

The Empowering Writers Authors' Group Model

- 1.) Begin after the entire class has written to a topic – ex. the class has written reports on the woodland habitat. – the main ideas are: animals, plants, birds in that habitat
- 2.) Read through their papers with an eye for common strengths and weaknesses – identify just one or two common weaknesses you'd like to address –
ex. Elaboration – “What does it look like? Why is it important?”
- 3.) Select a **representative sample** – a piece that illustrates a skill MOST students need help with. Remove the student author's name and project this piece for the class. THIS IS A WHOLE CLASS ACTIVITY.
- 4.) Point out and review the skill you will be focusing on – ex. “Class, today I want you to look at this piece and think about the ways the author used the detail-generating questions to elaborate on their facts. The detail generating questions are:
 - What does it “look” like?
 - Why is it important?Let's read paragraph 2 and ask ourselves how well the author used these questions to enhance her or his writing.
- 5.) Locate the places where the student simply stated facts, or used a grocery list. Discuss this. Then, ask students how they might use the detail generating questions to improve the paragraph. Use a marker to write in revisions.
Ex. The student may have written something like this:
You can find lots of birds in the woods.
Your class revision:
Look into the trees and bushes, along the banks of the stream, and even on the forest floor and you'll see a variety of birds. Birds help the forest habitat by eating harmful insects and helping to spread and germinate trees and plants.
- 6.) Read the “before” and “after” versions of the piece.
- 7.) Finally, send the entire class back to their seats to revise the **same section** of their respective pieces, applying the skills demonstrated in the whole class modeling session.

In this way **everyone** benefits from the discussion of one author's piece. This is analogous to the way authors in the “real world” work together in authors' groups, learning from their peers, sharpening their “author's eyes”, and building confidence through review and reinforcement. It also is an excellent way to maximize instructional time.