



## Editing Tips for Students and Writing Activity Leaders

**What to do:** Use the following chart to provide editing tips and examples for students based on their grade level. Try using an “Editing Tip of the Week” to help students target a specific skill during writing workshops or as a mini-lesson during revision conferences.

**Why it matters:** Writing is a daunting task for many students, and editing can present even more of a challenge. Many students choose to write a minimal amount with the mindset of “The less I write, the less I have to correct.” Having targeted areas for editing increases mastery, decreases frustration, and creates achievable goals.

Grades K-2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't forget to capitalize the first word of the sentence.</li> <li>Endings matter! Use end marks (periods, question marks, and exclamation points) correctly.</li> <li>More than one? Use singular and plural nouns correctly (e.g., tooth vs. teeth).</li> <li>Use contractions (e.g., won't, can't, I'm) correctly.</li> <li>Let's agree to have subject-verb agreement (e.g., he runs, they run).</li> <li>Be complete! Use complete sentences in writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Past, present, or future tense? Stay consistent!</li> <li>Use future tense correctly.</li> <li>Some words sound alike, but they're different! Use the right homophone (e.g., it's vs. its, your vs. you're, their vs. there).</li> <li>Use prepositions correctly (e.g., in the past, from one to another).</li> <li>And or but: Use conjunctions logically (e.g., I like dogs but am allergic to them).</li> <li>Learn to use the apostrophe for possessive nouns (e.g., the dog's house, the dogs' houses).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be careful about homophones — words that sound the same (e.g., sale and sail).</li> <li>Learn how to use a semicolon between two independent clauses (e.g., I studied late into the night; thus I passed the test).</li> <li>Truly, really, wonderfully: Use adverbs correctly!</li> <li>Use comparative and superlative adjectives correctly (e.g., The ruby is <u>harder</u> than the emerald. The diamond is the <u>hardest</u> gem).</li> <li>Whether I, you, we, he, or she: Maintain consistent point of view (e.g., first-, second-, or third-person subject).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid dangling modifiers like the one in this sentence: <i>After standing in line for hours, the tickets were sold out.</i></li> <li>Guess who matters? Use <i>who</i> (subject) vs. <i>whom</i> (object) correctly.</li> <li>Don't get confused! Use commonly confused words correctly (e.g., accept vs. except, can vs. may).</li> <li>Stay active! Use active voice except when passive voice is appropriate.</li> <li>Get it straight! Use parallel construction in clauses. The last clause in this sentence is missing a parallel verb before “dogs”: On vacation I love to sleep late, lie in the sun, and dogs on the beach.</li> </ul>



## The Vocabulary of Grammar: Tips for Activity Leaders

If you select an “Editing Tip of the Week,” take advantage of the opportunity to help students learn the vocabulary of grammar — words they may encounter in school but not on the playground. Using these words in the context of writing activities and explaining what they mean can be especially helpful to English learners. Use this vocabulary cheat sheet to refresh your knowledge and to explain these terms in a simple way.

**Active voice** — Puts the doer before the doer’s action: “Lynn told him,” not “He was told by Lynn” or — even less clear — “He was told.”

**Adjective** — A word that describes a person, place, or thing: “*red* doors,” “*brave* leader,” “the park was *crowded*.”

**Adverb** — A word that describes a verb: “He walked *slowly*,” “*Luckily*, he caught himself,” “They *seldom* spoke.”

**Apostrophe** — A curly mark before an *s* that shows ownership (*Natalie’s*) or stands in for missing letters in a contraction (*don’t*).

**Clause** — A group of words that has a doer (a subject) and an action (a verb). A clause may be an incomplete sentence (“the straw that broke the camel’s back”) or a complete sentence (“That was the straw that broke the camel’s back”). Clauses that are complete sentences are called *independent clauses*.

**Comparative adjective** — A word that helps you understand how one thing compares to another. Generally formed by adding *er* at the end of the word or *more* before the word: *bigger*, *more excited*.

**Conjunction** — A word that connects nouns, phrases, or clauses: *and*, *or*, *but*, *so*.

**Contraction** — Two words jammed together with an apostrophe standing in for the letters that got crowded out: *let’s* is a contraction that means “let us.”

**Homophone** — A word that sounds the same as another word but is spelled differently (*coarse* vs. *course*).

**Parallel construction** — Using similar word form and order for related clauses (such as items in a list): “I packed up, waited for the bell, and dashed out the door” not “I packed up, waited for the bell, and *dash* out the door” nor “I packed up, waited for the bell, and *it was time to go*.”

**Passive voice** — Puts the doer after the doer’s action, or omits the doer entirely, which can lead to wordiness or confusion (“He was told by Lynn,” “He was told”); uses a “to be” verb (e.g., *be*, *been*, *is*, *was*) followed by a past tense verb (e.g., *told*).

**Plural noun** — A person, place, or thing of which there is more than one. Usually a plural noun ends in *s* (*students*) or *es* (*beaches*), but not always (*children*).

**Point of view** — The perspective from which a story is told — who’s talking to whom? One way to determine point of view is to look at what pronouns are used in the telling (e.g., *I*, *you*, *they*).

**Possessive noun** — A noun that has an apostrophe + the letter *s* (*girl’s*) added at the end to show ownership. Or, if the noun already ends in *s*, an apostrophe alone may show ownership (*girls’*, not *girls’s*).



**Preposition** — A word that marks the relationship between words in a sentence. It usually indicates location, time, or direction (e.g., *in*, *on*, *at*, *under*, and *over*).

**Semicolon** — A punctuation mark (;) used to join two closely related independent clauses in the same sentence: *She was late for class; that's why she missed the instructions.*

**Sentence** — A group of words that contains enough information to stand alone as a statement, question, command, or exclamation. It typically includes a *subject* (a person, place, or thing that the sentence is about) and a *predicate* (a word or phrase that includes a verb and tells something about the subject): *You [subject] were so helpful yesterday [predicate].*

**Singular noun** — A person, place, or thing of which there is only one (*student*, *beach*, *curriculum*).

**Subject-verb agreement** — A grammatical rule stating that the subject (a singular or plural noun) and the verb in a sentence must agree in number (one or more than one). A singular subject requires a singular verb (“The *student arrives* right on time”), and a plural subject requires a plural verb (“The *students arrive* right on time”).

**Superlative adjective** — A word that indicates the highest degree of a characteristic in comparison to others. Generally formed by adding *est* at the end of the word or *most* before the word: *biggest*, *most excited*.

**Tense** — A grammatical indication of whether something already happened, is happening now, or will happen in the future; usually evident in the form that the verb takes in the sentence (“It *is* time for a snack,” “It *was* time for a snack,” “It *will be* time for a snack soon”).

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