

The 12 Student Leadership Skills

Observation sheet. Assess the behaviour, not the student — and never let a self-rating be the measure.

Student: _____ Class / section: _____ Term: _____

Skill	What you would see	Seen on	Note
1. Listening to understand	Restates the other person's point, in their terms, before answering		
2. Explaining one thing clearly	Picks an entry point, checks for understanding, stops when the other person has it		
3. Giving usable feedback	Names one specific change, tied to the criteria, with the reason		
4. Planning backwards	Starts at the due date and works back to today, with dates attached		
5. Deciding without complete information	Makes a call, states the reason, names what would change their mind		
6. Delegating and asking for help	Hands off work with the standard attached, or asks a direct question early		
7. Taking feedback	Asks a clarifying question instead of defending or going silent		
8. Navigating a disagreement	Separates the issue from the person; proposes rather than repeats		
9. Following through and repairing	Says in advance it will be late; names what is owed, to whom, by when		
10. Knowing what is not yours to decide	Stops and hands something to an adult instead of ruling on it		
11. Running a short meeting	Keeps to an agenda, closes with who does what by when		
12. Reflecting so it changes the next attempt	Names one thing to do differently, then actually does it		

Pick three. A twelve-row sheet read in one sitting becomes a general impression of the student with numbers attached. Mark three rows at the start of the term and leave the rest blank.

Practice and Fair Checks

One way to practise each skill inside a lesson you were already going to run, and a check two adults could agree on.

Skill	One way to practise it	A fair check
1. Listening	Two-minute paired protocol: you may not reply until you have summarised and the partner agrees the summary is right.	The partner confirms the summary was accurate.
2. Explaining	Reteach one skill to two or three classmates, after you have checked the explainer holds it.	A short check on the students who were taught, not on the explainer.
3. Giving feedback	Fixed critique protocol, a sentence frame, a cap of two items.	The receiver can state what to change without a follow-up question.
4. Planning backwards	Build the team timeline on day one, on paper, before any work starts.	The written timeline against what actually happened.
5. Deciding	Forced-choice rounds: two defensible options, ninety seconds, one sentence of reasoning.	Was a reason given, and was it about the task.
6. Delegating / asking	Hard split so nobody does more than their share; require one question asked outside the group.	Was the work distributed, and was the question asked before the deadline.
7. Taking feedback	Receive-only drill: the receiver may ask questions but may not explain for sixty seconds.	Did the next draft change in the direction of the feedback.
8. Disagreement	Rehearsed scripts for the three disputes your room produces: workload, credit, a missed deadline.	Did the group keep working; did an adult have to step in.
9. Follow-through / repair	A standing one-line repair sentence any student can use, modelled by you first.	The repair happened, on the date the student named.
10. Not yours to decide	Sorting exercise: ten situations, three piles — mine, ours, not mine.	Did the student escalate the ones that belonged to an adult.
11. Running a meeting	Five-minute checkpoint with a fixed four-item agenda you supply.	Meeting notes listing decisions and owners.
12. Reflecting	Two questions after any role: what worked, what you will change next time.	Compare to the previous reflection — did the named change appear.

Three rules for assessing these. Assess one skill at a time. Score the artifact, not the performance. Keep it out of the course grade unless your standards include it and your district's grading policy allows it. Say "the summary missed her second point," never "you are not a good listener" — feedback aimed at the self is the kind that backfires.