

Lesson Four: Revising Your Draft

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SUBJECT: Writing, Writing Process, Publishing

GRADE: Grades 3-5

Revision is a word that invokes fear for some students... and teachers. In the minds of some students, they believe revision means “making corrections”. Revision, however, is making changes to a draft to make the writing seem more natural to you. When you envision your characters, did you give them names that correlate with their personalities? Where could you use more vivid language? Are there too many quotations or not enough in your writing? Is there a place where you could have better developed your plot?

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will discover places in their writing where they can revise.
2. Students will work with peers, family members, and an expert editor to evaluate what they written.

MATERIALS

1. Writer’s notebooks or other place where students have their drafts stored
2. Chart paper and marker
3. [Peer Checklist for Revising-](http://teachingvision.org/resource/peercheckrevise.pdf)
<http://teachingvision.org/resource/peercheckrevise.pdf> (PDF)
4. [The Judging Panel- Having Individuals Critique Your Writing-](http://teachingvision.org/resources/judgingpanel.pdf)
<http://teachingvision.org/resources/judgingpanel.pdf> (PDF)

SET UP AND PREPARE

1. Make copies of [Peer Checklist for Revising-](http://teachingvision.org/resource/peercheckrevise.pdf)
<http://teachingvision.org/resource/peercheckrevise.pdf> (PDF) for each student.
2. Make copies of [The Judging Panel- Having Individuals Critique Your Writing-](http://teachingvision.org/resources/judgingpanel.pdf)
<http://teachingvision.org/resources/judgingpanel.pdf> (PDF) for each student.
3. Get in the Mindset- Watch the video clip featuring Scholastic professional author Janet Angelillo- “Revision is Not Punishment”-
<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/media.jsp?id=174>.
4. Perhaps before you hand out the judging panel handout, make a copy of each student’s working draft so they are not lost.
5. Have an example of a peer critique from the judging panel handout to show your class.
6. Before inviting an “expert editor” to your classroom, watch this video clip featuring Scholastic professional author Janet Angelillo- [Study the Greats to Discover Great Writing Strategies-](http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/media.jsp?id=176)
<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/media.jsp?id=176>.
7. Before telling the students they have to find others to judge their stories, perhaps speak to teachers and other staff members who are willing to serve as mentors. Tell them your expectations, that you expect them to point out

the positives of the students' writing. (This is especially helpful for students who do not have the support from their families or are not sure on who to ask.)

8. Find someone from your school or community to be an "expert editor" for your students.
9. Make a copy of each student's draft for your "expert editor".

DIRECTIONS

Part One: *What Revision Is... and Is Not*

Step 1: Using chart paper, write the heading at the top- "What is revision?" Tell students to take notes during this time about what revision is and what it is not.

<p>What revision IS</p> <p><u><i>Revision is looking at your story through a detective's eyes.</i></u> (You analyze the threads of your story and see if they tie together.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teacher- or peer-directed questions that guide in improving a story -Improving specific areas of your story -Focusing on the positive parts in your writing -Looking at "bits" of your writing and seeing why they are important to your story -Working for the goal of publication 	<p>What revision IS NOT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Forced time where you have to "look over and change" your work -Completely transforming your writing -Relying on the thoughts of other people to help you with your story -Focusing on just the parts you don't like about your story
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Step 2: Ask students what they feel are the strongest parts of their stories:

- Is there a character who sticks out more than the others?
- Is there a character who shows promise for driving the story, yet you haven't developed him or her as much as you could have yet?
- Which event in your story do you feel is the most important to the plot?
- Is there an event that you could add more description?
- Where did you use vivid (Million Dollar) words?
- Are there any areas where you used an ordinary word that you could replace with a more vivid word?
- What do you feel was the funniest part of your story?
- What do you feel was the most unique part of your story?
- Does your story have an antagonist and protagonist? How did you develop each of those characters?
- Do you feel you gave your characters a name that was appropriate with their personalities and actions?

Part Two: Private Investigators

Step 3: Tell your students that they are going to be one another's private investigator. Students will work in pairs to focus on the positives of one

another's stories. Have students pair up with someone in which they can work comfortably. (In some classrooms, writing partners have already been established.)

Step 4: Hand out [Peer Checklist for Revising-
http://teachingvision.org/resource/peercheckrevise.pdf](http://teachingvision.org/resource/peercheckrevise.pdf) (PDF) to each student.

Step 5: Ask one student who is willing to volunteer to come up to the front of the classroom with his or her draft. (You may notify him or her the day before to make sure he or she is comfortable with discussing his or her story.) Act as the student's "peer", evaluating the story by the steps on the handout. Read excerpts of the story and model think-aloud strategies as the two of you go through the steps of the sheet. Model what an encourager looks like to the class, and be specific with your praise. (Example- Michael, I like how you developed the character of Elivitra by how you described the way he demonstrates his anger and how you described how others fear him.)

Step 6: Encourage your students to begin working together for an overall time for about twenty minutes. Circulate around the classroom, stopping every once in a while to offer specific praise to the groups. You can also stop the class for a moment and direct their attention to pairs of students who are being particularly encouraging and are on-task as long as it does not interrupt the other students.

Part Three: Taking it a Step Farther

Step 7: After the students work together in evaluating one another, have them put their peer evaluation sheets in the convenient place where they have stored their drafts.

Step 8: Ask students what they particularly liked about their peers' writing. (By now, your class should be aware of what each student has written to an extent.)

Step 9: Hand out [The Judging Panel- Having Individuals Critique Your Writing-
http://teachingvision.org/resources/judgingpanel.pdf](http://teachingvision.org/resources/judgingpanel.pdf) (PDF).

Step 10: Explain to your students that they will be going to three other people to have their writing critiqued. They will be taking their writing to family members, fellow teachers, peers, and other people of their choice to have those people tell them what impressed them most. Show your students an example of a critique, whether you made it up yourself or have a sheet copied from a former student.

Part Four: The Expert Editor

Step 11: The following day or later that week, invite your "expert editor" to come to your classroom. This person should be enthusiastic about writing (at our school, we have a published author who sponsors a fifth grade writing

club). (Perhaps you can locate a teacher at your school who enjoys writing stories or a published author from your community.)

Step 12: Provide copies of each story for your “expert editor”. Have your “expert editor” write each student a short note of encouragement and possibly make grammatical corrections or suggestions on the copied sheet for your students’ reference.

With the advice of peers, families, other teachers, and the expert editor, students should be able to feel positive about revising their work.

SUPPORTING ALL LEARNERS

Students should be encouraged to work at their own pace. If a student is still working on his or her draft during this time, do not urge him or her to rush ahead to be with those working at a faster pace. In addition, students’ confidence increases with the encouragement of peers.

ASSESS STUDENTS

Once the students are done with their drafts and they feel they are ready for the publishing stage, use these expectations to see if you are ready for them to move forward:

- Provided vivid description for a number of events that correlated with the main idea of the story
- Described personalities, physical attributes, and motives of characters
- Includes transitions that connect the events of the story together
- Has edited grammatical aspects of the story- sentences flow naturally, capitalization and other punctuation is precise

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Students have completed a peer editing sheet.
2. Students have gone to three “mentors” and have their opinions written down about their stories.
3. Students have used the advice of others and personal intention to improve their drafts for publication.

HOME CONNECTION

Students are encouraged to get advice from family members with [The Judging Panel- Having Individuals Critique Your Writing- <http://teachingvision.org/resources/judgingpanel.pdf>](http://teachingvision.org/resources/judgingpanel.pdf) (PDF).

EVALUATE THE LESSON

- Did students find parts of their stories that personally impressed them?
- Were your students on-task when working together on the peer editing sheet?
- Were students encouraging when evaluating one another’s stories?
- Did you provide ample modeling for the class on how to complete the peer editing sheet?
- Did students approach the process of revision in a positive manner?

