

JACQUELINE JULES

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PENCIL TIPS WRITING WORKSHOP: Weekly posts from authors of children's books offering practical lessons, ideas, and advice for teachers. Blog includes links on where to publish student writing. My lessons posted at link under my name, left-hand column.

<http://penciltipswritingworkshop.blogspot.com/>

"Ultimately, the quality of a good piece of writing is determined by the amount of revision a writer is willing to do." —Marcia S. Freeman, *Teaching the Youngest Writers: A Practical Guide*.

TALK IT OVER: Conferences should simulate the work adult authors do with professional editors. All writers benefit from showing their work to others before publication. Good writing requires good thinking and the best way to develop an idea is to discuss it with other people.

REMEMBER YOUR READER: When students re-examine their writing with a reader in mind, they find new reasons to make changes. Writing for an audience is like performing for an audience. Students want others to enjoy their stories, just as they want an audience to enjoy a musical or dance concert. Thinking of the reader helps all writers explain things in better detail and remove confusing parts.

QUESTIONS TO INTERNALIZE: How big? Small? Can you compare it to something else? How did it look? Sound? Taste? Feel? Is this the right order of events? Can you tell me more about this? Can you leave this confusing part out? Can you vary word choice? Sentence structure?

WHAT IF? Stories make questions grow. Brainstorm ideas to create endings and/or more plausible plot lines.

DON'T LEAVE RED RIDING HOOD IN THE WOODS: Examine familiar fairy tales for beginning, middle, and end. Identify the story's problem. Discuss how unsatisfying Red Riding Hood's story would be if we left her in the woods with a T.B.C.

CONFERENCE CHECKLIST: Grammar and spelling errors? Incomplete thoughts? Confusing sentences? Best order of sentences? Enough details? Figurative language? Repetitious words or phrases? Satisfying ending?

REVISE FROM A COPY: Preserving the original provides freedom to make changes.

ELEMENTS OF FICTION: Beginning: Introduce characters, setting, and problem. Middle: Story builds with rising action to a turning point or crisis. Ending: Story shows the resolution of the problem with a satisfying ending. All stories need problems to solve.

PLANNING A PERSONAL NARRATIVE: Identify what you are writing about: A funny experience or a sad one? A lesson learned or problem solved? An opinion? Identify what you want your reader to feel: Sadness? Laughter? The desire to have the same experience? To accept your viewpoint? Identify the best order of story: Flashback with attention grabbing intro? Chronological?

EXTRA TIPS: Avoid lists. Identify and enhance the most dramatic part. Be sure piece has a conclusion. Examine your beginnings and endings. Do they mirror each other?

PARAPHRASING: Define words for the reader and yourself. Don't copy down a word you don't know. Use simpler words or different words for the same thing. Think about why a fact was stated. Is it different? Can you compare it to your life or something else you know? Avoid key phrases from original. Turn sentences around. Begin with the ending phrase.

USE IMAGES: As a pre-writing activity, have your students study the details of displayed pictures and discuss ways of describing them. Figurative language requires thought. Giving your students a little time to visualize the scenes they plan to write about will enliven their writing.

WRITING READALOUDS:

Author: A True Story by Helen Lester

The Best Story by Eileen Spinelli

Firetalking by Patricia Polacco (all the titles in the *Meet the Author* series)

Max's Words by Kate Banks

My Best Friend is as Sharp as a Pencil by Hanoch Piven

My Dog is as Smelly as Dirty Socks by Hanoch Piven

The Missing Golden Ticket and Splendiferous Secrets by Roald Dahl

The Plot Chickens by Mary Jane Auch

A Story with Pictures by Barbara Kanninen

S is for Story by Esther Hershenhorn

What do Authors Do? by Eileen Christelow