

Using the Writing Checklist: A Guide for Teachers

Suggest to students that they staple the checklist (on page 160) into their science folders or another place where it will be easily accessible as a reference. Discuss with students each step in the checklist.

1. Prewriting: Students develop ideas for their writing using brainstorming techniques such as concept mapping. They think about ways to organize and plan their work.

2. Drafting: Each student writes a rough draft, getting down as many ideas as possible. Remind students that revising and editing come later; what is important in this stage is to include anything that might be important. Also, remind students that they will proofread and make spelling and grammatical corrections later, during the editing phase.

3. Revising: In groups of four to six, students take turns constructively critiquing one another's work.

- First, a student reads his work aloud and others in the group give a collective oral summary of what the student has written.
- Second, listeners discuss the strengths of the writing (or compliment the author on some aspect of the work).
- Next, listeners ask questions about any parts of the writing that are unclear.
- Then, listeners make constructive suggestions to improve the writing.
- Finally, authors revise their writing by adding, deleting, or rewriting. They review and reread their writing to make sure that it makes sense.

4. Editing: Students proofread their writing to correct errors in grammar and spelling. If students seem to need extra help, review some simple editing rules, such as those for capitalization and punctuation. Have students meet in pairs to check each other's editing.

5. Publishing: After students write the final draft, they might want to illustrate their work or otherwise enhance the text before others see it. In any case, the point of writing is to share ideas with others. Students can publish a class anthology or a science newsletter for their parents or other students.