



Mastery Decision Tree and Guide

Use this Mastery Decision Tree and Guide to help you identify areas where your student could use more practice, and help you determine when they have achieved mastery and are ready to continue to the next step.



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Mastery Guide

It can take some practice to recognize when your student has truly mastered new skills and is ready to move on to the next lesson, subject, or level. Use this guide and decision tree to help you determine when they are ready, so you can continue their instruction with confidence.

What is Mastery?

- A deep understanding of the subject
- The ability to **say** what they know as they work
- The ability to **show** what they know with confidence
- The ability to **apply** learned skills to various real-world scenarios

How do I use the Mastery Decision Tree?

Beginning at the top, consider each statement and your student's current skills and abilities. Once you can answer **Yes** to each mastery statement, your student has achieved mastery and is ready to move on.

What if I answered Not Yet, and my student isn't ready to move on?

Use the Mastery Decision Tree to help pinpoint which skills they need to further develop, and try some of the recommended techniques. Every student has their own strengths, needs, and educational pace. Remember to model patience and understanding as you guide them through each lesson, subject, and level towards mastery.

The Bigger Picture

What if my student consistently grasps concepts more quickly than their peers and applies them without much effort?

- Consider **Acceleration** — speeding up the pace of teaching, possibly completing two or more subject levels in a single school year.
- Some students excel in every subject, while others advance in only one or two.
Always ensure mastery before moving ahead.

What if my student consistently grasps the theoretical concepts quickly but isn't as accomplished at applying them to real-world scenarios?

- Consider **Enrichment** — providing student-guided projects and hands-on activities that connect learning to real life.
- Examples: create a class newspaper, run a classroom store to practice budgeting, or use creative media like art, video, or theater to bring lessons to life.

What if my student consistently struggles with concepts compared to their peers?

- Consider **Reinforcement** — Check for gaps in foundational knowledge such as math facts or grammar basics, and circle back to reinforce these skills before moving on.
- Rather than reteaching the same lessons in the same way, try incorporating fun and interesting methods to spark their interest and lean into their strengths.
- Examples: Math-fact games, real-life shopping or budgeting scenarios, writing stories or graphic novels about subjects they enjoy, creating themed games, scavenger hunts, and mazes.

What if I think there is something deeper going on?

- If other challenges may be preventing mastery, consider seeking support. Learning difficulties, behavioral concerns, or emotional challenges can affect focus. Guidance from knowledgeable specialists can help your student receive the support they need to succeed.

