

Ideas on how to check answers

It is important to give students an opportunity to check their work after they complete an exercise. Checking their work gives students the opportunity to learn from their mistakes, which helps them become independent learners and at the same time gives them a sense of their own progress. There are many ways to check answers. A variety of ideas are presented below.

General suggestions

- To keep classes interesting, vary the way answers are checked. It is best to prevent the same students from always responding, and to avoid putting on the spot students who cannot come up with the answer immediately. To do this, have students raise their hands if they know the answer, encouraging as many as possible to raise their hands. When a reasonable number of students have their hands raised, call on one.
- If there is more than one possible answer, ask if other students have different answers. If there are students who always know the answers, keep them challenged by having them lead the answer-checking activities. If students give incorrect answers, give hints or clues to help them. Alternatively, ask other students in the class to provide the correct answer. Avoid simply giving the students the answer. Instead, gradually give them increasingly specific hints until they figure it out by themselves. This will leave them with a sense of accomplishment.

Checking answers in pairs

- Students in each pair take turns reading their answers aloud and checking one another's answers. A student then reads his or her answers aloud, and the class checks their answers.
- Students in each pair exchange books and check one another's answers. When done, the students return the books and look over the suggested corrections. A student then writes his or her answers on the board, you check them, and then the students check their answers.

Checking answers in groups – for large classes

- A student in each group reads his or her answers aloud while other group members check their answers. If there are any discrepancies, the group collectively decides on the correct answer. A student from one group then reads his or her group's answers aloud, and the other groups check their answers.

Checking answers as a whole class

- Read the answers aloud or write them on the board. Have students check their own work.
- A few students go to the board and write their answers. Other students go to the board and correct any mistakes.
- Students double-check their own work. Direct their attention to any relevant material in the Student's Book to help them, for example, the grammar charts. When students finish, go over the answers using any of the ideas presented above. Ask students to write down the mistakes they made on a piece of paper. Collect the papers, note the common mistakes, and review the appropriate language items in another class.

No matter what technique is used to check answers, it is always useful to note common problems or recurring mistakes. A good way to do this is to ask students to put a question mark next to items they are unsure about in the *Now I can . . .* checklist at the end of each unit. Reteach or review with the class the things most students still have questions about. This way students will remain interested in the class, will not move to a new language item before understanding the previous ones, and will feel successful in their language learning.