



Revising Narrative Writing

By: Lori McDonald
Elementary school teacher; Ed.D. in School Leadership/Administration

Language Arts
Grades 6-8



Introduction

This is a lesson designed to guide students through the process of revising narrative texts after writing a first draft. Students do not naturally know how to revise and improve their own writing until they have been taught the process. This engaging lesson will provide that opportunity and can be adapted for use after any narrative assignment.

Learning Objectives

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3](#)

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Materials Needed

- Post-it notes
- Highlighters
- Copies of grade-level exemplar narratives

Procedure

Warm up – Prepare two examples of a narrative story in advance on the same topic, making sure that one example is very basic and lacking details and descriptions. Also, make sure that example has several grammatical errors as well. The other example should be much better, including lots of details, descriptions, and little to no grammatical errors. Display and read the not-so-good example first. Ask students for ways they think it could have been made better. Then, display and read the improved example. Have students talk about how it was improved in the second version, naming specific examples that can be highlighted or underlined by the teacher on the displayed version.

1. Give students a copy of an anonymous, grade-level, exemplar narrative. All students should have a copy of the same example. Students should be given a few minutes to read over the narrative independently. As they read, they are to highlight details and descriptions that make the writing excellent.
2. Then, students will turn to a partner or their small group and share/discuss what they highlighted and why they thought those parts were good.

Continued on page 2



Revising Narrative Writing

By: Lori McDonald
Elementary school teacher; Ed.D. in School Leadership/Administration

Language Arts
Grades 6-8



Continued from page 1

3. Next, students will be given the opportunity to review their first draft. They will also highlight areas that they feel are strong.
4. Students should then switch papers with their writing partner. The writing partner will make suggestions, using post-it notes, on ways the writing can be improved. The focus should be on better details and descriptions, eliminating off-topic segments, and correcting grammatical errors.
5. Students should then be given independent work time during which they will look for ways to improve their writing, taking into consideration their partner's suggestions. The second draft that they complete during this time should include at least 10 changes from the first draft.

Evaluation

Since the focus of this lesson is on learning how to revise, this formative evaluation will provide an opportunity for the teacher to see how keen the students' proofreading skills are. Students should be given a paragraph or short narrative writing with errors, off-topic segments, and a serious lack of detail and description. (This paragraph or short narrative should be a scenario in which students would feel familiar and comfortable adding details and descriptions.) Students should mark all areas that need revision and add details and descriptions so that the narrative would receive a 4 if graded on the rubric below.



Revising Narrative Writing

By: Lori McDonald
Elementary school teacher; Ed.D. in School Leadership/Administration

Language Arts
Grades 6-8



Categories	4	3	2	1
Story Elements	Setting and characters are clearly established and well-developed throughout the story.	Setting and characters are established and included throughout the story.	Setting and characters are somewhat established but not well-developed throughout the story.	Setting and characters are not clearly established.
Events	5 or more events are included and with logical sequencing.	4 events are included and with logical sequencing.	2 or 3 events are included.	There is only one event in the story.
Notable Details and Descriptions	5 or more details or descriptions are included.	4 details or descriptions are included.	2 or 3 details or descriptions are included.	There is only one or no detail or description included in the story.
Ending	Ending is very clear, reflective, and memorable.	Ending is clear and memorable.	Ending is unclear.	Ending is not obvious or not included.
Grammar	Fewer than 3 grammatical errors.	4-6 grammatical errors.	7-9 grammatical errors.	10+ grammatical errors.