Essential Skill: Peer Feedback

Skateboard Story

TRANSCRIPT

HOOK 1

Hi, writers. It's Margaret.

I recently took a trip to visit my mom. We spent the afternoon cooking together—something we've done since I was a little kid.

At one point, we made spaghetti and meatballs featuring my mom's famous tomato sauce. Mom did most of the cooking, but every few minutes, she'd give me a spoonful to taste and ask for some feedback. She'd ask questions like, "What do you think?" "Does it need anything?" I responded, "Maybe a little more basil, and I think it could use a pinch of salt." A few minutes later, she gave me another taste. Now, it was perfect!

DISCUSSION 1

Discuss: What's one situation where you've helped someone make or do something better by giving them feedback?

HOOK 2

Maybe you said that you've given a friend feedback so they could learn a hard soccer move, or that you and your friend love to draw and color together, and you always give

each other feedback on each other's drawings. You may have said something else, and that's great!

Working with my mom in the kitchen and giving her feedback on her pasta sauce made me think about my two friends, Gillian and Kiaan—they create books together. Gillian is the writer, and Kiaan is an illustrator. Just like how my mom and I work together to make the sauce better, they work together giving each other feedback to make their book the best it can be.

They use a process called *peer review* to give each other feedback on each other's work and to suggest changes that could help it be stronger—it allows them to see things they might miss on their own.

For Gillian's story, the process works like this:

- Gillian writes her story and then shares it with Kiaan, along with any questions she might have.
- Kiaan then reads it and offers his feedback to Gillian.
- Gillian then takes the feedback and uses it to revise her story.
- The process then starts all over again.

Each time they use this process, her writing gets stronger!

Here's a section from one of Gillian's short stories:

> *"The girl loved to explore. The sun felt magical as she walked through the forest. She saw something that scared her. She took a deep breath, opened her book, and started to draw."*

Gillian liked what she had written, and it made sense to her. But would it make sense to a reader? She also had a few other questions: "Were there any confusing moments?" "Are there parts that need more details?"

Gillian is always a bit nervous when she first has to share her writing. That's why, after Kiaan finishes reading what Gillian has written, he starts by being kind and giving positive feedback, highlighting the parts that he really likes. "I really liked how you describe the sun. I also enjoyed the ending and how the girl overcame her fear."

Kiaan always tries to be kind and specific when giving his feedback. He understands that when you spend time on your work, getting feedback can be hard. Here are two different ways that Kiaan could give Gillian feedback:

1. It was good. You should add more details about the forest.

2. I liked your story, but I was confused because I didn't know what the girl saw in the forest.

DISCUSSION 2

Discuss: What do you notice about both pieces of feedback?

HOOK 3

I don't know what you said, but I think both of these are great examples of helpful feedback. They both include something kind and something specific that Gillian could do to make her writing stronger.

Kiaan knows that when he gives Gillian feedback, he needs to include specific ideas for what changes she could make. He'll first describe what the feedback is: "I'd like to know more about what the girl saw in the forest." And then he'll describe how Gillian can change her writing to make it better: "Maybe you could add details about what she saw including its name, how it looked, and how it moved."

After Gillian receives feedback from Kiaan, she decides what revisions she wants to make. When she's ready, she'll write a final version.

Here's her final version and the parts that Gillian changed using Kiaan's feedback:

> *"Emma loved to explore. The morning sun felt magical as she hiked through the forest. She suddenly saw a hairy spider hanging from a tree branch. At first, it scared her. But then, she took a deep breath, opened her sketchbook, and started to draw her discovery."*

Now it's your turn to give feedback on the peer review process. Working with a partner, you'll start by reading a story that Gillian wrote, and you'll help her make it stronger by providing ideas and specific feedback.

I'll get you started, step by step.

STEP 1

Get your supplies.

STEP 2

In today's lesson, you'll need someone to share ideas with. This could be a partner or someone you sit near. When everyone has a partner, click the arrow to go to the next step.

STEP 3

Gillian is working on a new story titled "Her New Ride." It's about a girl who gets a new skateboard and all the adventures that come with it.

On your worksheet, find the story "Her New Ride." Read the story to yourself.

Give a thumbs up when you're ready for the next step.

STEP 4

When giving feedback during a peer review, you always want to start off by being kind and mentioning something that you like about the writing. Maybe you really like how the story leads to a surprise, or you like something that the main character does in the story.

Discuss with your partner: What's one thing that you like about this story and why?

STEP 5

Find the section next to the smiley face on your worksheet. Finish the sentence by describing something you like about the story and why you liked it. If you need help, use your Idea Bank.

STEP 6

It's now time to give Gillian two specific ways that she could make her writing stronger. Remember, when you give specific feedback, there are two parts: the *what* and the *how*. You want to describe *what* the feedback is, and then *how* Gillian can change her writing to make it stronger.

Reread the story to yourself, looking for areas that you want to give feedback on. Is there anything that confuses you? Do you want to know more about a certain part? Can something be described using more details? Read the story and think about ways to make the story stronger.

Give a thumbs up when you're ready for the next step.

STEP 7

Find the "Suggestion #1" section on your worksheet. Using one of the sentence starters, describe what your first piece of feedback is.

If you chose, "I'd love to know more about..." make sure to describe exactly what it is that you want to know more about.

If you chose, "I was a little confused..." make sure to describe exactly what you were confused by.

Right now, you're only writing what your feedback is. You can leave the bottom line blank for now—you'll add that in a later step. Write your sentence here.

STEP 8

You now want to give Gillian specific ideas for how she can make her writing stronger. In the "Suggestion #1" section, find "You could try". Finish the sentence by describing specifically how Gillian could make her writing stronger here. If you need help, use your Idea Bank.

STEP 9

Take turns with your partner reading what you wrote for "Suggestion #1".

STEP 10

Now look for one more way Gillian could make her story better. Look for something you're curious about or a part that could be more interesting. Reread the story again and think about what feedback you want to give.

Give a silent thumbs up when you're ready for the next step.

STEP 11

Find the "Suggestion #2" section on your worksheet. For your second piece of feedback, describe what it is, here. If you need help, use your Idea Bank.

STEP 12

In the "Suggestion #2" section, use one of the sentence starters to describe how Gillian could make her writing stronger. If you need to reread the story, that's okay. If you need more help, use your Idea Bank. Describe how Gillian could make her writing stronger here.

STEP 13

Take turns with your partner reading what you wrote for "Suggestion #2".

WRAP UP

Great job, writers! Using the peer review process, you've carefully read Gillian's writing, identified parts that you liked, and given Gillian specific feedback for how she could make her writing stronger. You've also been kind and specific in the way that you've given her your feedback. She now has lots of new ideas for how she can revise her story, and she's ready to work on a brand new draft!

So, whenever you find yourself using the peer review process to make your writing better, just remember: be kind and specific. And let this powerful peer review process turn your writing into the best it can be.

I'll see you next time, writers!