

Literacy Tips



Tips for middle school educators on various topics such as grammar, writing, reading, spelling, vocabulary, cooperative learning and more.

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Tip #1: Remember to read everything the students write.

What this does not mean

This does not mean you have to **grade** everything they write, but you must at least read everything. Teenagers often disclose things in their writing that are cries for help, and you need to hear those cries and then find them the appropriate help. This does not mean you should ask them to write less because of the daunting job of reading 120 papers. Instead, try to do more in class sharing.

Table/Group Pass

Try a table/group pass. I let kids know in advance that their writing will be read by their peers and me. (Giving them a specific audience like that will eliminate some kids writing things that are way too personal for school.) After a fast write, for example, I have students pass their papers to the left. I randomly choose a group to join and put my paper in the pass, too. Everyone reads the paper in front of them. I have them "autograph" the paper to let me know it has been read. Keep passing papers around until they have had 3 - 4 readers.

After this becomes a comfortable routine, next have students go find friends in the classroom to share their writing. Again, have them sign papers to show papers have been read. Keep changing routines to keep the interest level high.

Many of you are comfortable with peer conferences, and that would be the next step for actually revising the writing; however, not all writing needs to be revised.

Keep the students writing so their fluency improves, but remember to read everything they write.

YOU still need to read everything

Even though you have students reading student work, ultimately you, as the teacher, still need to read everything that has been written. Remember to collect those pieces at the end of a sharing session so you can read them individually. You still don't have to grade everything, but they must be read. It is all for the safety of our kids.

