Explain the Step

A quick write that helps a student identify a meaningful move in a solution and explain why it works.

The most important step in this solution is _____ because _____.

Five directions for the next math lesson

1. Choose	Select one current problem with a step worth explaining.
2. Start	Use a completed homework solution, or give everyone a short problem in class.
3. Write	Give two minutes for the stem. Students may add an equation or diagram.
4. Talk	In groups of three, compare choices and point to mathematical evidence.
5. Respond	Listen for one sound idea and one sticking point; assign a short next task.

Two ways to begin

Homework available

Partners select a solution from the assigned work, explain one decisive step, and compare reasons.

Homework uneven or missing

Offer one shared problem and a few quiet minutes to attempt it. Then every student can write and talk from a common starting point.

Listen for a next task

If students name a step but cannot justify it, compare two methods. If they misread a diagram, test a differently oriented figure. If units disappear, revise an explanation with labels.

A brief 50-minute framework

Launch 5 | Write 5 | Talk 12 | Respond 5 | Follow-up 15 | Exit 8

Related routines in the book

Find and Fix asks students to locate where a solution goes astray. Compare Two Methods asks them to explain when two approaches agree or differ.

Anna J. Small Roseboro, NBCT and NWP Fellow

More strategies and book information: teachingenglishlanguagearts.com