

Writing Workshop Sample Lesson: Editing & Revision

Learning Targets:

- Edit writing for correct grammar, **capitalization**, **punctuation**, spelling, sentence structure, and **paragraphing**.
- Use and punctuate correctly varied sentence structures (to include conjunctions and transitions words).
- Revise writing for clarity of content, word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Differentiation:

- Because every student has a different level of mastery of the conventions of editing, I use individual lists for students to track the skills they are learning. We start out with a few common rules (based on my observations in pre-assessment), then each time a student submits a piece, I teach a new rule to that student based on observed errors in his or her piece. That then becomes a skill he or she is responsible for editing for in the future.
- I also choose editing lessons for the whole class or small groups based on SOLs and (especially) observed needs.
- Based on formative assessments, I group students as necessary for re-teaching.
- As discussed below, I use writing conferences to meet students where they are in terms of revision.

Pre-assessment:

- Students wrote a short essay the first day of class, and I observed that virtually all follow expected conventions of capitalization and paragraphing. As I expected, however, I noticed frequent errors in sentence combining, and there weren't any students who correctly used semicolons. As this is an important skill in varying sentence structures, I selected it as a skill to teach the whole group. Based on pre-assessment of these students and my prior knowledge of 8th graders in general, it should be appropriately challenging, while also being developmentally appropriate for 8th grade learners.

Whole class lesson:

- Organizing question: How do we use conventions to help readers understand our writing?
- Introduce use of editing list & checklist
- Instruct briefly in each of three skills:
 - Correct obvious errors (suggest capitalization, end punctuation, & editing as obvious errors; point out that what is “obvious” to one person is not “obvious” to another—each student is to correct anything he or she notices in the writing);
 - Capitalize the first, last, and all important words in a title;
 - Use a semicolon (not just a comma) to divide two complete thoughts.
- Have students add semicolons to three sample sentences. Circulate to assist.
- Do a thinkaloud demonstrating where to put the semicolons.
- Quick formative assessment (thumbs up/ thumbs down); how do kids feel about how they understand?
- Move on if appropriate (mostly thumbs up/ sideways). In this lesson it was appropriate to move on in every class.
- Written formative assessment to check for understanding. Students complete it during writing workshop time, when each is working on his or her writing. Normally I confer with students about their writing; had I had lots of thumbs down/ sideways, I would’ve done more independent assistance during this time.
 - During writing conferences, I am observing what students have mastered & then giving a teaching point—what he or she should do with this piece and in future pieces. This is based on two different things—first, where students are in their writing and the logical next developmental step; and second, our instructional focus area. Right now, because it’s so early in the year, the focus area is simply that revision is changing (not correcting) the writing. In about two weeks, we will begin looking at how writers create mood, tone, and voice, so my teaching point will address those areas.

Formative Assessment/ Reinstruction:

- I use writing conferences (described above) to formatively assess students’ understanding of revision. Instruction is done on a one-on-one basis.
- Use Learning Progression Scale to assess written formative assessment.
- Students below a three (very few): Individual appointments to re-teach in resource or Writing Workshop.
- The formative assessment revealed that the majority of my students are at a 3 level on this learning progression scale (as I anticipated based on my knowledge of developmental skills in editing). As a result, I will reinstruct.
 - However, many students are also at a level 4. Instead of having them sit through reinstruction, I’m putting together a “next step” learning assignment on semicolons (learning how to use semicolons in lists).

- Note: These are flexible, not permanent groups. I expect that later when I do reinstruction on different topics, the students in the group will change. Being able to use a semicolon does not mean, for example, that a student can evaluate the validity of websites when we do research.
- Part 1 of lesson:
 - Group 1: Reinstruction on Semicolons
 - Group 2: Independent work on semicolons (to include formative assessment), then begin writing workshop. I start this group with independent work because they've demonstrated understanding & a potential to learn/ apply this skill on their own.
- Part 2 of lesson
 - Group 1: Formative assessment, then writing workshop
 - Group 2: Check in with the group to do instruction as necessary on the new skill.
- Formative assessment & reinstruction continues as necessary.

Summative Assessment:

- After instruction, students are submitting a piece of writing to demonstrate their ability to revise, edit, and reflect on their revisions.
- Each student will also be given and taught a new editing convention based on his or her own demonstrated needs.
- I may change my summative rubric slightly to reflect what I learn about students as I assess them formatively.
- Part of the summative assessment is a reflection on the writing process/ revision process. There is an essay option and a short answer option. I encourage all students to complete the essay, but include the short answer as an option for students who are having a hard time deciding what to include and how to organize it. The content required is the same.