

## Authors' Circles

### Purpose

Students will review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning and clarity.

### Materials

*For each group of 3 to 4 students:* dictionary, thesaurus, small slips of scrap paper, index cards, sticky notes, colored pens or pencils, pencils, paper

*For each student:* copy of *BLM Revision List for Authors' Circles*

### Activity

#### A. Pre-Activity Preparation

1. Have students complete a short (one- to two-page) profile of a favorite author to use for this activity. (Students can collect information from publishers, libraries, the Internet, and information from the biographies contained within the author's books.) Encourage students to think of a good way to organize their information to provide a clear picture of a part of the author's personality. Have them provide a conclusion that restates in brief what they have learned about the author and draws a connection to the author's works.
2. Explain the terms *revision* and *editing* to students. Tell students that during this activity, the class will be concentrating on revision, which entails looking at the ideas of the paper to see if they make sense to the reader and provide a complete argument or picture. Explain that often authors will revise a piece several times and as a result see the message of the piece become clearer and more vivid.

#### B. Authors' Circles

1. Set up several "authors' circles" around the room that are stocked with colored pens or pencils, a dictionary, a thesaurus, and sticky notes.
2. Have students form groups of three or four and seat themselves at the authors' circles. Give each member of the group a copy of *BLM Revision List for Authors' Circles*.

(continued)

EXTENDING  
THE



ACTIVITY

Have students choose a writing and editing partner and write a collaborative piece. Have each partner read and review the piece and have the team compare comments and make revisions. Have the teams share their pieces with the class.

connecting  
across the  
curriculum



#### Science

Have the class research a mysterious scientific phenomenon and incorporate it into a science fiction story to be revised.

Standards Links  
8.5.1, 8.7.10

**Activity (continued)**

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3. Have students read their author profiles in turn. After each student reads, have the group members state their impressions of the author and have the writer of the profile discuss what he/she was trying to convey.
4. Have the group, including the student writer, work together to fill out one copy of the BLM. When the group has finished hearing each author profile, each student writer should have a copy of the checklist that has been filled out for his/her work.
5. Allow students time to revise their author profiles, using the suggestions on their revision checklists.

**C. Close the Activity**





1. When the assignment is completed, have students tell about some of the changes they made when they revised their profiles.
2. Have students record what they learned about the revision process in their writing journals and list ideas for stories or other papers that might have occurred to them as they were revising.

**Classroom Assessment**

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**Basic Concepts and Processes**

After students have completed the activity, ask them the following questions about the revision process:

-  Why is it important to revise material?
  -  How many times do you revise a short paper?
  -  What did you look for when revising your author profile?
  -  If you could revise your author profile one more time, what would you change?
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Revision List for Authors' Circles

Revision is an important part of the writing process. The author you studied revised his or her work repeatedly, just as you are doing now. Read your profile to your authors' circle and then discuss and fill out the following checklist together.

Does this profile present a clear picture of this author? \_\_\_\_\_

Description of the author as portrayed in this profile (one or two sentences)

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Does each paragraph convey a main idea? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a paragraph or some information that doesn't seem to belong? \_\_\_\_\_

What is it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Suggestions on how the author could link the information to the main point,  
or reorganize a part of the paper:

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Does the conclusion sum up what you have learned? \_\_\_\_\_

Is it a satisfying ending? \_\_\_\_\_

Brainstorm ideas for the conclusion and write them here:

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# Revision List for Authors' Circles

## Teacher Directions

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Distribute one copy of this list to every member of the authors' circles. Have a member read his/her author profile aloud to the rest of the group and then have the group confer about how to revise the profile using a copy of the revision list as a discussion guide. Direct the group to fill out one copy of the revision list together and give it to the student writer to refer to when revising the profile. Repeat the process with each member of the group, until each writer has a completed revision checklist. Allow students time to revise their profiles and to incorporate some of the suggestions from their authors' circle.

## Answer Key

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Not applicable.