

Grammar Teaching Tips

Introduction to Proof-reading Strategies

Note: I start grammar instruction here, because it fits grammar at the appropriate point in the writing process, and also, because many errors are just careless ones that the student has overlooked. Teaching proofreading first helps to empower the student and also let them and you figure out which errors are caused by carelessness and which are from lack of grammatical knowledge.

Explain reason for proof-reading . . . spell check/grammar check flaws, importance of error-free prose.

Two best methods: reading aloud (slowly)—because the ear will catch things the eye doesn't—and reading backwards, last sentence then next to last sentence.

Have students read the last page of their textual analysis backwards before turning it in, correcting any errors they catch by hand. Have them tally the number of errors they caught. Pay special attention to sentence boundaries.

Alternative: have partner proofread the last page. Swap papers and decide if you agree with your partner's corrections.

Introduction to Grammar Work

Have students bring to class their first paper you've responded to (textual analysis or??).

Ask them to highlight the errors with a highlighter, so they can easily pick them out in the text.

Have them count the number of grammatical errors you indicated (I circle grammatical errors) and write that number at the top of the paper.

Explain why grammar is important . . . how writing gets judged, fairly or unfairly, on the basis of correctness . . . Also, grammar is important for its effect on meaning, etc. Explain why starting to work on grammar now---it's part of the final stages of polishing a piece of writing.

Ask them to create a list in their notebook of the types of errors they've made in this paper. Have them list the errors in order of frequency--most frequent first, so they know where to concentrate their attention. Then, refer them to Hacker to find the rules governing that type of error and hand-write the corrections on their papers and turn in to you. Check to be sure they understood and corrected the errors accurately.

If you want, you can combine this individual work with a mini-lesson on a particular grammar mistake you've noticed is common on a lot of their papers.