

# Quick Start Guide:

## Using Spiral Review in the Classroom

### Help Learning Stick with Spiral Review

Spiral Review is a research-backed approach that intentionally revisits previously taught skills and concepts over time through short, recurring opportunities for retrieval and application. Rather than teaching a topic once and moving on, students repeatedly encounter important learning in spaced intervals.

By combining Spaced Practice, Retrieval Practice, and Interleaving, teachers can build a simple, consistent review routine that strengthens retention, deepens understanding, and helps students connect prior learning to new concepts over time.

### Why Spiral Review Works

**Spiral Review helps students:**

- Retain learning longer
- Connect new concepts to prior learning
- Build confidence through regular, low-stakes review
- Strengthen problem-solving by choosing the right strategy from memory
- Reduce the need for reteaching later

### What Teachers Notice

Students often:

- Recall prior learning more quickly
- Independently connect new learning to previous concepts
- Make stronger connections across skills and topics
- Show more durable understanding over time
- Increase confidence with mixed or unfamiliar problems
- Rely on more strategic thinking and less memorization

### What This Looks Like in Practice

- A teacher introduces a concept on Monday, revisits it later in the week, and includes it again in future warm-ups, exit tickets, and mixed-review activities.
- A math class learning area continues reviewing previous concepts like perimeter, multiplication, and fractions as new skills are introduced.
- A teacher revisits a comprehension skill with new texts, helping students apply the skill in new contexts.

### Teacher Tips

- Keep review short and consistent.
- Ask students to recall from memory.
- Make review challenging but manageable.
- Correct errors quickly.
- Ask students to explain, apply, and connect ideas.
- Make Spiral Review part of the regular routine.

## The Science Behind Spiral Review

Spiral Review works because it combines three evidence-based learning practices:

- **Spaced Practice:** Practice is spread over time to improve retention.
- **Retrieval Practice:** Students strengthen memory by actively recalling information.
- **Interleaving:** Mixed problem types help students choose the right strategy.

## A Simple Way to Begin

No curriculum changes necessary!

Begin with a short, consistent routine built into your current lesson flow.

### Week 1 Quick Start Plan

#### Day 1: Teach New Learning

- Introduce and practice the new skill or concept.

#### Day 2: First Retrieval Opportunity

- Begin class with 2-3 short questions that require students to recall yesterday's learning from memory.

#### Day 3: Mix Old and New Learning

- Include 1-2 questions from previous lessons alongside current instruction.

#### Day 4: Space the Review

- Revisit the concept through a warm-up, discussion, or exit ticket.

#### Day 5: Cumulative Check

- Include the concept in a short mixed review with previously taught skills.

#### Next Week and Beyond

- Continue revisiting the concept periodically through bell ringers, exit tickets, homework, quizzes, and classroom discussions.

## Easy Classroom Routines

- Bell ringers: Start class with a few short questions from prior lessons.
- Exit tickets: Ask students to retrieve one key idea before they leave.
- Mini whiteboards: Give students an opportunity to retrieve and respond simultaneously.
- Think-pair-share: Let students retrieve independently, then discuss with a partner.
- Mixed practice: Blend old and new questions in classwork or homework.
- Cumulative quizzes: Use short, low-stakes quizzes that revisit earlier learning.

## A Simple Solutions Reminder

Spiral Review is *most effective* when it is:

- **Intentionally planned**
- **Spaced over time**
- **Focused on retrieval from memory**
- **Low-stakes**
- **Part of a regular classroom routine**

**When students regularly retrieve and apply their learning, it sticks.**

*For schools and districts seeking a structured way to integrate spiral review, Simple Solutions provides research-backed resources for retention, confident learning, and easy implementation.*

## Additional Research

**Roediger and Karpicke (2006)** found that retrieval practice improves long-term retention more effectively than by additional study alone.

**Rohrer and Taylor (2007) and Rohrer, Dedrick, and Burgess (2014)** showed that interleaved mathematics practice can improve students' ability to select the right strategy and solve new types of problems.

**Agarwal, D'Antonio, Roediger, McDermott, and McDaniel (2014)** found that classroom retrieval practice can also help reduce test anxiety while strengthening learning.