

Figure 3.4 Types of Prompts

Type of Prompt	Definition/When to Use	Examples
Background knowledge	Used when there is content that the student already knows, has been taught, or has experienced but has temporarily forgotten or is using incorrectly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As part of a science passage about the water cycle, the teacher asks, "What do you remember about states of matter?"• When reading about a trip to the zoo, the teacher asks, "Remember when we had a field trip to the zoo last month? Do you recall how we felt when it started to rain?"
Process or procedure	Used when established or generally agreed-on rules or guidelines are not being followed and a reminder will help resolve the error or misconception.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student is saying a word incorrectly, and the teacher says, "When two vowels go walking. . . ."• When the student has difficulty starting to develop a writing outline, the teacher says, "I'm thinking about the mnemonic we've used for organizing an explanatory article."
Reflective	Used to encourage students to be metacognitive and to think about their thinking, which can then be used to determine next steps or the solution to a problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student has just read something incorrectly, and the teacher asks, "Does that make sense? Really think about it."• When the student fails to include evidence in her writing, the teacher asks, "What are we learning today? What was our purpose?"
Heuristic	Used to help learners develop their own way to solve problems. These are informal problem-solving procedures. They do not have to be the same as others' heuristics, but they do need to work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When the student has difficulty explaining the relationships between characters in a text, the teacher says, "Maybe drawing a visual representation of the main character's connections to one another will help you."• When a student gets stuck and cannot think of what to write next, the teacher says, "Writers have a lot of different ways for getting unstuck. Some just write whatever comes to mind, others create a visual, others talk it out with a reader, and others take a break and walk around for a few minutes. Will any of those help you?"

Source: Adapted from Fisher and Frey (2013a).

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