



FREE BUILD THE ENGINE RESOURCE

Classroom Walkthrough Checklist

A lite edition walkthrough tool for instructional focus and quick patterns

Purpose

Use this tool to collect quick, low-inference evidence during classroom walkthroughs. The goal is not to rate teachers. The goal is to see patterns, coach one adult move, and check whether the system is improving.

The Build the Engine Walkthrough Cycle

Step	Leader Move	What It Produces
1. Focus	Choose one look-for before entering classrooms.	A clear lens instead of random notes.
2. Collect	Write what you see and hear without judgment.	Evidence that can be discussed without defensiveness.
3. Pattern	Look across several rooms for repeated strengths or gaps.	A schoolwide trend, not one teacher story.
4. Coach	Name one adult move that can improve the pattern.	Feedback leaders and teachers can act on quickly.
5. Recheck	Return within the week to see if the move changed practice.	Accountability and momentum.

Lite edition rule

Do fewer look-fors well. A focused five-minute walkthrough can teach a leadership team more than a long checklist with no follow-up.

Choose One Instructional Look-For

Pick one look-for for the day or week. New leaders should resist trying to monitor everything at once.

Look-For	What to Look For	Evidence You Might Write
Learning target	Students know what they are learning and what success looks like.	3 of 5 students could explain the task; 1 student could name success criteria.
Instructional clarity	Teacher directions, model, and task are aligned.	Teacher modeled first problem; independent task matched the model.
Student engagement	Students are doing the thinking, speaking, writing, reading, or problem solving.	18 of 22 students wrote a response before discussion.
Checks for understanding	Teacher gathers evidence from all or most students before moving on.	Teacher used whiteboards; 14 of 20 responses were correct.
Student work rigor	The task matches the standard and requires the expected thinking.	Task required explaining strategy, not only selecting an answer.
Culture routines	Transitions, materials, voice level, and response routines are consistent.	Transition took 45 seconds; all students had materials ready.

Evidence Language

Instead of Writing	Write Evidence Like This
Students were off task.	6 of 24 students were not writing during independent practice from 9:12-9:15.
Teacher did a great job.	Teacher modeled two examples before releasing students to practice.
Lesson was confusing.	4 students asked what page to use after directions were given.
Students understood.	9 of 10 checked responses matched the success criteria.

Classroom Walkthrough Checklist

Use one row per classroom. Keep notes short. You are looking for patterns you can coach, not collecting everything you see.

Date / time	Grade / teacher	Look-for

Evidence seen and heard

Student evidence or quote	Adult move observed	

Strength to reinforce	One coaching next step	

Feedback rule

If you cannot name the evidence, do not give the feedback yet. Go back, observe again, and collect a clearer pattern.

Quick Pattern Tracker

After several walkthroughs, summarize what is repeating. This turns individual visits into leadership action.

Look-For	Rooms Visited	Pattern Noticed	Leadership Move	Recheck Date
Learning target				
Student engagement				
Checks for understanding				
Culture routines				
Student work rigor				

From Pattern to Coaching

If the Pattern Shows	Leadership Response
One teacher needs support	Give direct feedback and schedule a recheck.
Several teachers need the same support	Use a leadership team huddle, PLC, model lesson, or shared example.
A dean or coach owns the area	Coach the dean on the look-for, evidence, and teacher follow-up.
The system is unclear	Clarify expectations, provide a tool, and monitor implementation.

Filled-Out Example: Five-Minute Walkthrough

Use this example to model how leaders can write precise, low-inference evidence and turn it into one next coaching move.

Scenario

The principal is checking for student-facing success criteria during 4th grade math because recent walkthroughs showed students could complete problems but struggled to explain what quality work looked like.

Field	Filled-Out Example
Date / time	Sept. 10, 9:05-9:10
Grade / teacher	4th grade math / Ms. Rivera
Look-for	Students can explain the learning target and success criteria.
Evidence seen and heard	Learning target was posted: I can multiply two-digit numbers using partial products. Teacher modeled one problem. During partner practice, 3 of 5 students asked could explain the task. 1 of 5 could explain what would make the answer complete.
Student evidence or quote	Student quote: I know we multiply, but I am not sure what she wants us to show.
Adult move observed	Teacher named the task but did not ask students to restate success criteria before practice.
Strength to reinforce	Model problem was clear and aligned to the student task.
One coaching next step	Before independent practice tomorrow, ask students: What must your work include to be complete? Capture 2-3 student responses and post the criteria.
Recheck	Return Sept. 12 during independent practice and ask 3 students to explain success criteria.

Why this example works	What leaders can copy
It avoids judgment words like good, weak, or messy.	Write what was seen, heard, counted, or collected.
It connects the note to one look-for.	Use the selected focus to keep notes tight.
It names one adult move.	Give one next step that can happen within 24-48 hours.
It includes a recheck.	Feedback becomes accountability when leaders return to see the move.

Want the deeper system?

This lite checklist helps leaders begin collecting evidence and seeing instructional patterns. Build the Engine consulting, coaching, and step-by-step guides help schools build the full walkthrough system: look-fors, dean coaching, teacher feedback, data meetings, and accountability checkpoints.

BuildTheEngineLeadership.com | buildtheengineleadership@gmail.com