ELA Classroom Pulse Checks

Use these questions to engage students in the learning process, prepare them for difficult discussions, or refocus after a disruption.

1. Pulse Check Opener Questions

Use opener questions to assess prior knowledge, introduce a skill, or ask students to recall something they learned last class. You can also use them to see how students feel about what they read for homework or as a general emotional check-in.

- What's one thing you learned last class?
- What's one thing from last class you're still unsure about?
- What's one goal you want to accomplish during class today?
- How are you feeling today? Anything you'd like me to know?

2. Pulse Check Exit Questions

Use exit ticket questions to solidify knowledge or assess how students feel as they walk out your door. You can also ask students to pose questions or share an idea that will stick with them.

- What's one new thing you learned today?
- What's one question you still have about today's class?
- What was your favorite thing that happened in class today?
- What was your least favorite thing that happened in class today?
- How're you feeling as you walk out of the classroom?
- What are you most looking forward to for the next class?

3. Pre-Discussion Pulse Check Questions

Use pre-discussion pulse checks to prepare students for potentially difficult conversations. You can ask them to clarify what they would like to discuss and formulate questions to ask their peers. You can also prompt them to find passages they'd like to focus on or set discussion goals for themselves.

- What emotions did this text make you feel?
- What did this text make you think about? Did it remind you of anything else you've read or seen?
- What is one thing you noticed about this text that you'd like to share with your classmates?
- What is one question you have about this text that you'd like to ask your classmates?
- What's one goal you have for yourself in this discussion?

4. Post-Discussion Pulse Check Questions

Use post-discussion pulse checks to see how students feel after a difficult discussion, help them solidify new ideas, and reflect on whether they met their discussion goals.

- What was the most surprising thing about today's discussion?
- What's one thing you learned in this discussion that you will keep thinking about?
- Did you change your mind at any point in this discussion? About what?
- Which classmate do you think did a great job in this discussion? What did they do?
- What's something you did in today's discussion that you are proud of?
- What's something you could have done better in today's discussion?
- When were you most engaged in today's discussion?
- When were you least engaged in today's discussion?
- Is there anything I can do to make our next discussion better for you?
5. Curveball Pulse Check Questions

Use curveball pulse checks when the unexpected happens, and you need real-time feedback to make instructional changes on the fly. You can also use them when class is going great to gain insight into the activities or discussion topics to try again!

- If you described to an absent friend what we did in class today, what would you say in one or two sentences?
- What do you still have questions about?
- Are there concepts I need to be clearer on or that you need more time with?
- Whoa! What just happened? Can you explain why the conversation took that turn?
- What do you think we need to do as a class to get the conversation back on track?
- How do you feel about the conversation we just had?
- What do you need from me to resolve any anger, hurt, or frustration you’re feeling?
- How can we ensure that whatever didn’t go right today doesn’t happen again?
- It sounds like there was a lot of disagreement around the table today. Can you summarize a viewpoint you heard that you disagree with? Then, in a few sentences, can you explain why you disagree?
- Is there something you wanted to say in the discussion that you didn’t have a chance to share?

6. Self-Assessment and Reflection Pulse Check Questions

Use self-assessment and reflection pulse checks as formative assessments where students show you what they’ve learned and reflect on their learning.

- In a paragraph or two, tell me what you learned in this unit.
- What in this unit challenged you the most? What surprised you the most?
- Tell me something you learned about yourself during this unit.
- When were you most engaged during this unit? Why?
- When were you least engaged during this unit? Why?
- What work in this unit are you most proud of? What could you have done a better job on in this unit?
- If you were designing this unit, what parts would you keep? What would you cut? Anything new you would add?
- Talk briefly about how you improved as a reader, writer, and discussant during this unit. Then, set yourself a reading, writing, and discussion goal for our next unit.