

Anchor Charts: Making Thinking Visible



Purpose

Anchor Charts build a culture of literacy in the classroom by making thinking visible: recording content, strategies, processes, cues, and guidelines during the learning process. Posting Anchor Charts keeps relevant and current learning accessible to students: to remind them of prior learning and to enable them to make connections as new learning happens. Students refer to the charts and use them as tools as they answer questions, expand ideas, or contribute to discussions and problem solving in class.

Materials

- Poster or chart paper
- Dark, easily visible markers

Procedure

1. Build Anchor Charts with students to capture strategies and key ideas.
2. Let students add ideas to Anchor Charts as they apply new learning, discover interesting ideas, or develop useful strategies for problem solving or skill application.
3. Also add to Anchor Charts as you debrief student work time, recording important facts, useful strategies, steps in a process, or quality criteria.
4. Anchor Charts should contain only the most relevant or important information.
5. Post only those charts that reflect current learning and avoid distracting clutter—hang charts on clotheslines or set them up in distinct areas of the room; rotate the charts that are displayed to reflect the most useful content.
6. Charts should be neat and organized, with simple icons and graphics to enhance their usefulness (avoid distracting, irrelevant details and stray marks).
7. Organization should support ease of understanding and be varied based on purpose.
8. Charts are best in simple, darker earth tones that are easily visible (dark blue, dark green, purple, black, and brown—use lighter colors for accents only).

Variations

- Students can create Anchor Charts during small-group and independent work to share with the rest of the class.
- For a wide variety of other Anchor Charts, explore www.readinglady.com/mosaic/tools/AnchorChartPhotographsfromKellyandGinger/.