

This tool encourages students to form a concise summary of what they just learned at various points in the lesson.

One-Minute Note

Are “movie talkers” one of your pet peeves? You want a quiet atmosphere to enjoy the movie. Yet on the other hand, you also understand the urge to want to pause the movie and turn to your friend to share your thoughts.

- ♦ *What do you think about the villain?*
- ♦ *Why did that happen?*
- ♦ *How do you think this movie will end?*



One-Minute Note is much like pausing a movie midway and sharing your thoughts about it. Sustaining attention on a passive activity for more than ten to fifteen minutes is not natural for most students. A lecture-based lesson is not an easy way to maintain the class’s undivided attention.

By creating stopping points to pause and check for student understanding, the teacher invites active participation versus passive participation. With a One-Minute Note, the teacher engages all students in these ways:

- ♦ Asking a thought-provoking question
- ♦ Focusing on vocabulary
- ♦ Emphasizing connections between the new information and students’ prior knowledge
- ♦ Connecting content to students’ interests
- ♦ Relating the information to current events or circumstances

Students write their thoughts in **One Minute** of time as a **Note**. This break serves two purposes:

1. It is a quick way to check for understanding.
2. It breaks up the material into manageable chunks.

During the discussion of the notes, the teacher assesses student understanding and uses this opportunity to address and clarify any misconceptions. The discussion also provides students a break from the lecture



One-Minute Note (continued)

(listening and/or notetaking). In return, the teacher receives immediate feedback about students' interpretation of the information they are receiving.

Traditional lectures can go on well over twenty minutes with little teacher-student exchange, with the exception of some question and answer responses. If a long lesson is not interspersed with events to engage all students in the content, class time might be wasted. Following a traditional lecture, homework may be assigned, and by the time the teacher can review students' homework, the opportunity to make content most immediate and relevant to students has passed.

Immediately responding to questions and intervening when students demonstrate confusion maximizes instruction time. Students should not feel lost or disengaged. Teachers can ensure their energy is used to meet the students' immediate needs. Waiting to assess students to provide feedback at the end of the week or a unit of study could result in losing out on many learning opportunities.

How to Use One-Minute Note

1. Ask

After five to ten minutes (depending on the students' age or attention span) of listening, watching, or reading new content, ask students thought-provoking questions that can be used to assess their level of understanding.

- ♦ What are the most important points you have learned in the last _____ minutes?
- ♦ What do you understand about _____ at this point?
- ♦ Define (or illustrate) _____.
- ♦ How does _____ relate to our field trip experience?
- ♦ Close your eyes and visualize what _____ looks like. (Pause) Describe to your partner what you visualized.

2. Write

Before students begin to write, state clear and explicit expectations. If students are to use specific terms to articulate their responses, make that clear by posting the terms. Set a timer for One Minute as students respond by writing their notes, drawing a picture, or whatever is expected.

Name: _____ Date: _____

One-Minute Notes

(Be prepared to share with the class)

The most important points during part one of the lesson:

The most important points during part two of the lesson:



One-Minute Note (continued)

3. Share

Elicit responses from the students. Provide specific praise. Emphasize key terminology. Correct any misunderstandings or points of confusion.

When to Use One-Minute Note

Use a One-Minute Note throughout the direct teaching portion of a lesson to check for student understanding:

- ♦ As a warm-up to discuss previous lesson or homework
- ♦ As a warm-up to evaluate prior knowledge about a difficult concept (one that frequently has misconceptions)
- ♦ During class discussion for students to summarize information
- ♦ During Guided Practice to get a quick formative assessment
- ♦ As a closing activity to review what was learned in the lesson
- ♦ As practice for developing a main idea and/or summary
- ♦ To build conciseness and connect word choice in explanations
- ♦ To give meaning to important words or phrases

One-Minute Note Variations

One-Minute Sentence

This strategy encourages students to form a concise summary of what they just learned. Students demonstrate their understanding of an idea or concept by writing only one sentence to capture the most important elements. This strategy allows students to practice their writing skills and gives teachers a way to check student understanding.

One-Minute Sentence Mash-Up

Students pair up with a partner. They share their sentences with the partner, then create a new sentence using the best parts of both sentences.

One-Minute Sentence Competition

Execute the One-Minute Sentence Mash-Up first. Then, combine two student pairs to create groups of four. Give each group two sentences to judge. The groups discuss the merits of each sentence and give the best summary to the teacher. Lastly, the teacher reads and shows the student-selected sentences to the class. The class votes on the best summary.

One-Minute Problem

Students discuss responses within their assigned group before sharing them with the class. This strategy builds student confidence in their answers and provides a way for students to share information and correct misconceptions by their peers. Students expand their own understanding by listening to their peers' responses and reinforce concepts by being able to explain them to others. By walking around the room listening to these discussions, the teacher can assess students' comprehension of the concept or topic.

Agree or Disagree

Provide students with a statement relevant to the current topic. Students work as a group to decide if they agree or disagree, and state why. They then write their explanation on a sticky note and post it on the board. Divide the board into two sections—AGREE and DISAGREE. Compare the explanations on both sides of the board. Students can provide additional information and examples to defend their opinions.



One-Minute Note (continued)

Chain Notes

Ask students to write one thing they've learned on a piece of paper, then pass the paper to someone else. The next person adds to that information or writes down a new fact. Students continue passing around the "notes" for as many One-Minute rounds as the teacher calls.

Buddy Notes

This method is particularly helpful for developing writers. Instead of students working alone, pair students with a partner and have them write or illustrate their responses together. Assign students two different-colored writing tools to distinguish and individually assess each student's input and progress.

Quick Writes

Set a timer for 30 seconds and have students create lists related to a topic, such as, "Think of as many words in 30 seconds related to ELECTRICITY." This can be used to assess each student's knowledge on a particular topic prior to learning new information.

Value of Using One-Minute Note

- ♦ All students actively participate.
- ♦ Students apply higher-order thinking skills.
- ♦ Students receive immediate feedback to what they understand.
- ♦ One-minute intermissions are a quick and easy way to assess students' understanding.
- ♦ One-Minute Notes require students to stop, think, and share what they understand.
- ♦ One-Minute Notes provide a break from passive instruction.

To see the research that validates this approach, read how this method is applied in *THE First Days of School*, page 42.