

## What Do Writers Do?

### Purpose

Students will review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning and clarity.

### Materials

*For the teacher:* transparency or photocopy of an author's draft with a large number of editing markings

*For the students:* paper, pencils, copies of Black Line Masters (BLMs) *Re-visiting* and *Editing Checklist*

### Activity

#### A. Pre-Activity Discussion

1. Introduce the concept of editing to your class. Ask students if they know what an editor of a magazine does.
2. Explain that revising writing does not necessarily mean correcting small parts of it. Tell students that the beginning stage of revising their work is like having a dialogue with themselves.
3. Show a picture of an author's draft. Explain to the class that most authors change whole parts of stories for various reasons: in order to bring out a theme that was running through a story, to make the wording or the plot line clearer, to introduce a new character or take out an old one. Emphasize that great authors often revise their stories many times and for them this is part of the game, activity, and joy of "re-visiting" a story to make it better.

#### B. Write the Draft

1. Write on the chalkboard a series of story situations. Use the following or make up your own:
  - An unsuspecting person finds a stone staircase in a deserted field. She walks down the staircase and suddenly hears sounds. She has traveled back in time!
  - Someone is staring through a plate glass window at something he or she desires. (What is it? Who is he/she? What happens next?)
  - A boy wins a cheap basketball key chain at a fair. The next week he discovers that he is playing better than he ever has. Unfortunately, when he goes to his locker at the end of the week, both his keys and key chain are missing. (Who is the boy? What does he think about the key chain? Who has taken the keys?)

(continued)

### EXTENDING THE ACTIVITY



Assign class members different roles for the publication of your magazine (editor, designers, assemblers, distributors) and have them work together to produce it.

### connecting across the curriculum



#### Science/ Social Studies

Have students follow a similar process to create a magazine from a period of history or on a topic in science. Discuss how revising nonfiction might be different from revising fiction.

### Standards Link 4.4.11

**Activity (continued)** 

---

2. Give students time to write a part of a story, longer than one page, based on their choice of topic. Encourage students to draw pictures, make plot diagrams, or just start writing their ideas down. Also encourage students to discuss their ideas with one another if they choose to do so. (Have them be careful not to duplicate ideas.)

**C. Revise Your Writing**

1. Separate the class into groups of two, and explain to students that they will read their stories to each other. Tell students that both the partner and the reader should listen to how the story “sounds.”
2. Distribute the BLM *Re-visiting* to students. Have them discuss the ways in which their stories could be improved and write their answers in the spaces provided. Emphasize that writing down a lot of ideas does not mean that the story is bad. Also explain that there are very few pieces of writing that could not be reshaped or rewritten.

**D. You are the Editor**


1. Explain that you will be making a class magazine of students’ stories.
2. Tell students that you are at the stage that most people think of as revision, but that this is only a small part of revising.
3. Distribute the BLM *Editing Checklist*.
4. Have students trade papers and correct grammar, spelling, and coherence. (You should go over the papers as well before publication.)
5. Create and publish your class story magazine.


**Questions for Review** 


---


**Basic Concepts and Processes**

When students are finished with the activity, assess their knowledge by asking the following questions:

 What is revision?

 When can you start revising a story?

 If I have some good story ideas and I’ve written them down on paper, what would you advise me to do next?

 When do you check for grammar and spelling errors?

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Re-visiting

Directions: Read over your story and think about the following items. Write new ideas in the spaces provided.

Can my reader see the setting for my story?  
What are some vivid descriptive words I can add?

---

---

---

---

---

---

Do my characters seem "real?"  
What are some more words or actions I can use to show their personalities?

---

---

---

---

---

---

Does my story have a problem and a solution?  
How can I make my plot clearer to my reader?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

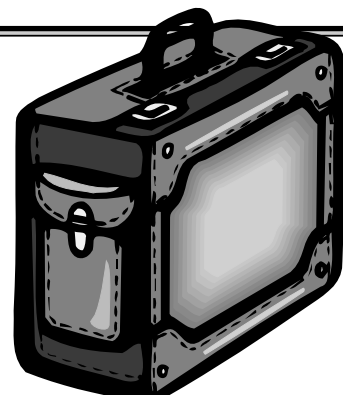
Does my story have a satisfying ending?  
How can I make it better?

---

---

---

---



# Re-visiting

## Teacher Directions

---

When students have finished with their stories, distribute a copy of the BLM *Re-visiting* to each student.

Have students read their stories aloud to one another and write their ideas for revision on the BLM. Repeat this part of the editing process if desired.

## Answer Key

---

Not applicable.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## Editing Checklist

**Directions:** Read the questions below and mark the errors that you notice. After you have finished a question, check the line next to it.

Do all individual sentences make sense? \_\_\_\_\_

Do subjects and verbs agree? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there misspellings? \_\_\_\_\_

Are words capitalized correctly? \_\_\_\_\_

Are run-on sentences and sentence fragments corrected? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you make an outline of the story? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Not finding anything?**

**Here are some tips on how to be a star editor!**

**1. Read slowly.**

**2. Focus on each word  
(point to words with a  
pencil if this helps).**

**3. Watch for patterns  
(the same word may be  
misspelled a number  
of times).**



# Editing Checklist

## Teacher Directions

---

When students have revised their stories and are ready for the last stage of the revision process, distribute the BLM *Editing Checklist*.

Have students trade papers and mark them with the corrections called for on the BLM. Direct students to explain their corrections to each other.

Have students take their own papers back and make final corrections. Publish the corrected stories in a class magazine.

## Answer Key

---

Not applicable.