



STOP ASKING “DO YOU UNDERSTAND?”

Check understanding. Don't ask for it.



THE IDEA

Asking “Do you understand?” gets very little useful information.

Instead, use quick checks that show what students actually understand.



IN THE CLASSROOM

Use mini whiteboards, thumbs, cold call, or small-group talk.

Ask students to show, explain, apply or teach it.

Build these checks into your teaching routines.

Respond and adapt based on what you see.

USE THESE INSTEAD

1



SHOW IT

Ask students to show the answer.

Use mini whiteboards, fingers, or drawings.

*What's the answer?
Show me.*

2



EXPLAIN IT

Ask students to explain in their own words.

Use pair talk or quick verbal responses.

*Can you explain how this works?
Tell your partner.*

3



APPLY IT

Ask students to apply it.

Give a quick problem or example.

*Try one like this.
What would you do?*

4



TEACH IT

Ask students to teach it to someone else.

Peer teach, turn and talk, or teach the class.

*Teach your partner.
Pretend you are the teacher.*



WHY IT WORKS

You get real evidence of understanding in the moment.
It helps EAL learners engage, think and demonstrate learning.



EAL UPGRADE

Allow response time and think time before asking.
Provide sentence starters and key vocabulary for explanations.
Use visuals and exemplars to support responses.



TRY IT TOMORROW

Replace “Do you understand?” with one of the four strategies above.
Choose one new check to use in every lesson.
Reflect: which checks gave you the clearest picture of understanding?



TEACHER LANGUAGE

“Show me the answer.”
“Explain it in your own words.”
“Try one like this.”
“Teach your partner.”

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