	V
S13	Z	Z	V
S14	Z	Z	V
S15	Z	Z	V
S16	Z	Z	V
S17	X	X	V
S18	X	X	Z
S19	X	X	X
S20	X	Z	Z
V / Z / X	9 / 7 / 4	12 / 5 / 3	17 / 2 / 1

Denominator: 20 usable matched records. V = 9/20 (45%), then 12/20 (60%), then 17/20 (85%). S21-S26 remain unavailable for this comparison. Selected full excerpts on pp9-10 let you inspect why responses were classified.

AGREE

OBSERVE

TRY

RETURN

Two records: stable evidence and a changed idea

S01 / the same criterion on three tasks

First / before explanation	Return / after reminder	Return / after comparison
B is proportional: 0 parcels costs 0, and 2 parcels cost 6, which is 3 times 2. A already costs 2 at zero parcels.	B starts at 0. At 2 parcels, 8 = 4 times 2. A has a 3-dollar starting charge, so it is not proportional.	A has 0 cost for 0 parcels and 4 for 2 parcels: 2 times 2. B begins at 5, so A is the proportional one.
Criterion visible	Criterion visible	Criterion visible

S13 / the same criterion on three tasks

First / before explanation	Return / after reminder	Return / after comparison
Both are proportional because the cost goes up 3 each time.	They both go up by 4, so I still think both are proportional.	Only A: zero parcels costs 0 and two cost 4, or 2 times 2. B has 5 added even before any parcels.
Starting value unexplained	Starting value unexplained	Criterion visible

Read the response, not only the total
S01 already meets the criterion; the case does not attribute new learning to the later teaching for this record. S13 keeps the constant-increase explanation after the reminder, then uses zero and nonzero evidence after the comparison.

AGREE

OBSERVE

TRY

RETURN

Two records: a correction and a remaining concern

S17 / the same criterion on three tasks

First / before explanation	Return / after reminder	Return / after comparison
A is proportional. The 2 is the cost for each parcel and 3 is the starting amount.	A still looks proportional to me. It is 3 for each parcel and 4 to start.	A is proportional. At zero it is 0, then 2 parcels cost 4. The 5 in B is the cost at zero, not the parcel rate.
Quantities confused	Quantities confused	Criterion visible

S19 / the same criterion on three tasks

First / before explanation	Return / after reminder	Return / after comparison
A. The number 2 means 2 dollars a parcel and 3 means the fee.	For A I read 3 per parcel plus 4 at the start, so I chose A.	B is 5 per parcel and 2 at the start. I chose B.
Quantities confused	Quantities confused	Quantities confused

Noah chooses the next move

S17 now labels the starting value and rate with the new numbers. S19 still swaps the two quantities, so Noah plans a brief individual table/equation comparison. S18 and S20 need a new explanation of the zero row. Learners meeting the criterion can build a counterexample with a fixed fee.

A later check is planned
Thursday Nov 5: a new context with $A = 5x + 1$ and $B = 5x$. Ask for zero and nonzero evidence, preserve accommodations and record extra help. No Nov 5 result is supplied; schedule and inspect it before deciding the next teaching step.

A second subject: keep the system boundary visible

This fictional Grade 8 science example checks conservation of mass in a closed system. The criterion is to explain that matter, including the gas, remains inside the sealed container, so total mass stays unchanged. There is no whole-class count in this short example.

Observation	Available before the prediction
Before mixing / sealed container	154.0 g
Bubbles form / still sealed	Second reading withheld

Check prompt
A sealed container has a mass of 154.0 g before mixing. Bubbles form inside and the container stays sealed. Before measuring again, predict the total mass and explain what happens to the matter.

Learner SC01 / initial response
The gas goes up, so the container should get lighter.

A probe asks: Where could matter leave in this setup? Point to the system boundary. If the learner cannot locate the boundary, the teacher sketches it and explains that the gas remains inside. The next response is inspected with that teaching recorded.

Learner SC01 / supported response
I predict 154.0 g. The gas is still inside the sealed container; matter has not left the system.

Reveal the reading, then plan another check
Only after the prediction and explanation, reveal the second reading: 154.0 g. Ask how the boundary explains it. The revised prediction followed teacher help. Plan a different closed-system check and collect a new explanation.

 AGREE

 OBSERVE

 TRY

 RETURN

Looking at lesson checks together

We will look at how a short lesson check helps you decide what to teach next. You choose the content concern. This is professional learning, not a teacher rating.

Bring one idea and a short check

Bring a prompt and what a useful answer should show. Anticipate a likely misunderstanding and a teaching move you could make when it appears.

Keep the response counts clear

Record how many learners were invited, how many responses were usable and what was unavailable. For example, 20 usable responses out of 24 invited does not describe every learner.

Act on the thinking you see

Check an uncertain interpretation, choose a teaching move and offer a fresh check on the same idea. Keep peer help, modeling and other support beside the later work.

Before we start

We will agree in writing who can see notes, where they are stored and what may be shared. Follow required school reporting and privacy rules. Use only the student details needed. Offer planned language and communication supports, including a private response or the option to pass.

Team option for a 30-minute session

5 minutes	Name one content idea and the evidence you need from a short check.
10 minutes	Try the prompt and inspect a few responses. Separate the evidence from a first interpretation.
10 minutes	Choose a teaching move and plan a recheck. Discuss access and missing responses.
5 minutes	Each teacher chooses one change and a date to review what happened.

For an individual conversation, begin with one observation, one agreed change and the next date. The optional ten-minute debrief keeps the record short. Share a summary only with agreed readers after teacher review; keep individual student work in approved school storage.



Check design and decision plan

Noah Morgan | Coach Casey Lee | Fictional Grade 9 math

Plan a short lesson check that can distinguish explanations and guide a teaching decision. Choose one criterion with the teacher before the visit.

Idea and evidence criterion

What should the learner show, explain or do? Specify the content evidence, not just a correct answer.

Grade 9 proportional relationships review. Noah Morgan and coach Casey Lee. Identify the proportional plan; use its zero row and a nonzero pair to show $\text{cost} = \text{rate} \times \text{parcels}$; explain why a plan with a starting fee is not proportional.

Check task and response

Write the task, correct reasoning and two plausible alternative responses. Avoid a cue that supplies the answer.

First task: A has $y = 3x + 2$; B has $y = 3x$. B is proportional: zero cost at zero parcels, and $y = 3x$ at nonzero pairs. A has a starting charge. Alternatives: both rise by 3; confuse the rate and starting charge.

Response opportunity and access

Who will be invited? Plan thinking time, oral, written or other response modes, and required accommodations.

Invite all 24 present learners. Use individual slips, with oral or scribed responses under planned accommodations. Collect before explaining the distinction; do not ask for public voting.

Decision options

What evidence would lead you to teach, clarify, extend or collect more? Record possible moves without a fixed percentage rule.

If explanations rely only on equal increases, compare zero rows and multiplicative pairs. If quantities are swapped, ask what each row and equation number means, then teach if needed. A fluent choice alone is not enough.

Recheck and support

Plan a new task testing the same idea. Record teaching, peer help or models and choose when a later independent attempt would help.

Use changed rates and fees for the next checks. Keep individual responses and record the reminder and later table comparison. A fresh Nov 5 check is planned after the lesson.



Evidence collection and coverage

Noah Morgan | Coach Casey Lee | Fictional Grade 9 math

Record up to three lesson checks. Keep invitations, received responses, usable evidence and teacher action distinct. Use secure local codes.

Criterion and collection method

Content criterion, task, response mode, observer position and how counts were gathered. Label timing as estimated or measured.

Nov 3, 2026; Grade 9 math. Full criterion from CF01. In a 10:00-10:50 lesson, checks fall near the start, middle and end. Noah and Casey quickly scan selected explanations while learners work. Casey collects the slips and codes all three sets after the lesson; counts below are retrospective. The same 20 usable records are compared.

Three checks and the teaching response

For each check, record support, invited / received / usable counts, the evidence pattern and the actual teacher response.

Check / support	Coverage	Evidence pattern	Teacher response
10:05 / individual, before explanation	24 invited / 22 received / 20 usable	After-lesson coding: 9 V / 7 Z / 4 X	A quick scan prompts a reminder; a new check follows at mid-lesson.
10:22 / after reminder	24 / 22 / 20; same matched codes	After-lesson coding: 12 V / 5 Z / 3 X	Selected explanations still show both concerns; Noah compares tables before the final check.
10:42 / after comparison	24 / 22 / 20; same matched codes	After-lesson coding: 17 V / 2 Z / 1 X; S19 still swaps quantities	Plan targeted follow-up and a fresh Nov 5 check.

Unavailable and unmatched records

Separate absence, not-returned and incomplete work. State the matching group and how excluded records will receive another opportunity.

26 enrolled: 2 absent; 24 present and invited. 22 responses received at each check; 20 usable matched, 2 incomplete. Two present learners did not return work. S21-S22 incomplete; S23-S24 not returned; S25-S26 absent. Preserve access supports and offer another check.



Evidence to teaching move

Noah Morgan | Coach Casey Lee | Fictional Grade 9 math

Use a response pattern to choose and explain the next teaching move. Check an alternative interpretation before acting on it.

Work and tentative pattern

Copy a few de-identified excerpts against the criterion. Keep learner evidence separate from your interpretation.

S13 first: Both are proportional because the cost goes up 3 each time. S17 first: A is proportional. The 2 is the cost for each parcel and 3 is the starting amount. Distinct patterns need different teaching.

Alternative explanation and clarification

Could the task, language, access or missing work explain the pattern? Record the probe and actual response if collected.

Check whether S13 can find the zero row and whether S17 can label quantities in one table row. Do not infer a misconception from a blank. In the first return S13 again says both go up by 4; S17 again swaps the quantities.

Chosen teaching move

Teach a concept, compare representations, clarify a direction, extend reasoning or collect evidence. Explain why this move fits.

After the first reminder leaves both concerns visible, compare zero rows and a nonzero pair. Name the fixed cost and rate using the table and equation. Model the distinction, then invite a new response.

What actually happened

Record the content taught, material, peer or teacher help, and who had the response opportunity.

Noah compares A and B in a shared table and discusses the starting fee and rate. Learners see that comparison. The revised task uses A: $y = 2x$ and B: $y = 2x + 5$; individual slips follow the explanation.

Check the response to teaching

Name the comparable task, criterion, response mode and timing. Use CF04 for the recheck; mark a future result as planned.

At 10:42, compare the same criterion on the revised task. S13 explains B and A correctly; S17 now labels the quantities correctly. S19 still swaps them. Use CF04; plan fresh evidence after this supported lesson.

Matched recheck and next decision

Noah Morgan | Coach Casey Lee | Fictional Grade 9 math

Compare records against the same criterion while keeping new tasks and assistance visible. Decide what to teach next.

Criterion and tasks compared

State the content criterion. Note differences in task, demand and response conditions.

Identify the proportional plan; use its zero row and a nonzero pair to show $\text{cost} = \text{rate} \times \text{parcels}$; explain why a plan with a starting fee is not proportional. Rates and fees change from $3/2$ to $4/3$ to $2/5$; the correct plan changes from B to A on the last check. Each asks for zero and nonzero evidence.

Coverage and matching

Invited, received and usable at each check; matching codes; unavailable or unmatched records and reasons.

At each check: 24 invited, 22 received, 20 complete usable responses. All S01-S20 are matched across checks. S21-S26 remain unavailable for this comparison; no missing response is counted wrong.

Response counts and excerpts

Count each pattern over the usable matched records. Preserve examples and a record that did not change.

Criterion visible: 9/20 (45%), 12/20 (60%), 17/20 (85%). Starting value unexplained: 7, 5, 2. Quantities confused: 4, 3, 1. S01 remains criterion-visible; S13 changes only after the comparison; S19 still swaps quantities.

Support between checks

Describe teaching, modeling, peers, cues, materials and access supports so supported work is not mistaken for independent use.

First return follows a verbal reminder about proportional relationships. Revised return follows the shared table comparison and explanation. Use the p7 interpretation limit when discussing these supported checks.

Next decision

Teach, extend or collect more evidence for each pattern. Use C02 for the conversation and C05 for an agreed summary.

Offer S18 and S20 another zero-row explanation; work with S19 to label quantities and inspect a new example. Extend the criterion-visible responses with a counterexample. For C05: wider evidence informed a changed teaching move; a later independent check remains planned.

Later check

Task, date, criterion and planned support. Use C03 to schedule. Leave results blank until collected.

Planned Nov 5 task: A has $y = 5x + 1$ and B has $y = 5x$. Ask for zero and nonzero evidence with a new context. Preserve accommodations and record extra help; result not yet collected.

Student quick-check slip

S13 / MATH

Answer the lesson question and show why. Write any question, even a small one.

You can write, draw, say it out loud, or point to your work.

Assignment / what I am working on: A: $y = 3x + 2$; B: $y = 3x$. Delivery plans A and B use these total costs. Which is proportional to the number of parcels? Explain using $x = 0$ and one nonzero row.

My answer

Both are proportional because the cost goes up 3 each time.

My evidence or reason

I see the cost increasing by 3 in each table.

A question or help I need

I am not sure why the zero row changes the answer.

Original first-check response; discuss the evidence before teaching.

CUT OR FOLD HERE

Student quick-check slip

SC01 / SCIENCE

Answer the lesson question and show why. Write any question, even a small one.

You can write, draw, say it out loud, or point to your work.

Assignment / what I am working on: A sealed container has a mass of 154.0 g before mixing. Bubbles form inside and the container stays sealed. Before measuring again, predict the total mass and explain what happens to the matter.

My answer

I predict 154.0 g. The gas is still inside the sealed container; matter has not left the system.

My evidence or reason

The container stays sealed, so matter cannot leave its boundary.

A question or help I need

Would the measured mass change if the container were open? I need to know what could leave.

Response after a boundary explanation; arrange a fresh check.