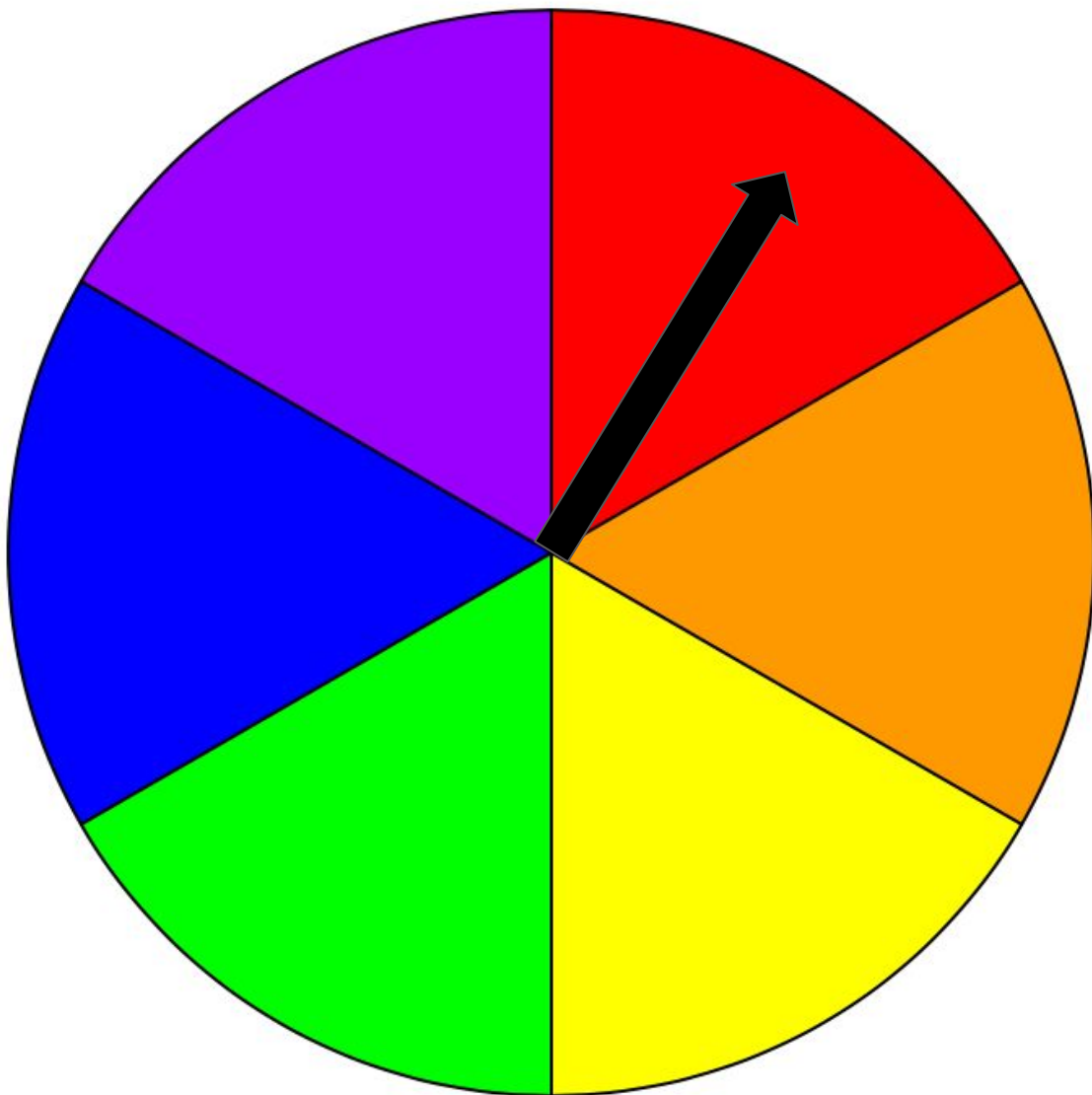


SPIN A GREAT STORY

For Grades 4-8

Are your students stuck in a writing slump? Do all their writing pieces sound exactly the same and lack any vivid details? Then it's time to gamify your narrative writing time with a simple spinner, a pencil, and a paperclip.



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Thank you!



Elizabeth Newmeyer@iTeach and iWrite

~ Suggestions for Use ~

As teachers, we know that good stories need lots of vivid details to help the reader picture the events and setting. But no matter how many times we've taught students about using sensory details or dialogue to *SHOW* not *TELL* the story, or to vary their sentence types, the stories always seem rushed and well, vague. This pack includes 6 different spinners (both in color and in black and white) that you can use to gamify your writing time while practicing skills you've already taught. Students can play alone, in pairs, or in small teams. I recommend introducing one game card at a time.

The following spinners are included:

- Spin a Great Story (sensory details, setting/weather, dialogue, characters, thoughts, emotions)
- Spin a Great Sentence (different types of sentences)
- Spin a Comma (7 different ways to use commas)
- Spin a Sentence Starter
- Revise Your Writing
- Edit Your Writing

TO PREPARE THE SPINNER CARD

1. Select a spinner from the pack.
2. Print your desired spinner on cardstock.
3. Cut it out.

TO PLAY

1. Each student or team will need one card ($\frac{1}{2}$ page), a pencil, and a paperclip to use as a spinner.
2. Students place the paperclip on the game card and use the pencil to hold the paperclip in the center of the circle. If desired, the kids can unfold one side of the paperclip to make it more clear where the spinner lands.
3. When ready to spin, one student flicks the spinner. Whatever it lands on is the element you must add to the writing piece.
4. Ring a bell, timer, or doorbell chime at random times during the writing block to let the kids know when to spin for a new element. The unpredictability is what keeps writing time fun.

SPIN A GREAT STORY

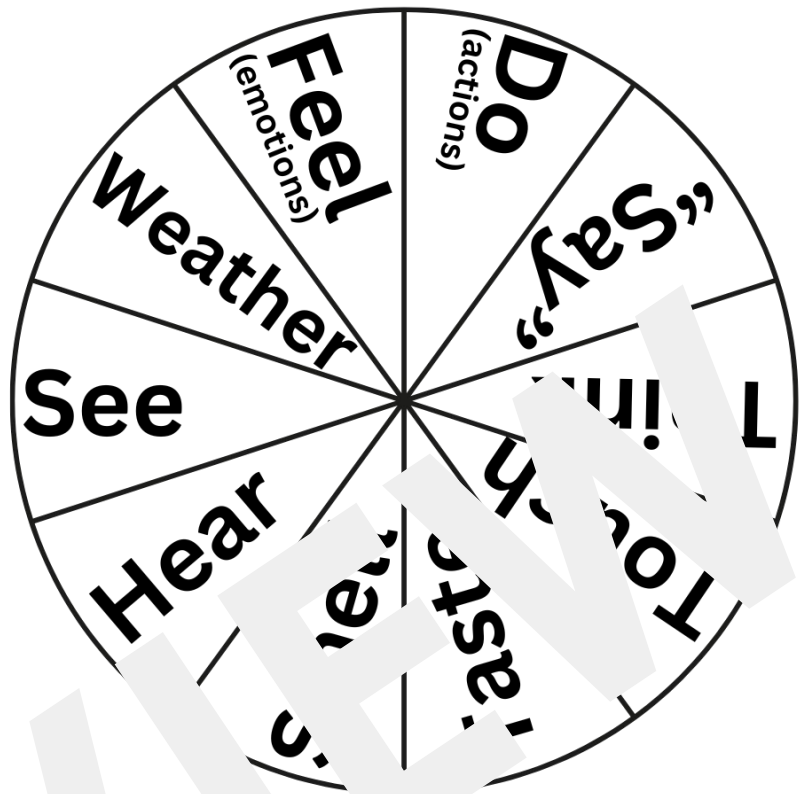
While writing your narrative story, remember to write like an author would. Add a variety of vivid details to bring your story to life and paint a picture in your reader's mind.

Use the 5 senses. What does your character see, hear, smell, taste, or touch?

Use dialogue and character thoughts to show the emotions your character is feeling.

Show your character interacting with the setting and actively trying to solve their problem. And don't forget those weather and setting details!

What does your character ...



SPIN A GREAT STORY

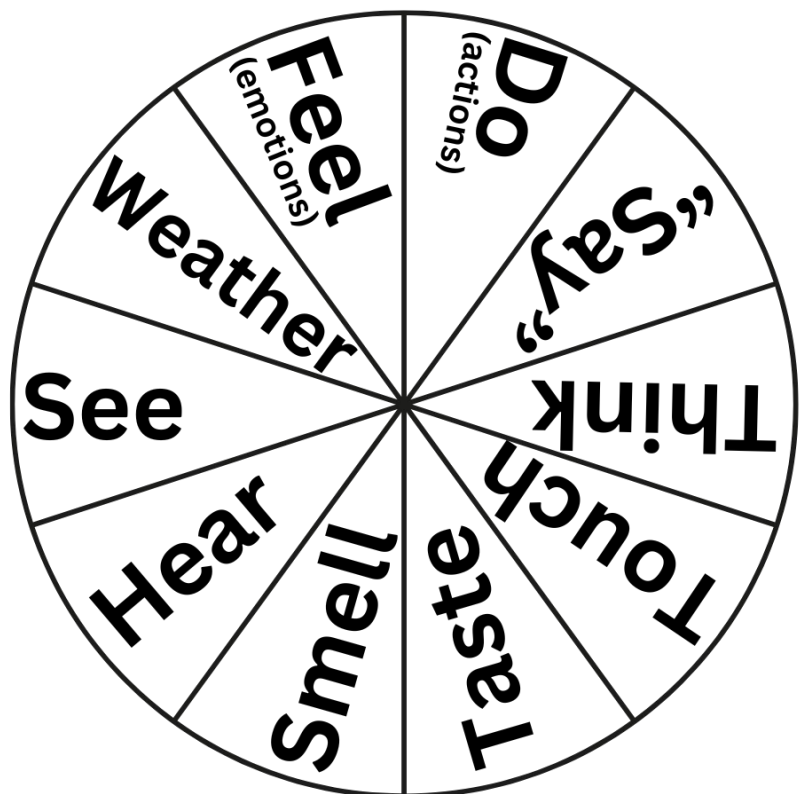
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SPIN A SENTENCE

Authors use a variety of sentence types to keep the writing interesting and clear.

Simple Sentence: This is a simple sentence. It's easy to read and short.

Question: Have you ever asked a question?

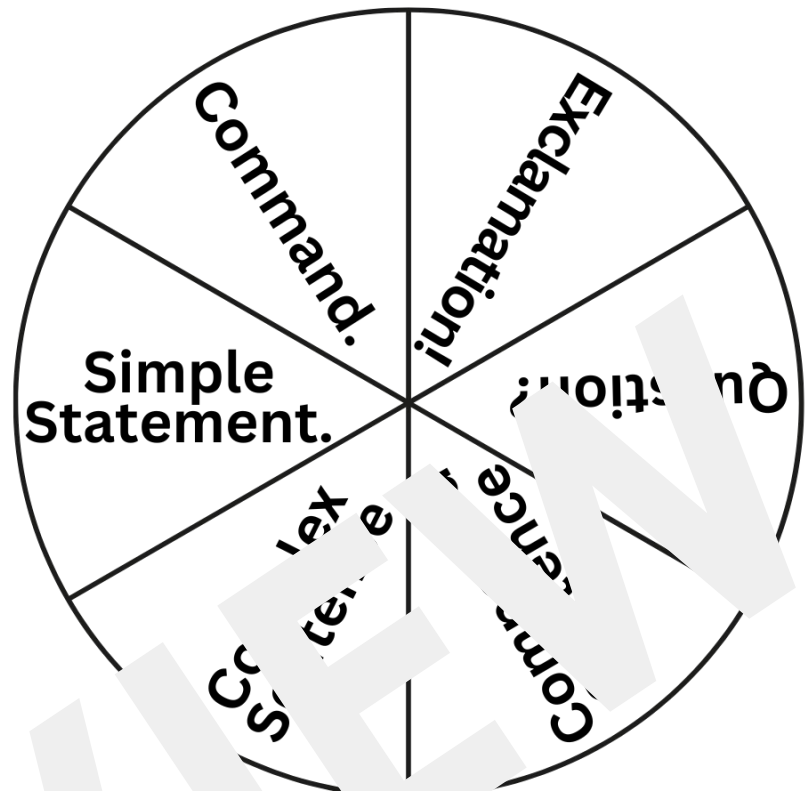
Command: Do your best writing. A command tells someone to do something.

Exclamation: Stop! We use an exclamation mark to show a strong feeling or shouting.

Compound Sentence: This is a complete thought, and here is another complete thought. Join two simple sentences together with a conjunction and a comma.

Complex Sentence: After a few simple sentences, try using a complex sentence. A complex sentence includes an independent phrase and an independent clause.

Sentence Types



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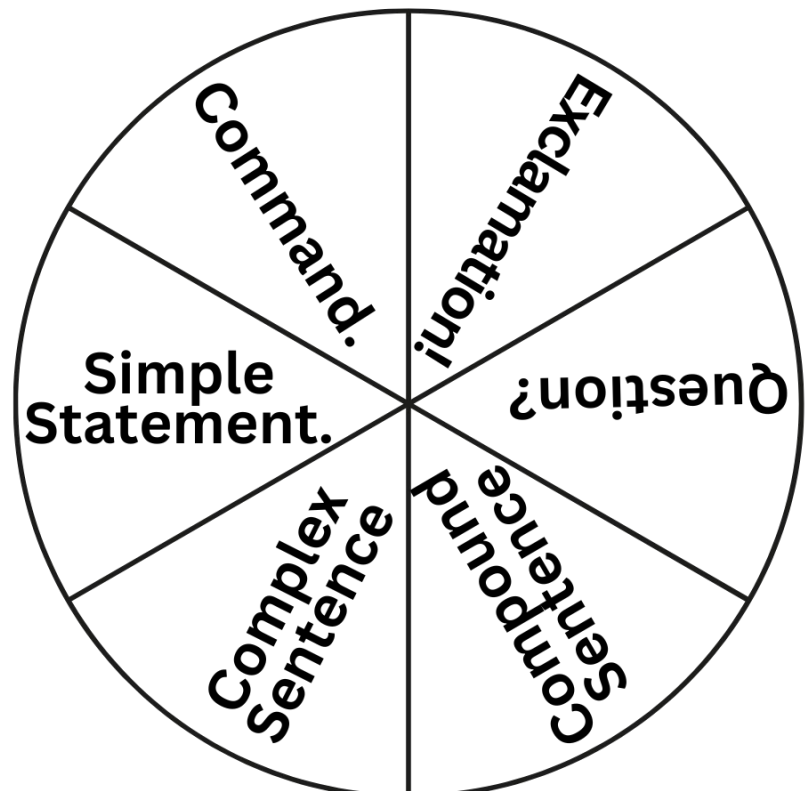
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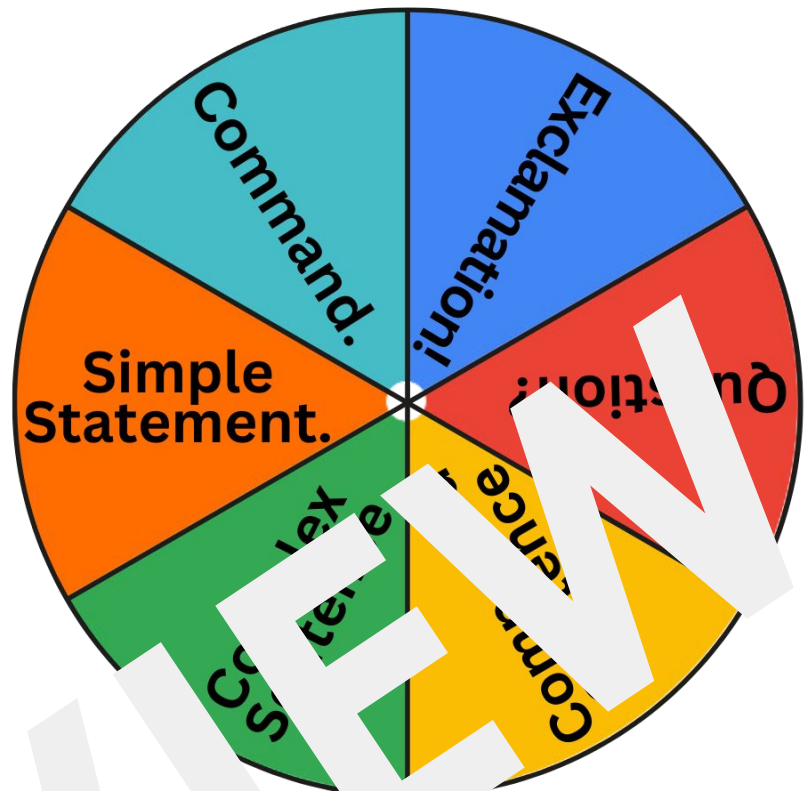
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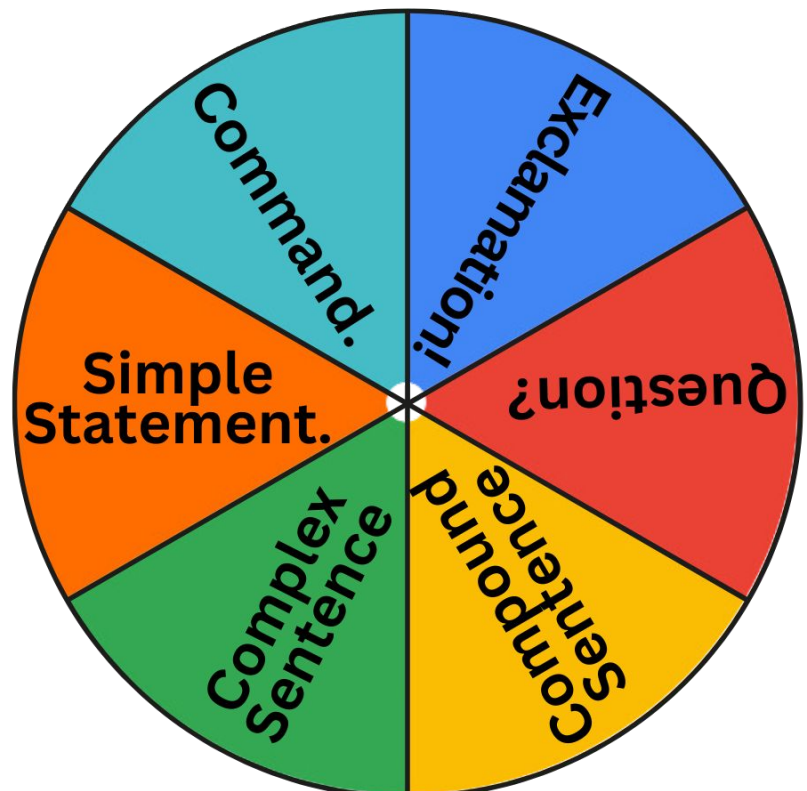
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SPIN A COMMA

Writers use commas to keep their ideas separate and in order. This makes it easier for the reader to understand what the author is trying to say.

Direct Address: Mary, please stop by my office before you leave.

Tag Question: Writing is so much fun, isn't it?

Appositive: Tilly, my dog, is always hungry.

Introductory Element: Well, I guess you can join us.

Yes/No: Yes, you need a comma here.

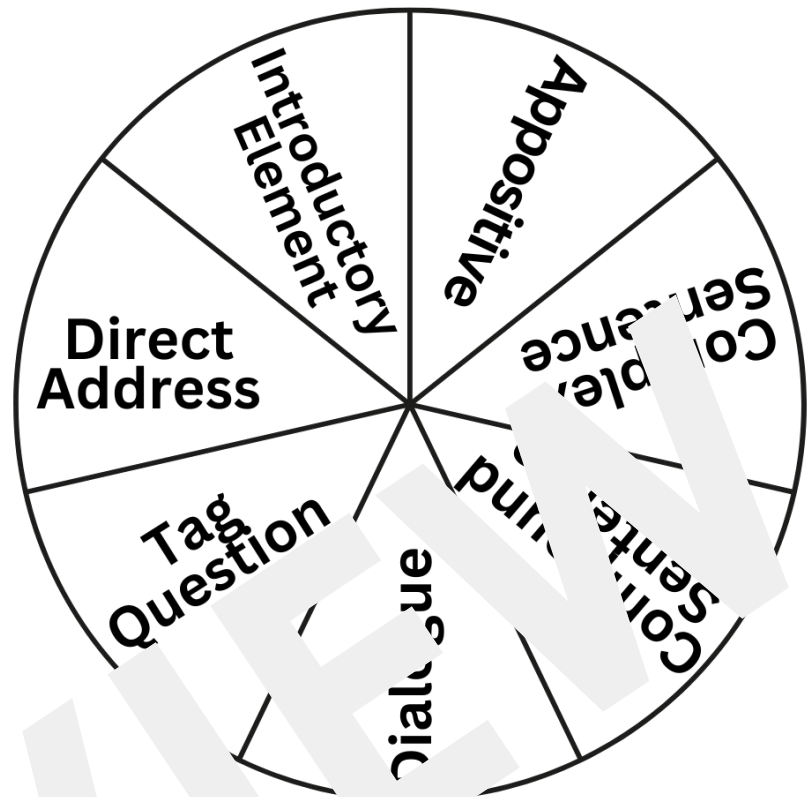
Dialogue: "Sometimes I can't remember when to use a comma," Sarah said.

Commas in a Series: After school, I went to the park, ate ice cream, and then did my homework.

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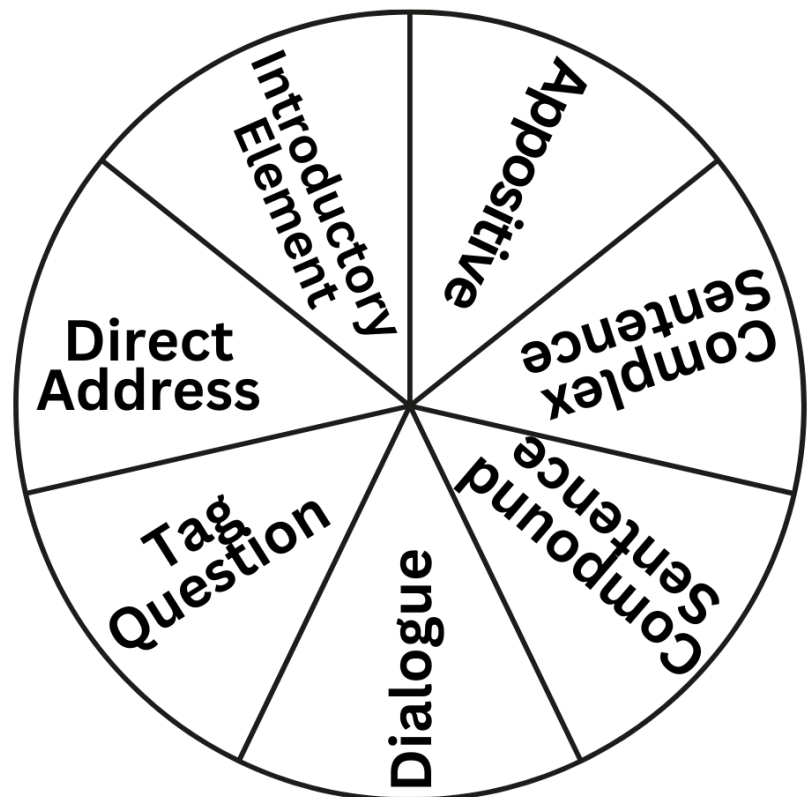
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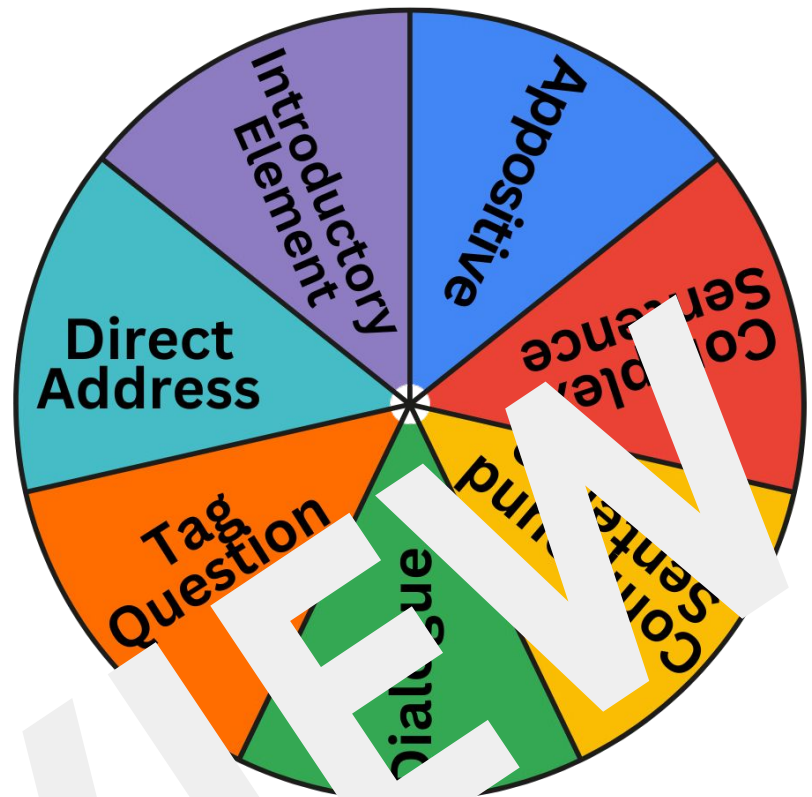
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SPIN A SENTENCE STARTER WORD

One way authors can keep their stories or articles exciting to read is by making sure each sentence starts with a different word. Here's an example:

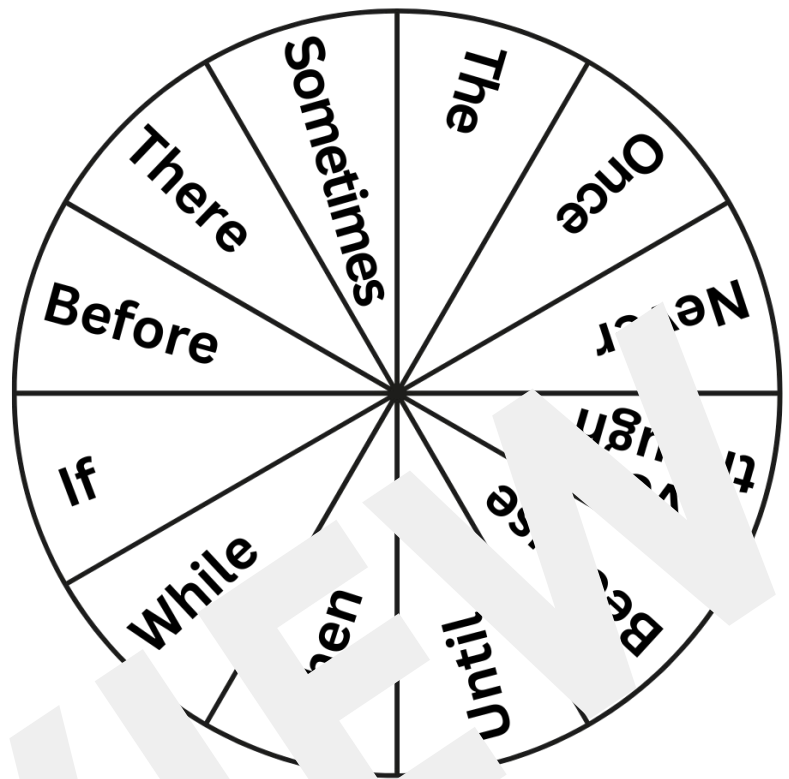
BORING & REPETITIOUS:

Bob was sick. He had a runny nose that hurt to blow. He had a sore throat that sounded like a frog. He had a tummy ache, and he'd sneezed so many times that he'd run out of tissues. Bob was miserable.

BETTER:

Never had Bob felt so miserable in his life. Every inch of his body hurt. Even though the doctor had given him a huge bag full of medication, he still felt lousy. No matter how many cough drops he sucked on, his throat still burned like it was on fire.

Sentence Starter Words



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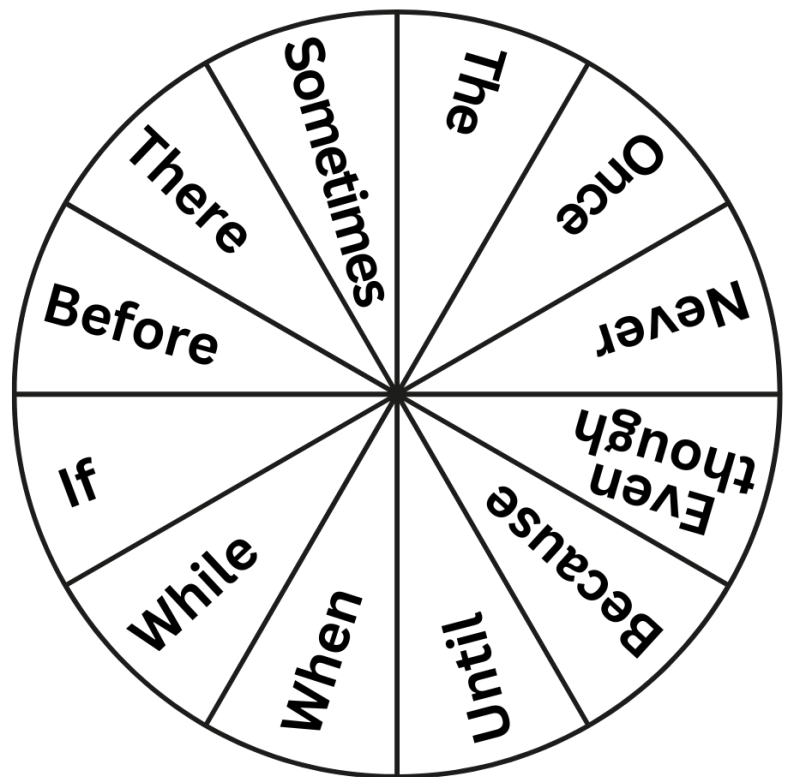
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REVISE YOUR WRITING

Revising your writing helps make your ideas stronger and clearer to the reader.

Read aloud to yourself or to a partner. If something doesn't sound right, fix it.

Rewrite your first line at least 5 different ways. Pick the way that you like best.

Strong Starters: Read the first word of every sentence. Does every sentence start with the same word? If so, add variety to your sentences.

Look for and **substitute boring words**. Use synonyms, rich vocabulary, and academic language instead.

Watch out for **unnecessary words**. Words like "just" and other filler words can be cut out.

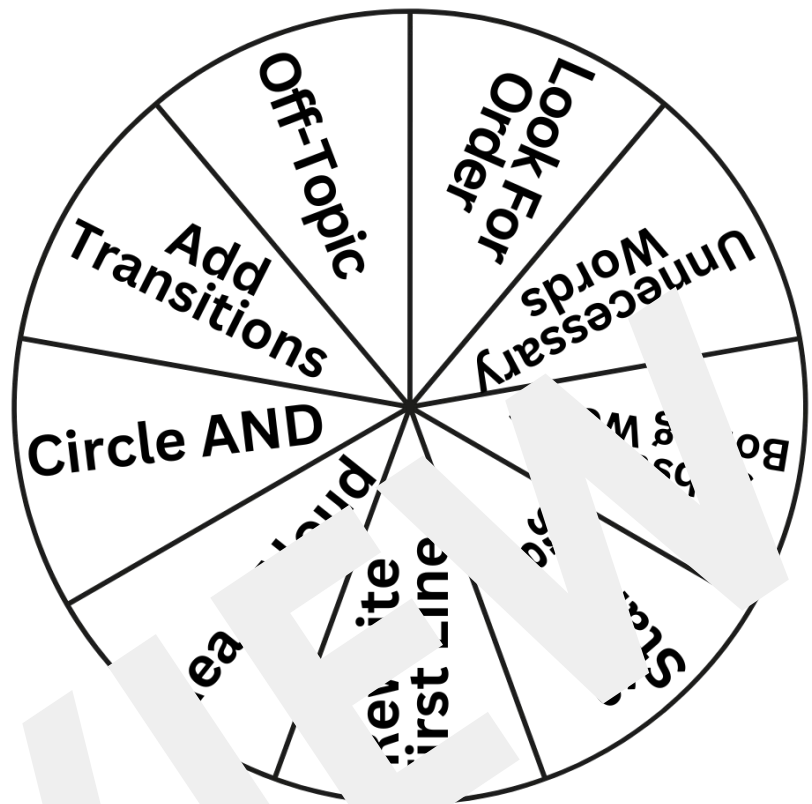
Look For Order: Do your ideas or events flow naturally? Is everything in the right order?

Off-Topic bits should be deleted.

Add transition words or phrases to help your reader move from idea to idea or event to event.

Circle every AND in your paper. Did you really need that word or you did need a period?

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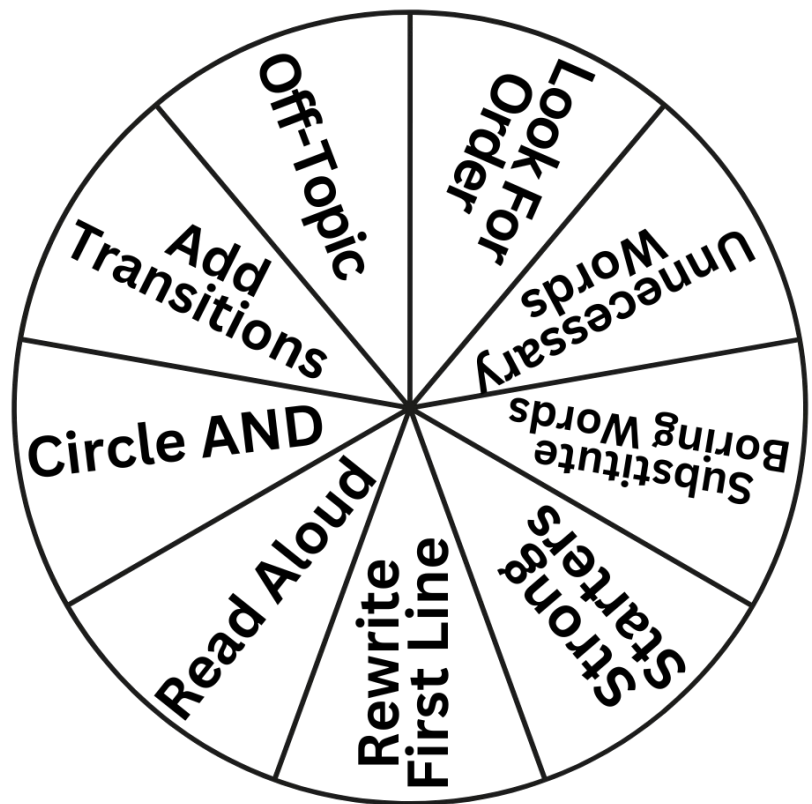
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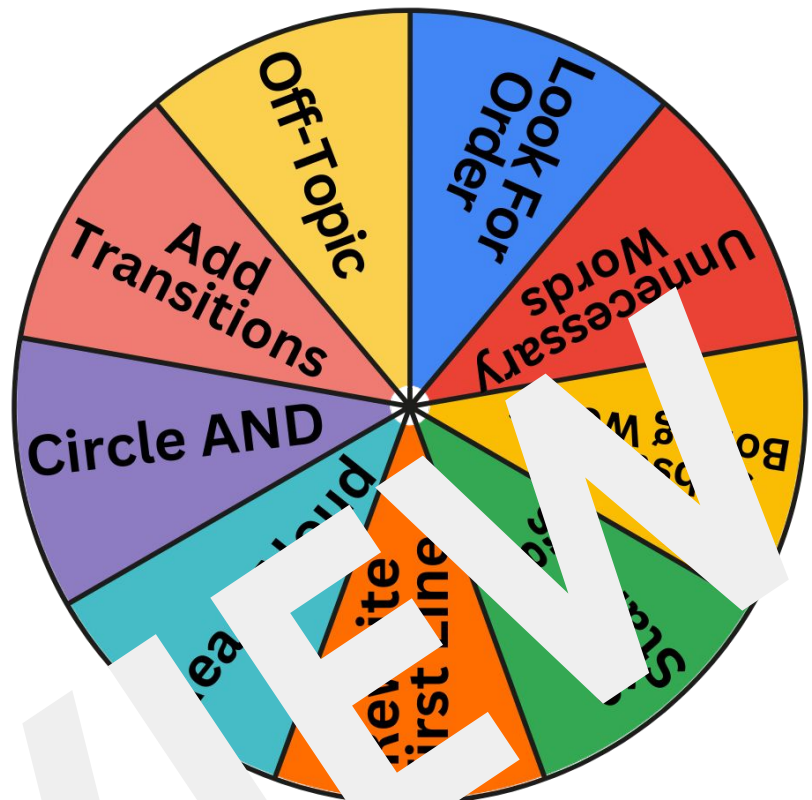
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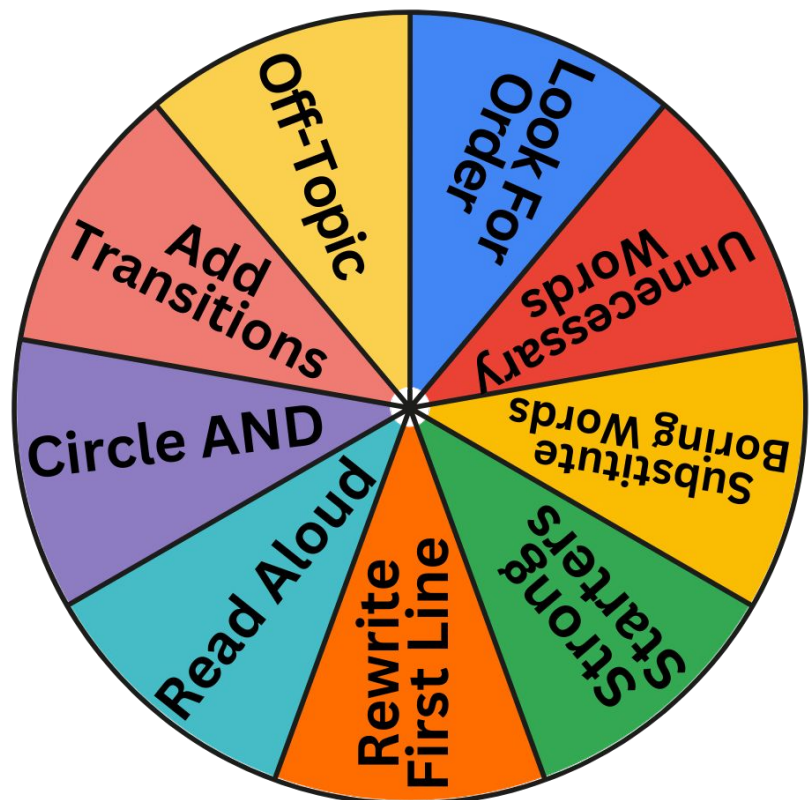
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EDIT YOUR WRITING

Revising your writing is one of the final steps in the writing process. It helps make your writing easy to read.

Capitalization: Did you remember to capitalize the beginning of each sentence, proper nouns, and the pronoun I?

Verb Tense Usage: Does your story suddenly switch from past tense to present tense? Do all your verbs match the nouns?

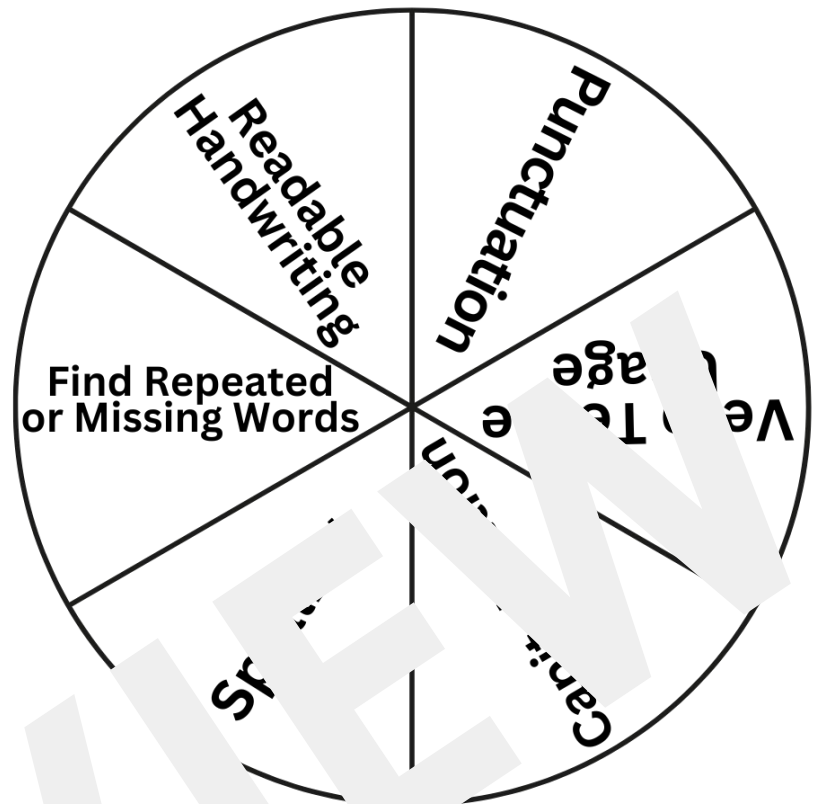
Punctuation: Is each sentence punctuated correctly? Look out for run-on sentences and missing or extra commas.

Spelling: Look for words that are misspelled. Run spell-check or check the spelling in a dictionary.

Readable Handwriting: Is the document readable? Fix messy handwriting.

Find Repeated or Missing Words: Sometimes we skip or repeat words when we're writing.

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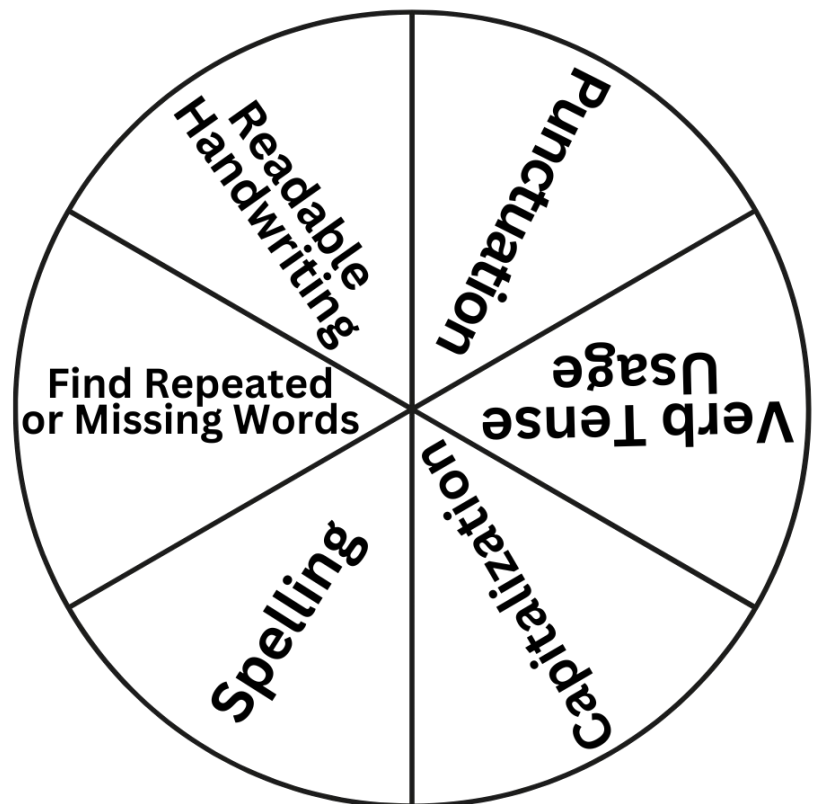
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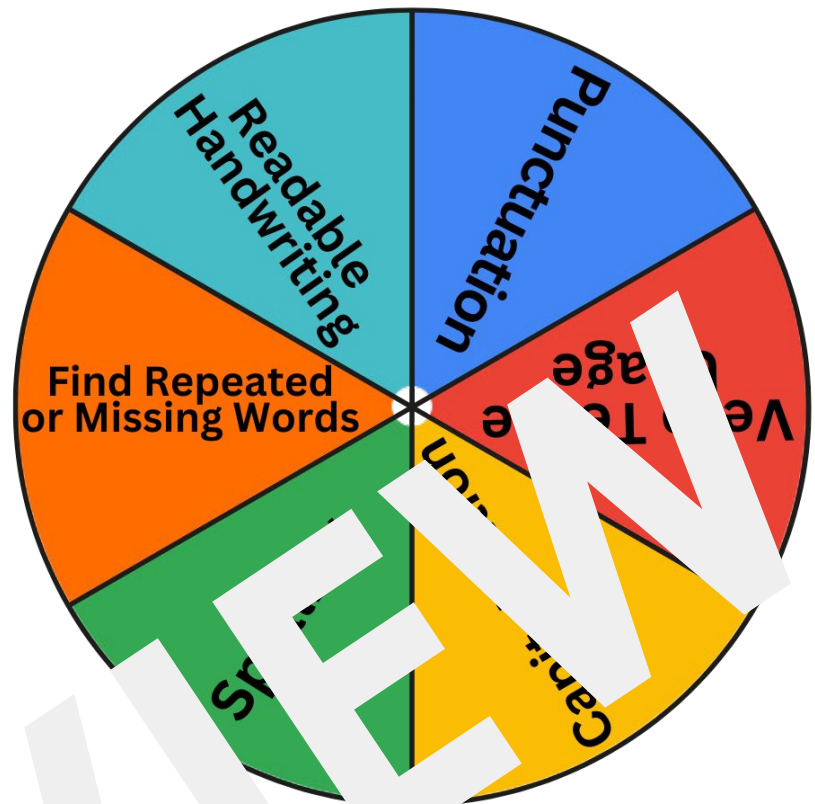
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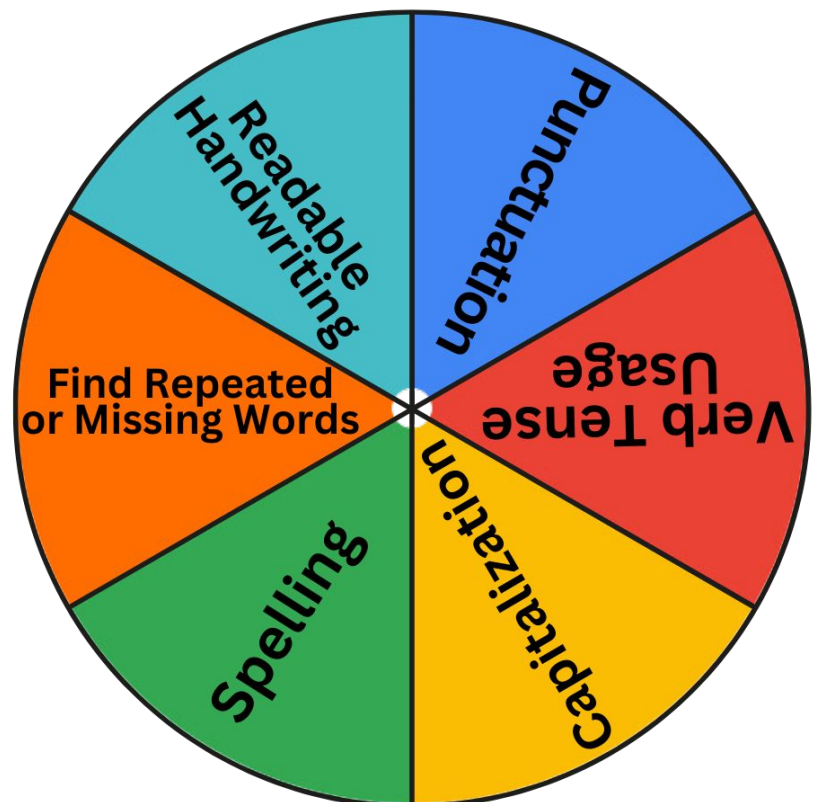
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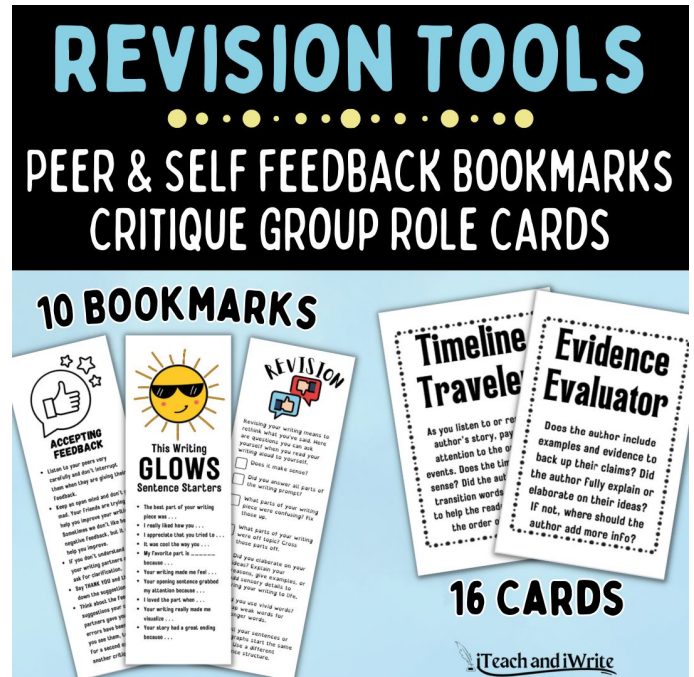
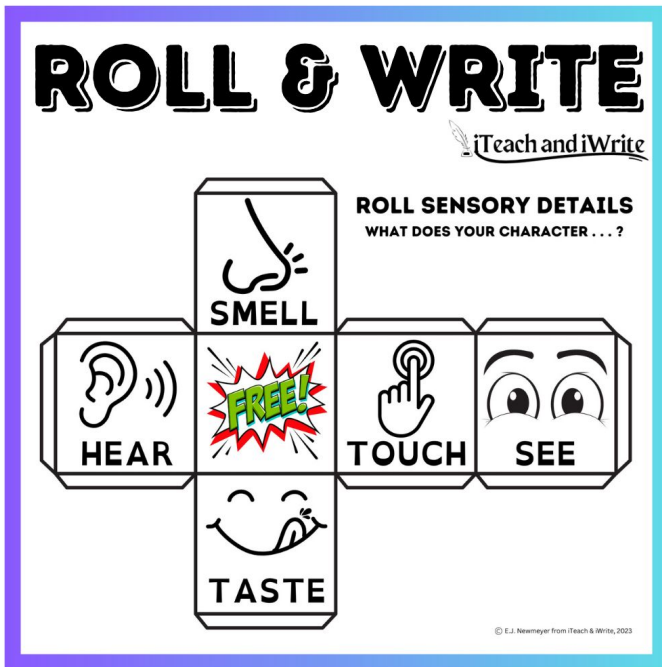
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