

HOW TO TEACH EDITING TO STUDENTS

1. Before beginning, let students know that you will be using their writing to teach editing. Let boys and girls know that no names will be used, only examples from work and that they should not be embarrassed if they recognize an example from one of their writings.
2. Copy errors from students' papers onto an overhead or transparency. Use several different examples from several different students. For instance, if you want to teach the use of starting each sentence with a capital, find two or three instances where this is not done correctly. Copy exactly what the student has written, including mistakes. Have the class look at each sentence one at a time, and suggest corrections. You can correct the sentence as students tell you to do.
3. Simultaneously, make a list of the rules used to correct the writing. In the case above, the rule would be, "All sentences begin with a capital letter."
4. As rules are written and students understand the concept of editing from the work on the overhead, let students select a writing that they would like to self-edit. Lead them through the exercise by going over one rule at a time. Suggest that every one check to see if every sentence begins with a capital letter, nothing else. Take the second rule written, and ask students to check for that and nothing else. Continue to go through the set of rules that you and the class have written. This exercise could take several days, depending on the level of the students.
5. Papers can then be exchanged and the whole process repeated. Again, this might take several days, depending on the abilities of the students.
6. Eventually, let students edit papers in small groups.
7. As group editing is successful, have students self-edit or exchange papers for every writing assignment before turning in papers for grading.
8. Editing should be a part of every assignment, even math, anything where writing is included. Students should realize the difference of writing for ideas and writing for an audience. When an audience is expected to read the writing, even you, papers must be edited. It takes time in the beginning, but the quality of assignments improves for every minute spent on editing. Editing should just be an extension of writing.