

RFE Language Arts Bulletin

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 MODEL

 STAR STRATEGY

 WEBSITE:
<http://www.storylineonline.net/>

*On-line video streaming of celebrities reading picture books



If you don't have the time to read, you don't have the time or the tools to write.

~Stephen King~

MODEL: It's easy to assign writing, but not as easy to facilitate. Teaching writing requires dedication and stamina, especially when it comes to revision. If you look at the etymology of the word revise, it simply means to see (*vise*) again (*re*). For many writers- especially our students- this part of the writing process can be extremely challenging. One of the best ways for our students to gain confidence in this critical part of the writing process is to see revision modeled. To become an effective facilitator of writing, we need to model our own piece of writing for our students.

For many of us, this may sound scary; however, the process you immerse your students in will be well worth the risk. Students will begin to *see* that good writing requires revision...even by their teacher. As adults, *we* know the magic happens during revision. It is here that we closely examine and scrutinize our thinking on the page to see how the reader will interpret it. We play with the text. This is how we get a decent piece of writing. Unfortunately, our students rarely see this crucial step- under the misconception that adult writing is a one time draft masterpiece. Kelly Gallagher said it best, "It's like the Wizard of Oz. Pull back the curtain and let the students see the real thinking and processing behind it!"

The first step is to write a short, light-hearted piece to work with (a paragraph is plenty). To make this an authentic experience for your students (and yourself), do not revise the piece beforehand. Make an overhead of your writing and then read it aloud in front of the class. As you hear/see places for revision, make your thinking visible by sharing these thoughts orally, be specific. For example, if you decide to reword something, tell your students exactly which words you want to revise and why. Think aloud and share all revision ideas in your head...even ones you will not carry out and change your mind on. Don't be afraid to word-smith out loud. After revising is completed, use the STAR strategy (below) to "label" the type of revisions made. Discuss the improved quality of the piece vs. the initial first draft.

STAR: STAR is an acronym for the four revision/craft techniques that writers can utilize to move their paper to a more developed sounding piece: **S**=substitute words, **T**=take stuff out, **A**=add stuff, **R**=re-arrange. After making revisions, students can analyze each alteration by designating the appropriate STAR letter to the type of revision made. For example, deleting a word would be labeled "T", while drawing an arrow to move a sentence would be "R". This strategy helps students understand the complexity of revision and increases their awareness of the choices they have available to them in the revision process. "S" and "T" are much often at the surface level, while "A" and "R" tend to be more in-depth revisions.

*Note: These 4 revision/craft techniques align with the revising traits of good writing.

STAR Strategy taken from Kelly Gallagher's book,
Teaching Adolescent Writers (2006)

Substitute

Take stuff out

Add stuff

Re-arrange

S (Substituting)	T (Take things out)	A (Add)	R (Re-arrange)
Replace: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overused words• Weak verbs with strong verbs• Weak adjectives with strong adjectives• Common nouns with proper nouns• "dead" words	Take out: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unnecessary repetitions• Unimportant or irrelevant information• Parts that might belong in another place	Add: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Detail• Description• New information• Figurative language• Development to clarify meaning• To expand ideas	Re-arrange: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The sequence• To produce a desired effect• For a more logical order

Taken from Kelly Gallagher's book, *Teaching Adolescent Writers* (2007)