Leadership Skills for New Team Leads

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. A lead assigns a teammate to summarize a 12-page survey. Which instruction identifies a deliverable and a deadline?

A. Send a one-page summary of the three most common responses by noon Thursday.
B. Take a look at the survey soon.
C. Set aside two hours Thursday for the survey.
D. Read all 12 pages before the next meeting.

Correct answer: A. Send a one-page summary of the three most common responses by noon Thursday.
The one-page summary is the deliverable. The three responses define its scope, and noon Thursday gives the recipient a specific deadline.

2. A lead wants a teammate to know what made yesterday’s handoff effective. Which feedback names an observable action and its effect?

A. You’re one of our most responsible people.
B. You’ve become a natural at this.
C. You listed the two open orders, so the next shift knew which to check first.
D. Yesterday’s handoff was better than usual.

Correct answer: C. You listed the two open orders, so the next shift knew which to check first.
The feedback identifies a behavior the teammate can repeat and tells them what it helped the next shift do.

3. A teammate is learning to estimate tasks. Which question asks them to describe their own reasoning?

A. Did you use the same estimate as last time?
B. What did you include when you estimated the first draft?
C. Shouldn’t you have rounded it up?
D. Can you change it to three hours?

Correct answer: B. What did you include when you estimated the first draft?
An open question about the estimate helps the teammate explain which steps they counted and which they may have missed.

4. A teammate offers to take a task. Which reply verifies what they understand before the lead moves on?

A. Did you see my earlier message?
B. These tasks are all pretty similar.
C. I'll ask someone on Friday if it arrived.
D. Could you walk me through what you'll send on Friday?

Correct answer: D. Could you walk me through what you'll send on Friday?
Having the teammate describe the deliverable in their own words reveals misunderstandings while there is still time to fix them.

5. A lead promised to make a decision by 3 p.m. A dependency will delay it until the next morning. What keeps the team best informed?

A. Send the decision the next day and wait for someone to ask.
B. Tell the team before 3 p.m., explain what is pending, and give the next update time.
C. Tell a teammate on a different project.
D. Send a message at 3 p.m. saying only that it is delayed.

Correct answer: B. Tell the team before 3 p.m., explain what is pending, and give the next update time.
An early update gives the team a chance to revise its plans. The pending dependency and next update time answer the obvious follow-up questions.

6. Two people have dominated a discussion. The lead wants independent suggestions from everyone before naming a favorite. Which format fits that goal?

A. Give everyone two minutes to write a suggestion, then invite each person to share.
B. Ask the two fastest speakers to summarize the group's opinion.
C. Announce the lead's favorite and ask who agrees.
D. Take a vote on the first suggestion that was offered.

Correct answer: A. Give everyone two minutes to write a suggestion, then invite each person to share.
Individual thinking time lets each person develop a suggestion before being influenced by the first speakers. The turn-taking gives each person a chance to share.

7. A recurring report leaves out its date range. Which opening for a private conversation gives the teammate a concrete problem to work on?

A. People are starting to doubt these reports.
B. You don't seem to care about the reports.
C. The whole team needs to stop making mistakes.
D. Two reports left out the date range this week, so the reader couldn't tell which days the totals covered.

Correct answer: D. Two reports left out the date range this week, so the reader couldn't tell which days the totals covered.
The opening specifies the missing field, how often it happened, and the consequence for the reader.

8. A teammate owns a print order. They may approve any quote up to $300 and need the lead’s decision above that amount. Which instruction gives them that authority clearly?

A. Manage the order and approve whatever you think is reasonable.
B. Collect the quotes, then wait for me to pick and approve one.
C. Choose a qualifying vendor and approve up to $300. Send me the quotes if every option costs more.
D. Pick any vendor, but only approve orders under $200.

Correct answer: C. Choose a qualifying vendor and approve up to $300. Send me the quotes if every option costs more.
This instruction gives the teammate a decision to own, states the budget limit, and explains when to ask the lead to decide.

9. Two shifts each thought the other would send a daily file. What change resolves the ownership gap and makes missed sends visible?

A. Assign the outgoing shift to send it and the incoming shift to record receipt in the shared log.
B. Send a general reminder asking everyone to be more careful.
C. Ask both shifts to send their own copies whenever convenient.
D. Move the file to a different folder without changing who sends it.

Correct answer: A. Assign the outgoing shift to send it and the incoming shift to record receipt in the shared log.
One role owns the send and another confirms receipt. A missing confirmation is visible in the log.

10. A teammate says the new queue is hard to use and mentions losing track of handoffs. Which response most directly checks the lead’s understanding?

A. Can you make a list of other tools to buy?
B. Would you like us to drop the queue entirely?
C. Several of us have found the new queue faster.
D. Is the main issue seeing who has the request after you hand it off?

Correct answer: D. Is the main issue seeing who has the request after you hand it off?
The question reflects the specific concern the teammate raised and invites them to correct the lead’s interpretation.

11. A teammate is struggling to remember a required check. Which coaching plan includes a practice change and observable follow-up?

A. Attend a seminar and revisit the issue at a future date.
B. Try to be more focused and see if work feels better.
C. Use a two-item checklist for the next five orders, then count how many orders include the check.
D. Collect old reports and save them in a folder.

Correct answer: C. Use a two-item checklist for the next five orders, then count how many orders include the check.
The checklist changes what the teammate does. Five orders and the count of completed checks give lead and teammate a specific result to discuss.

12. Two colleagues disagree about a support schedule. The lead has to preserve morning opening coverage and hear both concerns. What should the lead do first?

A. Have each colleague explain why the other person’s plan is unfair.
B. Ask each colleague which hours their plan covers, then compare both plans against the opening requirement.
C. Choose the proposal from the colleague with more tenure.
D. Settle the question by voting before discussing coverage.

Correct answer: B. Ask each colleague which hours their plan covers, then compare both plans against the opening requirement.
Both colleagues can explain the facts behind their proposal. Comparing coverage to a shared constraint makes the decision about the schedule.

13. A new teammate has four days to deliver a draft. A format error would take a day to undo. They can show a one-page sample after the first morning. Which plan catches the costly error and leaves the teammate ownership?

A. Take over the draft immediately and ask the teammate to observe.
B. Assign the draft and review it for the first time on day four.
C. Require the teammate to get every paragraph approved before continuing.
D. Review the sample after the first morning, agree on any change, then let the teammate finish the draft.

Correct answer: D. Review the sample after the first morning, agree on any change, then let the teammate finish the draft.
The sample tests the risky part early, while the teammate can still complete and own the full draft.

14. A lead asked the team for feedback on a pilot. The lead must choose two days by noon and preserve the staffing minimum. Which closure tells the team how its input affected the decision?

A. Publish the two pilot days, explain the staffing constraint, and note what changed after the team’s feedback.
B. Send only the final two days to everyone.
C. Keep the feedback for the next pilot and announce that staffing decided everything.
D. Ask the team to repeat the discussion without naming a decision deadline.

Correct answer: A. Publish the two pilot days, explain the staffing constraint, and note what changed after the team’s feedback.
The closure gives the outcome, the rule that shaped it, and an explanation of how contributions were used.

15. After a checklist trial, an audit shows errors fell from six to two, but average processing time doubled. The team had agreed to allow at most a 20% increase. What follows from both measures?

A. Drop the checklist permanently because processing time rose.
B. Adopt the checklist permanently because errors fell.
C. Keep the error data, revise the checklist, and test whether it can reduce errors within the time limit.
D. Extend the trial and record errors only.

Correct answer: C. Keep the error data, revise the checklist, and test whether it can reduce errors within the time limit.
The trial improved one measure and missed the other: a doubled time is a 100% increase. A revision can be tested against both original measures.