A suggested checklist for abdominal X-Ray interpretation:
Students should add and remove points…

1. Checks and comments on **identification** or **labels**:
- Patient's name, age; date and time when CXR done
- **Orientation**: Sides left / right (L or R) are correctly labeled because the gastric air bubble is on the left side and the liver on the right.

2. Checks and comments on **projection**:
- Says whether the projection is AP or PA, lateral, lateral decubitus
- Reports: This is an AP film. (PA abdominal films are rare; limited to patients who cannot stand or lie supine)

3. Checks and comments on the patient's **position** at the time the radiograph was taken: supine/ erect. Gastric air bubble or label also indicates erect position. Alternatively, look at the label.

4. Checks and comments on the degree of **penetration** of the radiograph:
- Says it is overexposed/ underexposed/ well exposed.
- How do you know when the penetration is adequate?

You can see the bony skeleton and the soft tissues

5. Gasses:
- Describe the **intraluminal gas pattern**: Stomach shows rugae in the left upper quadrant, small bowel shows central valvulae conniventes, large bowel shows peripherally located haustra and plica semilunaris. Is there dilation? Use the 3:6:9 rule to decide. Is there any abnormal gas distribution?
- Look for and describe the **extraluminal gas pattern**: Rigler's sign, air under the diaphragm, biliary gas, outline of liver/falciform ligament, intramural gas (NEC)

6. Masses:
- Describe appearance and location of liver, spleen, kidneys and bladder.
- Describe outline of psoas muscles by identifying properitoneal fat lines
- Is there any faeces present? Look for the mottled appearance in the bowel

7. Bones:
- Comment on ribs, spine, sacrum, coccyx, pelvis and femurs.
- Describe in terms of symmetry, alignment, density.

9. Stones:
- Look for calculi in the biliary tree and urogenital tract
- Look for and describe calcified lymph nodes or calcifications in the liver, spleen and pancreas
- Look for and describe foreign bodies
- Look for and describe therapeutic and diagnostic lines and leads