

Improving Writing through Revision



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Introduction

All writers revise. In fact, writers are constantly revising. They revise their initial ideas, their first drafts, each time they read their subsequent drafts, and revise as they proofread.

Since revising is such an important part of the writing process and we ask students to revise individually and with peers, it is important that we give students specific tools to use as they learn to revise.

Overview

Improving Writing through Revision offers a simple teaching method that teachers can implement immediately in their classrooms to improve their students' writing and revision skills. Specific lessons are included in this manual, along with supporting materials.

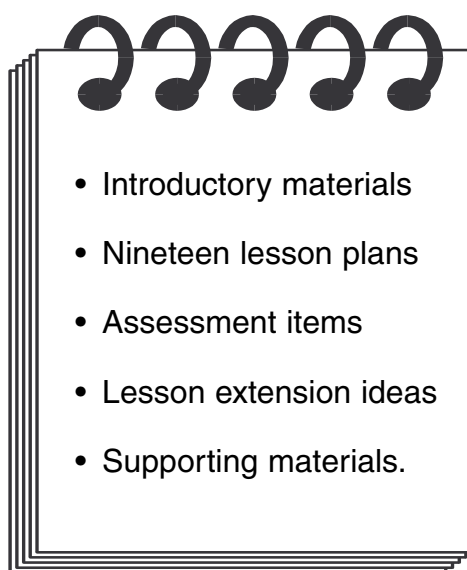
Method

Improving Writing through Revision builds skills throughout the year by adding a new skill each time the students reach the revision stage of the writing process. During the revision stage, the teacher introduces and models a skill, offers students an opportunity to apply the skill, reviews previous skills, helps students implement revision skills, asks students to reflect upon the revision process, and assesses students' understanding of the new skill.

Implementation

Improving Writing through Revision can be started at any point during the year and can be used immediately in any subject area where writing occurs.

Improving Writing through Revision can be used in several ways. Teachers can follow the lessons in the order they are presented in the book, present the lessons in a different order, use only selected lessons, or use only the method introduced in the book with individualised lessons. Included in *Improving Writing through Revision* are:



Getting started

This book is meant to be used in conjunction with the writing process. The basic steps of the writing process are prewriting, creating a rough draft, revising, editing and proofreading, creating a final draft and publishing.

Upon reaching the revision stage of the writing process, introduce *Improving Writing through Revision* to your students. Explain the importance of the revision process and the method you will be using to help your students become experts in the revision process.

Each time your students have an opportunity to revise, you will be **introducing** and **modelling** a skill, having your students **apply** the new skill, **reviewing** and helping your students **implement** all of their revision skills, asking students to **reflect** upon the revision process, and **assessing** their usage of the new skill.







Students will keep their own growing list of revision strategies in binders and whenever they come to the revision process, in any class, they can pull out their Revision tools to help guide them. (See materials, page 56.)

Since it is very time consuming to lead students through large writing assignments frequently, try to create opportunities for your students to revise their work. After students have written any multi-sentence response, present a new revision tool and have students practise revising their work.

Many of the pages in the supporting materials section are designed to be discussion guides and are therefore most effectively used as overheads. However, teachers who do not use overhead projectors can easily use the materials as handouts instead. Teachers should decide when it would be appropriate for their students to receive actual handouts, or when their students can use their own paper. Large chart paper or the board can also be utilised while completing the lessons.

A guide to the icons in this book

The lesson plans in this book may include sample passages, skill checks, sample student responses, sample think-alouds, sample revisions, or activities. The text appears in boxes with icons in the upper-right corner. Each has its own icon to make it easier to identify.

	Sample passages		Sample Think-Alouds
	Skill checks		Sample revisions
	Sample student responses		Activities

Writing standards

- **Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process.**

Analyses and clarifies meaning: *Lesson Fourteen*

Makes structural and syntactical changes: *Lesson Three, Lesson Six, Lesson Sixteen*

Uses an organisation scheme: *Lesson Nine, Lesson Ten, Lesson Nineteen*

Uses sensory words and figurative language: *Lesson Five, Lesson Eleven, Lesson Thirteen*

Rethinks and rewrites for different audiences and purposes: *Lesson One, Lesson Nine, Lesson Ten, Lesson Eighteen*

Checks for a consistent point of view: *Lesson Four, Lesson Seventeen*

Checks for transitions between paragraphs: *Lesson Fifteen*

Evaluates own and others' writing: *All lessons*

Uses style and structure appropriate for specific audiences: *Lesson Eight, Lesson Nine.*

- **Demonstrates competence in the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.**

Uses descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas: *Lesson Five, Lesson Seven, Lesson Eleven, Lesson Twelve, Lesson Thirteen, Lesson Seventeen*

Uses paragraph form in writing: *Lesson Nine*

Uses a variety of sentence structures to express expanded ideas: *Lesson Two, Lesson Six, Lesson Sixteen*

Uses some explicit transitional devices: *Lesson Fifteen.*

- **Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions.**

Gathers and uses information for research purposes: *Lesson Fourteen*

Uses simple and compound sentences in written compositions: *Lesson Six*

Uses adjectives in written compositions: *Lesson Five*

Uses adverbs in written compositions: *Lesson Five*

Uses standard format in written compositions: *Lesson Nine.*

Improving writing through revision: An introductory lesson

Objective

Students will understand the importance of revision as part of the writing process and examine the *Improving Writing through Revision* method of learning to revise.

Materials needed

- Revision tools (overhead, page 56)
- Personal reflection guide (overhead, page 57)
- Personal reflection and Skill check (overhead, page 58).

Build a new skill

Introduce

1. Introduce or review the writing process. When authors write, they **prewrite**, create a **rough draft**, **revise**, **edit** and **proofread**, create a **final draft**, and attempt to publish their work in some way. Remind students that the writing process is not linear. Authors use these steps in a variety of ways as they write. For example, an author might begin to revise a rough draft, realise there is not enough information, prewrite to gather new ideas, revise the rough draft again, edit, begin the final draft and decide that even more revisions need to occur. **Ask students to share successes that they've had with different parts of the writing process.**
2. Explain that learning to use each stage of the writing process will improve their writing. Then, explain that you will be giving students specific tools, or skills, that they can use during the revision stages of their writing. These are tools that students will be able to use whenever they write, in or out of school, this year or in the future. Explain that revising is a critical part of the writing process. It is the revising step that turns a good piece of writing into an excellent piece of writing. For example, during the revision part of the writing process, details are added that make characters and places come alive in readers' minds, dialogue is polished, repetitive words are deleted and unclear comments are rewritten so that they become clearer. While authors struggle to get their ideas down during the rough draft, the revision stage allows authors to polish their work and focus on the detail of their writing.
3. Describe the method that you will use each time you introduce new tools for revision to the students.
 - A. Explain that you will begin by **introducing** and **modelling** a skill and having your students **apply** the new skill.
 - B. Display Revision tools (overhead, page 56) to the students. Explain that each time you introduce a new skill in class, students will use this handout to keep their own lists of the tools that you've taught. Whenever students revise their writing, they can reference this handout to help guide them.
 - C. Explain that you will **review** and help your students **implement** all of their revision skills.
 - D. Display Personal reflection guide (overhead, page 57). Explain that after the students have had time to apply their revision skills, they will **reflect** upon the revision process. Students may use these sentence starters to help them with their reflections, or they may compose their own reflections.
 - E. Finally, clarify that you will **assess** students' usage of the new skill in the form of a Skill check.
4. Continue on to your first revision lesson.

Say 'said' sixty ways

Objective

Students will descriptively state how a character intends to deliver dialogue.

Materials needed

- Revision tools (overhead and handout, page 56)
- Say "said" sixty ways (Sample passages A and B) (overhead and handout, pages 59–60)
- Personal reflection guide (overhead or handout, page 57)
- Lesson Two Skill check (overhead or handout, page 77)
- Personal reflection and Skill check (handout, page 58).

Build a new skill

Introduce

1. Explain to students that writers try to create their characters so that they seem like real people. Ask: **What are different ways that an author might try to make a character seem real?**
Answers will vary. For example, to make a character seem real, authors might describe the appearance of a character, give the character a name or an age, or have the character act in realistic ways.
2. Point out to students that one way authors try to make characters seem real is to give their characters voices. To do this, authors give characters dialogue. However, having characters 'say' their lines becomes boring. Authors can make dialogue more interesting and more realistic by describing how characters deliver their lines.
3. Explain to the students that when they select a word to replace the word 'said', they might be changing the meaning of the text. For example, there is a large difference in meaning between the word 'said' and the word 'screamed'.

Model

1. Display or distribute sample passages A and B to the students. Read them aloud.

Sample passage A

'What do you want to do today?' said Sam.
'I don't know. Maybe we can go rollerblading in the park', said Neil.
'I hate rollerblading', said Sam.
'Okay, so what do you want to do today?' said Neil.



Sample passage B

'What do you want to do today?' asked Sam.
'I don't know. Maybe we can go rollerblading in the park', suggested Neil.
'I hate rollerblading', muttered Sam.
'Okay, so what do you want to do today?' retorted Neil.

