

Editing Strategies to Share with Your Students

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“Marking errors is most effective when it is used to help students develop their own editing strategies.” – Jordan Ruyle (ruyle@berkeley.edu)

- a. Read backwards (starting at the beginning of each sentence!) or—even better—hit a hard return between sentences to remove sentences from their context in the paragraph. Then treat the sentences as grammar exercises (e.g., circling verbs to check for verb tense or subject-verb agreement and underlining nouns to check for article usage).
- b. Read multiple times, looking only for *one kind of* language problem each time.
- c. Mark the paper in some way so that language stands out: Underline or highlight all the verbs. Draw arrows from pronouns to their antecedents. Bracket subject-verb sets to check structure and punctuation.
- d. Use the ‘Find’ function to search for repeated errors (e.g., a non-count noun repeatedly pluralized or a missing comma before “and” in a compound sentence).
- e. Give the paper a rest after revising and before editing.
- f. Read the paper out loud to yourself – or a partner. The partner should have a pencil and note whenever something sounds problematic.
- g. Have a partner read the paper out loud. If the partner stumbles or misreads something, that’s a cue to take a look.
- h. Be very suspicious--if you aren’t sure that it’s right, look it up or ask a friend or tutor.

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