

Thank you so much for your purchase!

I hope this set of narrative writing & revision task cards will come in handy for your students. This resource will help your upper elementary or middle school students develop a strong narrative story, from prewriting through revision. Use the task cards in centers for students to complete, or as independent activities.

The turquoise blue set of task cards are designed to help your students plan out a strong story. They can be used alone, or in conjunction with the included trifold table-tent planning worksheets. As students complete a task, they add the information directly onto their table tent planning guide, which they can refer back to during the drafting process. These pre-writing task cards should help get your students off to a good start, which will cut down on the amount of revision they'll need later.

The purple set of task cards are designed to be used either during the drafting process or during the revision and editing stages. You can use a couple of these revision task cards per day to slowly improve their writing, use them as a scoot, or turn them into a fast-paced, timed revision game.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions for future resources, please send me an email at: iteachiwrite@yahoo.com.

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Teacher Tips: Pre-writing Task Cards

TO PREPARE YOUR MATERIALS:

1. Print and cut apart the task cards. If possible, print on card stock and either laminate them or cover with masking tape or clear contact paper.
2. Print the trifold pages, if desired. I recommend printing them double-sided to save paper.
3. Students will fold their trifold pages into a table tent. As students complete tasks or visit centers, they can complete each section of the trifold.

PRE-WRITING TASK CARDS/CENTER ACTIVITIES:

1. **Research:** Think about what topic your students will be writing their story about. This can be a topic they have already studied, or a topic they want to study. Pull out research materials for easy access. Students can review their class notes, anchor charts, or consult books or videos about that topic. Give your students time to find facts or details they want to include in their own stories.
2. **Setting Development:** Students think through and sketch out the setting for their story by using the Create A Setting Map task card and the Setting Map parts of their trifold. For this center or task, students may want to use colored pencils to design their setting.
3. **Character Development:** In this station or center, students will develop their characters, thinking about what their characters want and what is getting in their way. I recommend providing students with access to building materials such as playdoh, modeling clay, puppetry materials, art supplies, wiki stix, pipe cleaners, plastic spoons, or legos.
4. **Character Traits:** While students build, they should also select 1 positive and 1 negative character traits. How will these traits be shown to the reader through the character's words, thoughts and actions.
5. **Conflict Development:** In this task, students will think about what problem their main character has and how the problem will get solved.
6. **Word Bank:** Students will create a list of 20 words they can use in their story. If you have access to vocabulary or spelling word cards, pull those out so students can sift through and select the words they want to use.
7. **Sensory Details:** Students identify what the characters might see, hear, smell, taste or touch. I like to use a Mr. Potato Head in this center. It helps kids really think through the 5 senses.
8. **Dialogue:** Prep this station with sticky notes and/or index cards so that students can write out at least 5 lines of dialogue. Remind students that characters may lie when they speak, but their thoughts are private and always the truth. Students should also consider what emotions their characters have and find ways to SHOW this, rather than TELL this.
9. **Lesson or Moral of the Story:** In this center or task, students will think about what lesson their main characters learn through the course of the story. The worksheet provides a list of possible lessons to select from.
10. **Story Telling:** This should be the last task before students actually begin their first draft. Students will partner up and verbally tell their story. Their partners are to ask questions or give suggestions for improvements.
11. **Great Opening Line:** For this center or task, your students will need to analyze the way different authors start their novels. Gather your favorite books and place them in this center/station. You'll notice that some authors start by introducing the character's thoughts and emotions about their daily life. Some jump right into dialogue or show a hint of the conflict. Some establish the setting and time period. There are lots of different ways to start off a story. This center asks your students to do a bit of analysis, then pick one sentence to use as a mentor sentence for their own story.
12. **4 Blank Task Cards for Teacher Use**

Teacher Tips: Revision Task Cards

The revision task cards are meant to be a mix-and-match kind of activity. Once you have prepared your cards for use, pull out the revision/editing tasks that are most appropriate for your students based on the kinds of errors you see.

REVISION TASK CARDS/CENTER ACTIVITIES:

1. **Capitalization Tasks (4):** pronoun I, proper nouns, first word of a sentence, titles, seasons, months, days of the week.
2. **Punctuation Tasks (4):** punctuation at end of sentences, correct run-ons, replace and, dialogue & quotes.
3. **Comma Rules (8):** compound sentences, complex sentence, tag question, apposition, introductory clause/phrase, direct address, commas in a list, commas between adjectives.
4. **Dialogue Rules (4):** quotation marks around speech, new paragraph for a new speaker, comma placement in dialogue, punctuation inside quotation marks.
5. **Sentence Fluency (3):** first word of sentence variety, combine short sentences & split apart long sentences, read aloud for fluency.
6. **Spelling (1):** ID misspelled words and fix.
7. **Add Details:**
 - a. **Sensory Details (4):** smell, hear, see, touch.
 - b. **Add Adjectives (1)**
 - c. **Add Adverbs (1)**
 - d. **Add Transition Words (1)**
 - e. **Add Figurative Language (1)**
 - f. **Add Weather Details (1)**
 - g. **Add Character Thoughts (1)**
 - h. **Add Dialogue (1)**
 - i. **Add Emotions (1)**
8. **Word Choice Tasks (4):** avoid “to be” verbs, replace vague nouns, replace vague verbs, replace 10 boring and overused/repetitious words.
9. **Organization Tasks (4):** timeline & transition words, revise the introduction, revise the conclusion, stretch out 1 moment in time but skip the boring stuff.
10. **Character Tasks (4):** GMC: Goal, Motivation, Conflict, character traits, character dialogue tips, adding in extra details.
11. **4 Blank Task Cards** for teacher use.

CREATE A SETTING MAP

Where will your story take place?
Draw a quick map of the setting.

Also consider the following:
What year is it? What season is it?
What's the weather like?

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Build your cast of characters.
Who is your story about?
What do they want?
Why do they want it?
What is standing in their way?
Who else is in the story?

CONFLICT DEVELOPMENT

What is the main problem in the story? What steps will the main character take to unsuccessfully try to solve this problem? In the end, how will the problem finally be solved?

CHARACTER TRAITS

Select 1-2 character traits for your main character(s).
What will your character say, think, or do that will show these character traits?

WORD BANK

Brainstorm and write down a list of 20 vivid words you can use in your story. These words can be about the character, setting, or conflict. Then explain to a friend how and where you will use each word.

RESEARCH

What topic are you writing about? Review your notes, books, or videos about your topic. List 5 facts you can include in your story.

LESSON LEARNED OR MORAL OF THE STORY

What lesson does your main character need to learn about life? How will they learn this lesson?

DIALOGUE

Use sticky notes or index cards to write out a conversation that will take place during your story. What might your characters say, think, and feel (emotions)?

PLOT ORGANIZATION

What happens in the beginning, middle, and end of the story?

Beginning: Introduce the main character, setting, and problem.

Middle: The character tries & fails to solve the problem.

End: The problem is solved, the lesson is learned.

5 SENSES

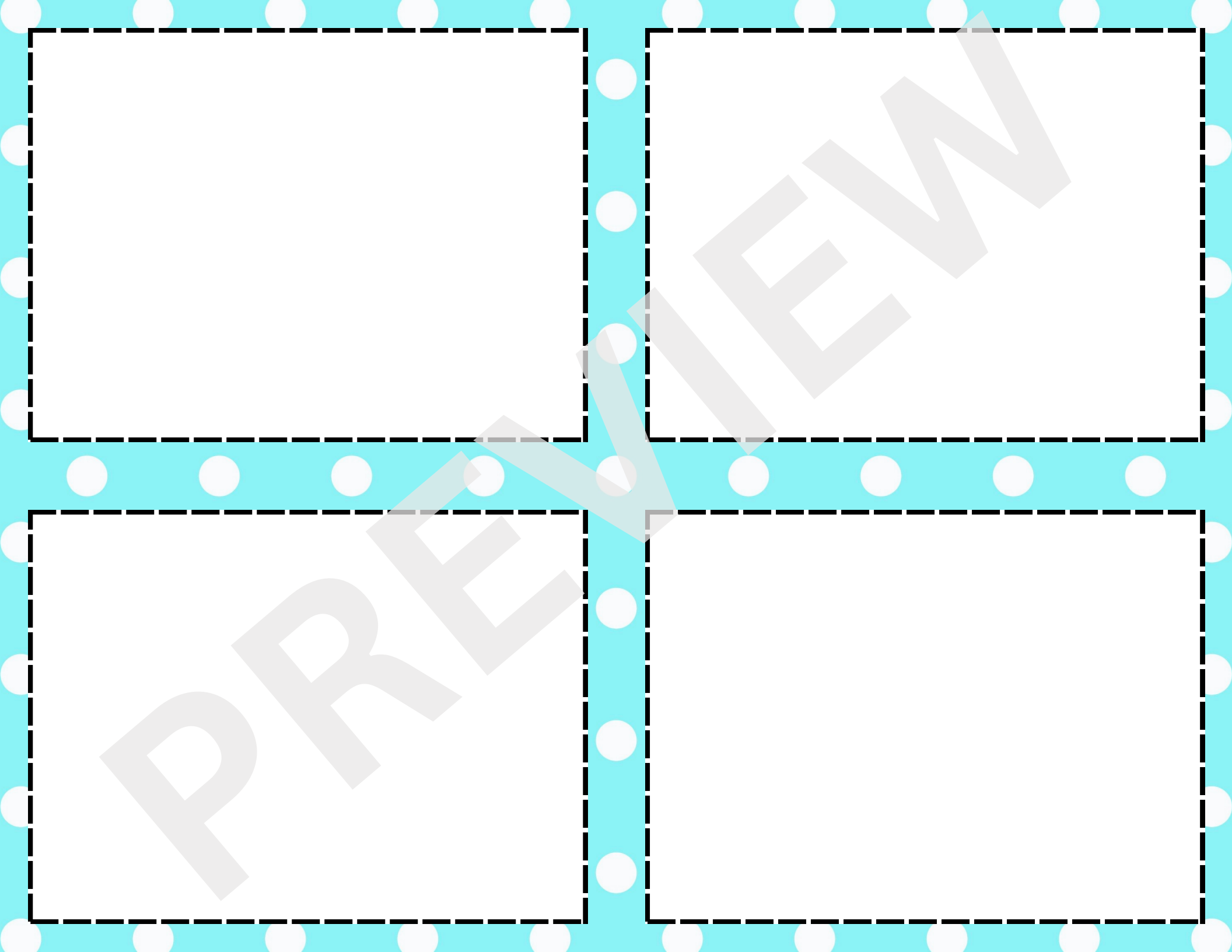
Write a list of everything your characters might see, hear, smell, taste, or touch during your story. These small details help bring your story to life.

STORYTELLING

Pair up with a friend. Show off the details of your story table tent as you tell your classmate all about your storyline. What ideas do they have for you that can make your story better? What parts were they confused by? What questions did they have?

GREAT OPENING LINE

Read just the first sentence of several different novels. How did the authors start their books and hook their reader? Did they start with dialogue? A hint of conflict? Select your favorite first sentence and try writing one just like it, but for your own story.



SETTING MAP

SETTING INFO

Setting Location:

Main character's relationship to and attitude about the setting:

Date/Year:

Time of Day:

Season: Winter

Spring

Summer

Fall

Current Weather:

WORD BANK

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PLOT PROGRESSION

BEGINNING

MIDDLE

END

A film strip graphic with three frames for plot progression. The frames are labeled BEGINNING, MIDDLE, and END. The film strip has sprocket holes on both sides.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Character Name:

GOAL: This character wants/needs:

MOTIVATION: They want this because:

CONFLICT: The problem is that:

Loves:

Hates:

Fears:

CHARACTER TRAITS

Positive Character Traits

Honest
Brave
Compassionate/Kind
A leader
Unselfish
Loyal
Hard-working
Independent
Responsible
Clever/Witty
Determined
Curious

Negative Character Traits

Selfish
Forgetful
Greedy
Dishonest
Boastful (Brags a lot)
Impatient
Judgemental
Lazy or Unmotivated
Pessimistic
Aggressive
Disrespectful
Sneaky

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Problem/Conflict:

Failed Attempts at Problem Solving

The problem is resolved when . . .

MORAL OF THE STORY

What lesson will your main character (and the reader) learn by the end of the story? How will they learn this?

Hard work pays off
Don't judge others
Never give up
Cheaters never prosper
Everyone is different
We are stronger together
Always tell the truth
Practice makes perfect
Money doesn't buy happiness
Be happy with what you have
Think twice before you act
Always be prepared
It's okay to be different

Sees

Hears

Smells

Tastes

Touches



This character says ...

This character thinks or believes...

This character's emotions....

This character's actions ...

CAPITALIZATION TASK

Search for the pronoun I.
If you used a lowercase i,
capitalize it.

Example:

I know I should capitalize the pronoun I.

CAPITALIZATION TASK

Tap the first word of each
sentence. Each sentence should
start with a capital letter.

Example:

This is a sentence.

CAPITALIZATION TASK

Underline character names
or the names of places.
Names should be capitalized.

Example:

My dog's name is Tilly.

CAPITALIZATION TASK

Capitalize the title of your story
along with any months, holidays,
and days of the week.

Example:

On **Saturday**, I reread my favorite
Diary of a Wimpy Kid book.

PUNCTUATION TASK

Read your writing aloud one sentence at a time. Each sentence should end with a punctuation mark.

Example:

I love my dog. Do you have a dog?

PUNCTUATION TASK

Circle each time you used the word **and**. Cover up each **and**. Could you use a period or comma there instead?

Example:

I love dogs and I love playing the piano
and I love to write short stories.

PUNCTUATION TASK

Highlight every punctuation mark. Do you see any super long sentences without any punctuation? Break these run-on into smaller sentences.

Example of a run-on sentence:

Tilly loves getting snacks she always wants to eat she also sleeps a lot.

PUNCTUATION TASK

Look for character dialogue or quotes from a text. Did you use quotation marks?

Example:

According to National Geographic Kids,
"One million Earths could fit inside the
Sun."

COMMA RULES

Use a comma and a conjunction to combine two complete sentences together to make a compound sentence.

Example:

I love singing, **but** I also like writing stories.

COMMA RULES

To add extra information about a character, you can insert the extra info and set it off with commas.

Example:

Maria, **my best friend**, waved hello.

COMMA RULES

If you start a sentence with an introductory phrase or clause, add a comma.

Examples:

No, I don't like anchovies.

Well, I prefer chocolate ice cream.

COMMA RULES

If you add a question on at the end of a statement, use a comma.

Example:

You know all the comma rules, **don't you?**

COMMA RULES

When you are directly addressing someone, you put a comma after their name.

Example:

Sara, can you come here please?

COMMA RULES

Use commas between multiple adjectives.

Example:

The **beautiful, long-haired** dog wagged his tail when I stopped to pet him.

COMMA RULES

If you start a complex sentence with an dependent clause, add a comma.

Examples:

Even though I love pizza, I don't want to eat it every single day.

COMMA RULES

If you write a list of words or phrases, use commas to separate them.

Example:

Today we have to **pack for our trip, go to the store, and stop by the bank.**

DIALOGUE RULES

Look for character dialogue. Did you use quotation marks around the part they said out loud?

Example:

“Hey!” Bob shouted at the startled bear.

DIALOGUE RULES

When a new person speaks, start a new paragraph.

Example:

→ **“Want to hang out tonight?” Sam asked** on the way home from school.

→ **“I can’t,” I explained.** “I’m grounded.”

DIALOGUE RULES

Check for commas. Writers use a comma to separate the dialogue tag from the dialogue.

Examples:

“I don’t like peas,” Bob said.

Bob said, “I don’t like peas.”

“I don’t like peas,” Bob said, “or broccoli.”

DIALOGUE RULES

Punctuation marks go inside the closing quotation marks.

Example:

Sam said sadly, “No, I didn’t get the job.”



SENTENCE FLUENCY

Say just the first word of every sentence aloud. If most of your sentences started with the same word, revise some of your sentences.

Example:

Instead of: He walked to the park alone.

Try: All alone, he walked to the park.

SENTENCE FLUENCY

Are most of your sentences short?
Combine some of your sentences into a longer, complex one.

Are they all long sentences?
Break apart some of them into shorter sentences.

SENTENCE FLUENCY

Read your story aloud. Where did you stumble on your words or have trouble reading? If something sounds wrong, fix it. Stop as soon as you find a mistake and fix it. Then keep reading.

SPELLING

If your story is typed, run spell-check on your writing. If your story is handwritten, circle any words you think are misspelled. Then check the correct spelling for each word in a dictionary, word wall, or with a friend.

ADD SENSORY DETAILS

What is something your character can smell? Add this detail as a new sentence.

Example:

The faint **smell of smoke** set warning bells off in her mind.

ADD SENSORY DETAILS

What is something your character can hear? Add this detail as a new sentence.

Example:

The old floorboard **creaked** beneath my feet, breaking the eerie silence.

ADD SENSORY DETAILS

What is something your character can see? Add this detail as a new sentence.

Example:

I watched as Mrs. Lee's **eyebrows furrowed and dipped into a frown.**

ADD SENSORY DETAILS

What is something your character can touch? Add this detail as a new sentence.

Example:

I **gripped my purse tighter**, ready to run.

ADD ADJECTIVES

Describe a noun (who, what, where) in more detail by adding adjectives.

Example:

The **teacup-sized, black** dog let out a ferocious bark.

ADD ADVERBS

Describe HOW someone did something by adding an adverb to the verb in the sentence.

Example:

The girl **bravely** stood up to the bully.

ADD TRANSITION WORDS

Transition words help keep the timeline clear in a story.
Where can you add a new transition word or phrase?

Example:

After school, I went to soccer practice.

ADD FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Where can you add a comparison like a simile or a metaphor? Can you add hyperbole, alliteration, or onomatopoeia?

Example:

Her smile was as bright as the sun.

ADD WEATHER DETAILS

Even if your character is indoors, you can add weather details that help us know when the story takes place.

Example:

The storm roared outside as a sudden gust of wind caused the lights to flicker.

ADD CHARACTER THOUGHTS

Readers want to know what your main character really thinks about their situation. Add 2-3 character thoughts.

Example:

Stop being such a scaredy cat, I scolded myself, but I couldn't force my feet to go.

ADD DIALOGUE

Look for opportunities for your characters to speak. They can talk to other characters or themselves, like a pep talk. Sometimes characters even lie. If you don't have dialogue, add 3 lines of dialogue to your story.

Example:

"Think positive," I said to myself.

ADD EMOTIONS

What emotion is your character feeling? Add a new sentence to either show their emotions through facial expression, posture, dialogue, or character thoughts.

Example:

My stomach churned with guilt.

WORD CHOICE TASK

Highlight the following words:

am, is, was, were, are

Can you replace some of these words with more active verbs?

Examples:

The pie **is** delicious. → The pie **tastes** delicious.
He **was** walking away. → He **walked** away.

WORD CHOICE TASK

Find 5 vague common nouns to replace with more specific proper nouns.

Example:

After school, we went to **the store**.
After school, we went to **Walmart**.

WORD CHOICE TASK

Find 5 vague verbs to replace with more vivid verbs.

Example:

We **took a walk** around the park.
We **strolled** through the park.

WORD CHOICE TASK

Replace 10 boring or overused words with vocabulary words or words from the thesaurus.

Example:

I was **so happy**. → I **squealed in delight**.

ORGANIZATION TASKS

The sequence of events in a story should unfold in a logical way. Use a timeline and/or transition words to make sure everything happens in the correct order.

Example:

Before bed, Bob practiced his dance routine one more time **before tomorrow's** talent show.

ORGANIZATION TASKS

Reread your introduction or beginning of the story. Did you introduce your main character, the setting, and the conflict/problem?

ORGANIZATION TASKS

Reread your story ending. Is the problem solved? Did your main character learn something about themselves or life?

Example:

My parents were right. Trying something new helped me make new friends.

ORGANIZATION TASKS

Good writers stretch out one moment in time, but they skip all the boring stuff that doesn't matter to the plot. Move or remove any sentence or detail that is unnecessary, repetitious, or off topic. Only keep details that are important to the conflict or show character traits.

CHARACTER TASKS

What does your main character want (GOAL)? Why do they want it (MOTIVATION)? What is standing in their way (CONFLICT)? Can you make these more clear in your story?

Example:

This year, I was going to win that talent show *and* the prize money so I could finally attend summer music camp. The only person standing in my way was my mortal enemy, Priscilla Peterson.

CHARACTER TASKS

What kind of person is your main character? Are they funny? Musical? Kind? A leader? How did you/can you show this to your reader? What does your main character say or do that shows their character traits?

CHARACTER TASKS

Read each line of dialogue again. Does the dialogue sound the way a real person speaks? It's okay to use fragments and slang in dialogue. What changes can you make to help your characters sound like real people?

CHARACTER TASKS

What extra details do we know about your main character? How do they dress? What do they love? What do they hate? How do they feel about their situation? How do they react when things go wrong?