

Musical Papers: Revising & Editing

by Mary Moskal-Blow

Musical Papers Overview

Musical Papers is an activity created to engage students in peer review while tapping into middle school students' love for music and socializing. Each student has his or her own writing style. Allowing them to analyze and respond to each other's work helps them to explore and find their own style. Before engaging in Musical Papers, provide students with communication skills for effective [Peer to Peer Review](#) (Annenburg).

MUSICAL PAPERS LESSON

Materials

- Student rough drafts
- Scotch tape (optional)
- Colored pens and/or pencils
- Music Sources: CDs, iTunes, [Pandora](#) (Free Customizable Internet Radio Station)
- Timer
- Rubric or Revision Checklist

Procedure

1. Review the writing goals for the assignment.
2. Review the rubric or revision checklist.
3. Students clear off the desk and leave just the checklist and their papers on the desk. Taping them to the desk ensures that reviewers don't accidentally take them.
4. Give each student a colored pen or pencil and a copy of the [editing symbols](#) sheet for reference.
5. All students stand and push in their chairs.
6. Model the direction that everyone will be traveling.
7. When the music starts, the students walk around the room.
8. When the music stops, they quickly find a seat at a desk.
9. The teacher sets the timer and the students begin reviewing.
10. The reviewer reads the paper and provides feedback using [editing marks](#) (Scholastic Printables). Before leaving the desk, each student signs his or her name as the reviewer.
11. When the timer goes off, the students get up and push in their chairs.
12. The music starts again and the students circulate to the music.
13. Repeat steps 5-12 until each student has reviewed at three different papers.

14. After the third review, students return to their own seats.
15. Set the timer for a time that is appropriate for the length of writing piece.
16. Each student reads the reviewers' comments. If they have any questions, the author has time to seek the reviewer for clarification,
17. The authors revise and edit.
18. When they finish, they whisper read their text, so they can hear the music of their words.

WHISPER READING

All my students whisper read their final copies before handing them in. If students make any corrections or use editing marks during whisper reading, they do not count against them. This is a time for the authors to **hear the music of the written language**. At the middle school level, students are self-conscious, and therefore, reluctant to read their writing aloud. Whisper reading with their ears plugged alleviates their concerns.

When introducing whisper reading, I have every other student put their elbows on their desk, plug his or her ears, and read while their neighbor listens. The listener gives a thumbs up, indicating when they can hear the reader. The readers are surprised that their neighbor cannot hear them when their voice is so loud in their head. They also marvel at how many "silly" mistakes they find while they are reading, which makes me happy.