



THE 60-SECOND RETRIEVAL ROUTINE

A quick routine. A stronger memory. A bigger vocabulary.



THE IDEA

Short, regular retrieval activities help all learners remember more, including EAL students.

By quickly recalling key ideas and vocabulary, students strengthen memory, build confidence and make connections between lessons.

It takes just one minute, requires minimal preparation and works in every subject.



IN THE CLASSROOM

Use 1-minute retrieval tasks at the start or end of a lesson.

Show an image, a key question or a few words. Students write, say or think their answers. Use strategies like:

- quick write
- mini whiteboards
- think–pair–share
- call and response

Focus on key vocabulary, concepts or processes from recent or last week's lessons.

THE 3 STEPS

1



RECALL

Show a prompt.

Use an image, a key question or a vocabulary word. Give students 30–60 seconds to recall what they know.

No notes. Just think.

What can you remember?

What are the key ideas?

What words can you recall?

2



SHARE

Say, write or discuss.

Students write their ideas, say them to a partner or share with the class.

Encourage full sentences and subject vocabulary. Allow all contributions.

The process is called ...

I remember ...

One key word is ...

3



BUILD

Make the connection.

Quickly check answers and clarify.

Link to today's lesson.

Revisit and build on key vocabulary.

This links to ...

It helps us understand ...

We can also say ...



WHY IT WORKS

- Strengthens long-term memory.
- Builds fluency and confidence.
- Helps EAL learners retain and use key vocabulary.
- Connects prior learning to new content.



EAL UPGRADE

- Use visuals, keywords or bilingual support if needed.
- Allow thinking time.
- Encourage students to say and write in full sentences.
- Revisit key words regularly.



TRY IT TOMORROW

- Plan a 1-minute retrieval task for your next lesson.
- Choose 3–5 key words, concepts or a diagram.
- Use mini whiteboards, a quick write or think–pair–share.
- Make it a daily or weekly routine.



TEACHER LANGUAGE

"Take 60 seconds to write what you remember."
"Turn and tell your partner."
"Can you recall the key word?"
"How does this link to what we are learning today?"