

## E-3: Check for academic understanding

### Focus questions on what is most critical to mastering the objective

*Just like all parts of your lesson, your checks for understanding should be aligned to the key points and the objective's cognitive level.*

#### What types of questions can I use to align to different cognitive levels and key points?

##### Questions that align to different cognitive levels:

- If the cognitive level of the objective involves *knowledge* and *comprehension*, simple, closed questions and more rote activities can provide effective checks for understanding. These activities give the teacher an easy opportunity to check for student understanding of new terms or skills.
- If the cognitive level of the objective points to *application*, students need to apply their knowledge to specific scenarios, such as word problems in math or a document to edit in language arts.
- If the objective requires *synthesis* and *evaluation*, student practice and accompanying checks for understanding should include activities that require complex thinking, such as designing a science experiment that tests the physics theory about which they have been learning.

##### Questions that align to key ideas:

- Ask clarifying questions as you present material, have students paraphrase the key information thus far, or, if appropriate, use questions or problems that illustrate examples of the main ideas

#### How do I create questions that align to my objective and focus on the key points?

- Identify your lesson objective and review the key points in your lesson plan (P-3)
- Use Bloom's Tool (see the Tools section of E-3) to help identify the cognitive level of your objective and write questions that match this level
- When you create scaffolded questions below the requirements of your objective, remember to create questions that also lead back to the Bloom's level of your objective.
- Center your questions on the content of your key points
- Avoid creating questions that address minor points or that will lead to tangential conversations

**Note:** *It can be helpful to actually write out the questions you want to ask into your lesson plan. However, if you choose not to write them out, at the very least you must think through and determine what questions you need to ask **before** your lesson. Only by preparing ahead of time will you know what effective questions to ask and how to follow-up to students responses.*