**Lesson Plan 17: Cleaning it Up**

Supports Common Core Standards for English Language Arts:

* **Grade 6**: Writing: 5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. Language: 1a. Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive); 1b. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person; 2a. Use commas, parentheses, or dashes to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements; 2b. Spell correctly; 3b. Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
* **Grade 7**: Writing: 5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach after rethinking how well questions of purpose have been addressed. Language: 1b. Chose among simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas; 1c. Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, avoiding misplaced and dangling modifiers; 2b. Spell correctly; 3. Choose words and phrases that express ideas concisely, eliminating wordiness and redundancy.
* **Grade 8**: Writing: 5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach after rethinking how well questions of purpose and context have been addressed. Language: 1a. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice; 1c. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood; 2a. Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., *It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie* but not *He wore an old[,] green shirt*); 2b. Use a comma, ellipses, or dash to indicate a pause or break; 2c. Spell correctly.

**Total Lesson Time**

Suggested time: 60 minutes

*Note: If you feel your students would benefit from extra support with grammar and mechanics, spread this lesson out over a few days; students acquiring English, for example, may require added review or even introduction to concepts covered here. To break up the lesson, spend one day on Steps One, Two, and the review portion of Step Three. You can continue work on the review portion of Step Three for as many days as needed, having students complete the worksheet only when you feel they are able to make the corrections successfully. Steps Four and Five can be handled on one additional day or spread out over several days, as well.*

**Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, SWBAT:

1. Proofread their work for sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
2. Use proofreading marks to edit their own work.

**Materials**

* Each student should bring a copy of the first five pages of his or her revised novel; he or she may re-use one of the copies previously marked up by another student if necessary.
* One clean copy of the [“Cleaning It Up” worksheet](http://ywp.nanowrimo.org/files/ywp/ywp_10_ms_cleaning_it_up.pdf) per student. This can also be found on page 96 of the Young Novelist Workbook.

**Lesson: Cleaning It Up**

**Step One: Writing Prompt**

*5 minutes*

Tell students that, since it’s been a little while since they did any good old-fashioned creative writing, today they will start the lesson with a writing prompt. Have each student take 5 minutes and a blank sheet of paper to describe a time when someone misunderstood what they were saying.

**Step Two: What’s the Point?**

*5 minutes*

1. Start by congratulating students for having made it this far. Tell them that the hard part of writing and revising a novel is over; the bulk of the work is done. All they have to do now is clean up the finished product so it will sparkle and shine. Explain that proofreading is the absolute last step in writing. They may have been tempted to fix grammar and typos before that, especially when they got stuck writing or revising for the “big picture.” Now that they’ve done all that though, they can fix all those piddly mistakes.

2. You may wish to reassure students that the process of proofreading a novel does not generally take as long as the process of thoroughly revising it (which they are likely not done with anyway). Proofreading can take days or even weeks though, since students want to read slowly and catch every mistake. Therefore in this lesson they will focus on proofreading only their first few pages; they can take what they have learned from this activity and apply it to proofreading their whole novels when they are satisfied with their other revisions.

3. Ask students to think of mistakes they have seen in writing, for example on signs, menus, publications, or even in their own writing. Were any of these mistakes confusing or even funny? Then have a few volunteers briefly tell about times others misunderstood what they were saying (their topic for the writing prompt). Help students grasp that mistakes in their novels will distract readers, confuse them, or even amuse them in a bad way—which in turn will make it harder for readers to understand what their novels are about. And it feels lousy to be misunderstood!

**Step Three: Proofread and Correct**

*Suggested time: 30 minutes*

1. Distribute the worksheet to students and read the introduction together. Then have students skim the blurbs about each area of grammar and conventions mentioned. Do students recognize any of these from previous lessons on grammar? It’s likely that they do, especially concepts such as subject-verb agreement, punctuation, and (of course!) dialogue formatting as discussed in Lesson 10. Some of the concepts may be new or particularly challenging, however, and require additional explanation and examples from you. You may have students briefly review what they know about different types of pronouns, for example, and how to identify the proper pronoun form to use. Also, it’s likely that they’ve never been introduced to the concept of “active voice” before. Take time to discuss the trickiest concepts here, basing review on the unique needs of your group and referring to printed resources such as *The Little Brown Handbook* and *The Elements of Style* if necessary.

2. Next explain that this worksheet is just a guideline for some common errors writers make. Point out that even famous and/or best-selling novelists are guilty of many of these offenses. Fortunately for published authors, they have editors who will point out and mark errors. Your students will have to mark their own errors themselves! Then work through the first exercise with students. Read aloud the blurb and then the sentences:

*The excitement was sew grate that Heidi couldn’t bear it. They’re was know way to describe the intents anticipation.*

3. Point to the word *grate*. Ask students to explain the problem with the use of *grate*. Then demonstrate on the board how to mark it, by drawing a line through it, adding a caret, and writing the correct word, *great*, above. Finish correcting the sentences as a group. Then have students complete the rest of the activities independently.

**Step Four: Clean It Up**

*10 minutes*

1. Say, “Now that you have filled in the worksheet pages with edits to someone else’s work, try it on your own!”

2. Tell students that they will have about 10 minutes to proofread and mark up their first five pages. Remind them that this is not the time to make major changes to the story, they should have done that already! Instead, they should focus on fixing mistakes in the writing. Tell students to use the checklist at the end of the worksheet to remind them of the types of errors they should be looking for.

**Step Five: Share**

*10 minutes*

1. Have volunteers share mistakes they found or improvements they made to their pages. You may wish to have some volunteers write sentences they corrected on the board and show how they marked them up. Or have them hold up their work and explain what they did. Provide support and encouragement to students. Tell them that “cleaning up” writing is hard work, and sometimes tedious, but makes an enormous difference in whether people understand what is happening in their novels.

2. You may also wish to have students post “Before and After” paragraphs from their novels on a class bulletin board. Other students will benefit from seeing the types of grammatical and conventional edits classmates are making.

**Homework**

Tell students that when they are happy with their "big picture" revisions, they can begin proofreading and correcting their novels. Encourage them to do this in as methodical a manner as possible, ideally marking up entire chapters or even the whole novel on paper, before making edits to electronic files. Students who hand-wrote their novels may input marked corrections when and if they are able to type their work onto a computer. Make sure to check with students in the coming weeks and months to see who is still working on their novels and how the process is going.