

## Responding to Student Writing

### Unit 3: The aims of this unit are:

- To get to know different forms and types of teacher written feedback
- To be aware of the consequences and aims of different types of feedback
- To be aware of different teacher roles
- To practice giving constructive feedback.

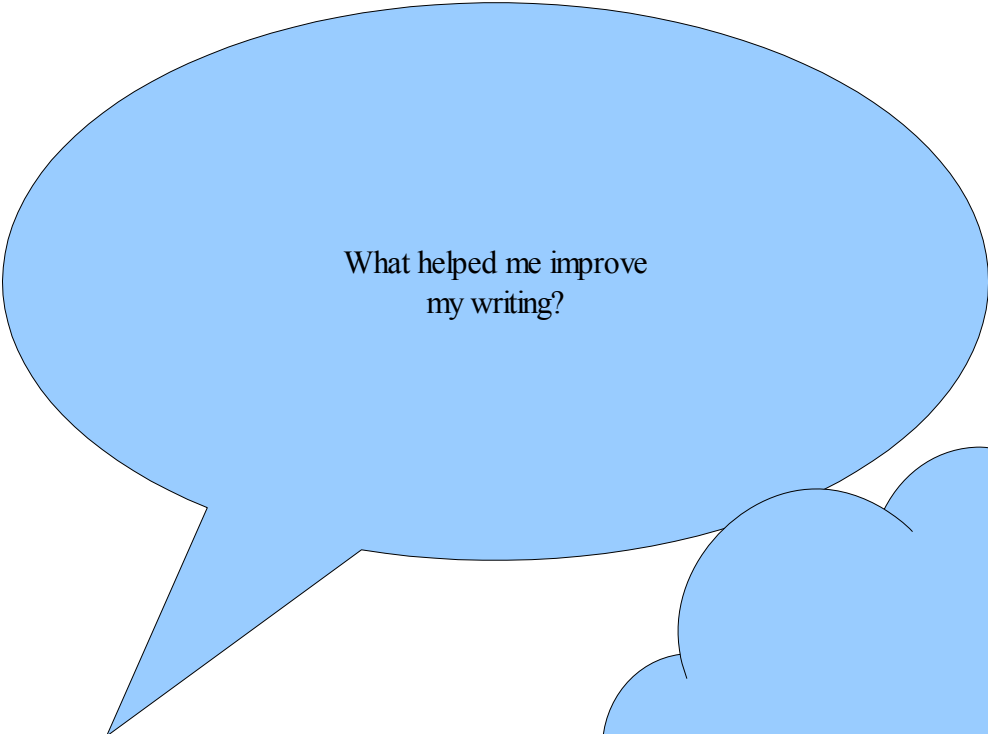
### *Looking at your own experience as a learner:*

What types of response or feedback have you received on your writing?

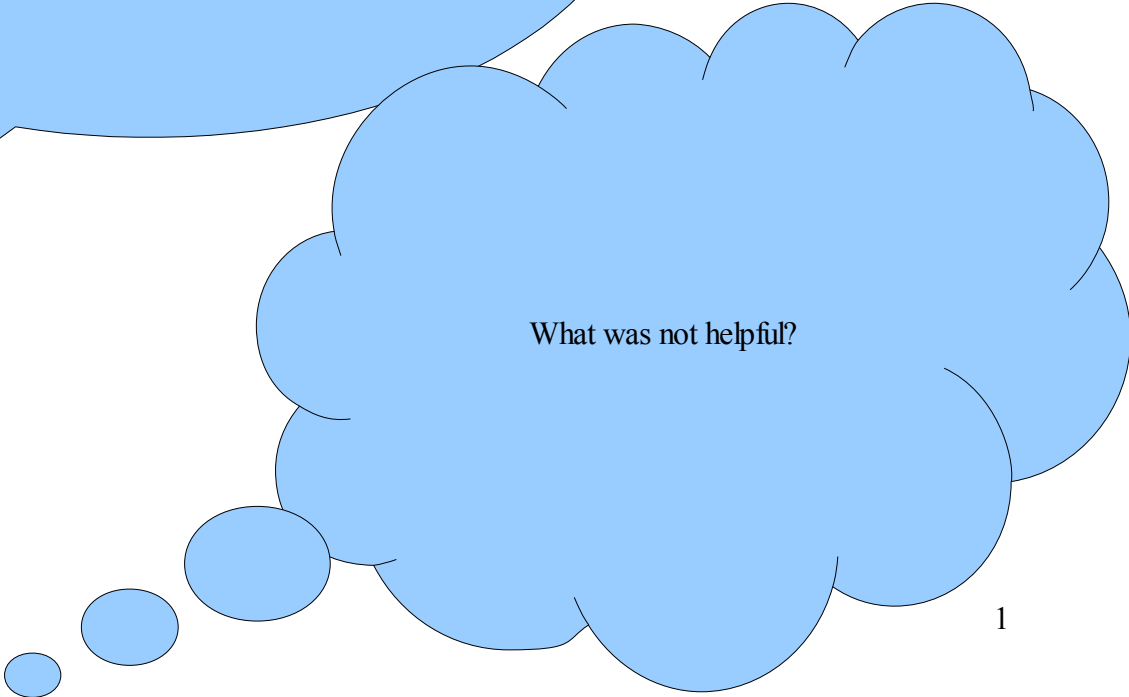
When in school, did you revise your texts and write second or third drafts or did you only correct the surface mistakes?

How did your teachers mark the mistakes? Did they suggest solutions?

What kind of feedback helped you improve your writing? What was not helpful?



What helped me improve  
my writing?



What was not helpful?

If you have grown up and gone to school in Austria, chances are you have had very little experience with detailed feedback on your writing or with process-writing and peer-conferencing. In Austrian schools writing is often seen from an evaluator's and examiner's point of view, whereas teachers in America will often take on different roles when reading and marking a student's texts. Peer-conferencing and feedback given from the point of view of audience or assistant can be very helpful for the learner and will also comment on the content and organization of a text rather than only focusing on formal mistakes. Let us look at different forms and types of feedback in turn:

*The purpose of feedback and marking is to help learners improve their English.*

### **To correct or not to correct...**

The first question we need to ask ourselves is whether to correct all the mistakes in a student's writing. Hyland (2003:185) says that 'teacher written feedback should respond to all aspects of student texts: structure, organization, style, content, and presentation, but it is not necessary to cover every aspect on every draft at every stage of the teaching-writing cycle.'

What do you think of this view? What criteria could be used to decide when and what to correct?

Once you have decided **what** type of errors to correct you will face the problem of **how** to mark or correct them.

**Forms of feedback:**

Which of the following forms of feedback discussed by Hyland (2003: 177-209) have you experienced as a learner? What are the **pros and cons** of each one? What **purposes** do they serve?

**Commentary:**(Marginal and end comments responding to the students' work as readers rather than evaluating what they have done.)

**Rubrics/ assessment scales:**

**Minimal marking / correction codes**

**Taped commentary**

**Electronic feedback**

**Teacher-student conferences**

**Peer feedback**

### Teacher Roles:

When responding to student writing teachers can take on different basic roles and formulate their feedback accordingly. Tribble ((1996: 119) describes four basic roles a teacher can take on:

As **audience** the teacher can respond personally and directly by showing surprise, asking questions to clarify certain points, adding personal views etc. As audience the teacher responds to the student's ideas, feelings and experiences and communicates his/her reactions to the writer.

As **assistants** teachers help students improve their texts by giving specific tips and possible solutions. In this role the teacher sees the text as work in progress and helps learners expand their language and text-writing skills. Feedback and comments given by an 'assistant' take the learner one step further in the sense of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development.

As **evaluators** teachers look at the piece of writing as a finished product. They comment on the learner's performance in different areas such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary.

In Austria teachers also take on the role of **examiners** who should provide an objective assessment of a student's performance.

**Look at the following examples and decide which of the four roles the teachers have adopted in each one.**

**Task:** Write a letter to the editor in response to T.C. Boyle's short story „Top of the Food Chain“. Imagine the story was true and had just recently happened. Level: Year 5, GIBS

### Top of the Food Chain

Dear Editor:

First of all I want to say that I think it's very egoistically and condescending ~~from~~ the Americans to go to a poorer country and try out new chemicals, as reported in the New York Times last Monday. As I'm a scientist I know very well about the consequences of DDT.

I mean it could have destroyed the whole country.

Secondly I think that it's <sup>a</sup>shame for our country to know that our own scientists didn't even waste any brain power to think about the consequences of using DDT.

In my point of view these scientists should be punished or get some kind of penalty for doing blindfold experiments at the expense of others.

adj ×

That's a great letter, Katja. Your criticism is very clear. Just clean up the little errors and show me your 2<sup>nd</sup> draft for assessment.

Tip: you pay a penalty

I absolutely agree! Their behavior was absolutely irresponsible and unacceptable.

**Task:** Imagine you are one of the soldiers in Henry Treece's poem 'Conquerors'. Write a letter home describing your experience and feelings.

**Level:** Year 7

### **Conquerors**

*By sundown we came to a hidden village  
Where all the air was still  
And no sound met our tired ears, save  
For the sorry drip of rain from blackened trees  
And the melancholy song of swinging gates.  
Then through a broken pane some of us saw  
A dead bird in a rusting cage, still  
Pressing his thin tattered breast against the bars,  
His beak wide open. And  
As we hurried through the weed-grown street,  
A gaunt dog started up from some dark place  
And shambled off on legs as thin as sticks  
Into the wood, to die at least in peace.  
No one had told us victory was like this;  
Not one amongst us would have eaten bread  
Before he'd filled the mouth of the gray child  
That sprawled, stiff as stone, before the shattered door.  
There was not one who did not think of home.*

**by Henry Treece**

March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Dearest Mary,

It feels like a long time since the last time I saw you. I know it has only been 6 months since I left home but I miss you a lot. In fact, I have never felt more homesick in my whole life. Apart from that I am perfectly healthy and fine.

I guess you have heard of our army's victory in the northern part of the country last week; the enemy has finally surrendered and you will be glad to hear that there is no more menace here anymore.

However there is none of the relieved and joyful atmosphere you'd expect at such a moment. I've never worked so hard in my life and understood so little. After victory was declared our squad was sent for reparation in some of the small villages.

Yesterday we arrived in the village of Kleinstein which had been bombed two weeks ago. It was a horrific ~~view~~<sup>sight</sup>. It seemed ~~like~~<sup>as if</sup> as if there was no life, as if even the plants and animals were shocked ~~about~~<sup>at</sup> the destructive creatures they are meeting.

Then this woman came to the clinic to seek help. She was desperate; two of her children were wounded and the small one literally starving, and weak. The doctors did what they could and we gave her what we have. But there wasn't much joy in her face. The whole time she stared at me, mute, as if frozen.

There are countless men, women and children dead, the ones left behind are still horror-struck and shattered.

We can't offer ~~this~~<sup>the</sup> people anything of any significance.

I wake up every morning, exhausted. By the end of the day all I want to do is ~~drink~~<sup>get drunk</sup>. And I wonder whether this is what we fought for; whether this is the victory we were seeking. I can't wait to come home.

Kiss my little girl for me!

Andrew Jansen.

① Do you work at the clinic?  
How did you meet her?

That's an excellent letter, Fortuna!  
Very plausible! Thoughtful and considerate!

Task Achievement: 30/30

Organization and Cohesion: 20/20

Range of Vocabulary and Grammar: 20/20

Accuracy of Grammar, Vocab and Spelling: 30/30

100%

**Task :** Write a letter about your summer holidays and include three lies. I will then try to find your lies, so don't make them too obvious.

Level: Beginning of year 2, GIBS

Dear Mrs. Pölzleitner,

My summer holidays were fantastic! I was in America for three weeks. I was there with my mom, my dad, my brother, my <sup>①</sup>cats and my grandparents. We traveled by airplane <sup>for about</sup> ~~around~~ 10 hours (to New York City). When we arrived in NYC we were driven by a limousine <sup>②</sup> to our hotel (Gershwin Hotel, 5<sup>th</sup> avenue, 27<sup>nd</sup> street). We ~~stood~~ <sup>x</sup> there for one week, then we drove to Cape Cod where we stood in the house of a very nice couple.

We also went ~~for~~ <sup>③</sup> whale watching there and we saw eight whales and twenty dolphins. But the weather was not this good. It was raining and very windy and my mom felt seasick and she became green in her face.

After we left Cape Cod, we drove to my aunt Barbara in Portland (Maine). She lives in a very nice ~~apartment~~ <sup>apartment</sup>. There we went ~~for~~ shopping and swimming. The temperature of the water <sup>was</sup> ~~has~~ only 15 to 16 degrees. And we ate a lot of ice cream.

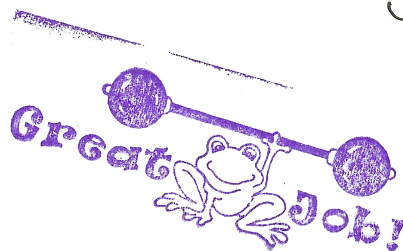
bye from  
Rosa

Wow, you've had fantastic holidays!  
How did you like the Gershwin Hotel?  
It's a bit crazy, isn't it?  
☺

① ② ③  
Have I spotted your lies correctly?  
☺

Tips & Comments

- you stay in a hotel  
we stayed there ...



### *Writing Feedback*

Writing feedback is certainly one of the most challenging jobs of a language teacher. Feedback can easily be misunderstood and hurt a learner's feelings and pride. If feedback is too positive or too vague, it is not helpful either. Look at the following tips for writing helpful, constructive feedback.

- Model and encourage a growth-oriented attitude towards mistakes. Encourage students to experiment with language and collect the corrected phrases as new vocab items.
- Be aware of your different teacher roles and use them consciously.
- Write personalized comments opening a dialog with the student and be as specific as you can. Avoid sweeping comments. Wherever you are confused or surprised ask the question you have on your mind. What exactly needs to be improved? Where are you confused? What did you expect? Where were you surprised?...
- Provide guidance where necessary (give concrete language or text-specific tips) .
  - E.g: “You find a **clock** on the churchtower but you wear a **watch** around your wrist.”
- Encourage active problem solving on the part of the students, for example by minimal marking in areas that are within the student's reach.
  - Give hints in form of keywords. (e.g. Habit! Or “NOW!” if you want to point the student’s attention to the correct usage of the present simple or present progressive. Use the keywords from David Newby’s Grammar – if the students are familiar with the notional concepts.)
- Start with a positive comment, then specify the areas that need improvement and try to formulate suggestions for improvement rather than criticism. Use some of the mitigation strategies described in Hyland (2003: 191):
  - paired comments (combining criticism with praise or suggestions)
  - hedged comments (some, sometimes, there is possibly a..., it seems that...)
  - personal attribution (I'm sorry, but... I find it hard to understand...I am surprised to see..)
  - interrogative form (Did you proofread your text? Does this argument convince you?)
- Do not overcorrect or cover the page in red ink. (Tip: Use friendly colors.) Focus on a small number of important errors that the learner can deal with.

Use numbers or letters to mark passages you want to comment upon. Writing comments at the end of the paper is less invasive than writing long comments in the margin or between lines.

**How helpful are the following comments?**

*A: Your essay is disorganized and incoherent. I cannot see your point.*

*B: It is sometimes difficult to follow your arguments. See my marginal comments and questions for details. To convey your opinion more clearly construct each paragraph according to our standard rule: Topic sentence + supporting arguments + summary sentence and/or link to the next paragraph. Concentrate on three to four main arguments rather than listing a mixture of pro and con ideas.*

*This is a sensitive and thoughtful short story! It would be nice to hear more of the conversation between mother and daughter. When the mother-daughter mold is broken, you mention that a friendship evolves. Yet can this be a friendship comparable to others? Can this be called a friendship or is it something more? Addressing such questions would enrich this story which is, as it is, very mature.*

**Organization:** *It's often unclear who is speaking. Use names to make your story clearer. ad 4: To better convey the transition between mother talking to daughter, start a new paragraph here.*

**Content:**

*You have written a sad and melancholic story! I read it and want to say "No, it cannot end like this. The narrator has to learn how to fly too! Otherwise it's much too sad and hopeless. The narrator needs to realize, from this image of the seagull flying against the wind, how the human can find the strength to fly with his or her spirit against the violent wind!"*

**Vocab and Style:**

The student wrote: A strong wind goes up and the seagull can no longer stand it and goes up back into the air and floats.

**Comment:** *Instead of "goes", words like "blows", "gusts," "howls", "rushes" would enrich your story. Is the seagull thrown up into the wind? Does it rally float, or must it flap its wings desperately to stay airborne? A bird can fly, soar, glide, dive, angle into the wind; a balloon floats.*

**More examples of feedback comments. See how the above tips have been used.**

- This paragraph needs a little work...
- The mechanical errors get in the way.... yet it is evident that you have put a great deal of effort into the tone of your story.
- You employ a nice variety of verbs and vocabulary.
- It seems that you intend to say something like "....."
- This is good writing, Lisa! However it seems strange that...
- "wooshed" is a fantastic word, perhaps not exactly fitting the...
- Is "disappointing" strong enough to describe this deeply touching frustration?
- Instead of "go" words like "rush, dash, run, hurry..." would enrich your story.
- Paragraphs are indented in English
- The various mechanical errors get in the way of enjoying the story.
- This is a sensitive and thoughtful story...
- This is a riveting story.....
- You have written a sad and melancholic story...
- You have written a very romantic story....
- To begin new paragraphs allows the reader to better consume your story in bite-sized portions!
- "Walk" sounds so calm and collected. I imagine that most people were racing or crashing or running down the stairs in that situation.
- Your intention could be better expressed: "....."
- The various mechanical errors distract me from the idea behind the story which is quite good...
- awkward, perhaps: .....
- This is unclear. One possibility: ..... Another.....
- This is very romantic, but would the moon, which sets in the west, be able to guide him? It could simply help light his way...
- Your ending is very effective : a really beautiful metaphor
- You are experimenting well with vocabulary!
- I am a bit lost here. I thought John was eating breakfast at home. Now he seems to be talking to a friend. How did he meet him? Where is he now?

### ***HOMework:***



Now try your hand at marking and giving feedback to the following learner texts. Use a variety of appropriate strategies discussed in class and try to show encouragement rather than harsh criticism.

**Text sample 1:****My Dream Job**

Describe the job you would like to have one day, what the job requirements (e.g. education, skills, qualifications) are and what you think your chances of getting such a job one day are.

Sometimes when I'm sitting at home, making some homework, I feel boring and ask myself why I'm doing all this. But then I think of my dream and it's not so hard to get on with my work.

I'd like to introduce to you my dream job. It's the position of a town councillor competent for town planning. A year ago I got a summer job with the town council and there I had met the man who does this job for our town. Since then I'm dreaming of getting this position once. Of course, it's hard to get this job.

First you need a university degree. I wanted to do political science and economics, but you can only do these subjects in Vienna. As I can't afford studying in Vienna, I'm thinking now I could do architecture in Graz. That would give me some training in town planning which is extremely important for a town councillor.

The next important thing is to know many important people, which have an influential position in a political party or in the government.

The main reason why I'd like to do this job is that you're your own boss. You can change many of your ideas into practice and do something against things that you think need change. Moreover, you can earn quite a lot of money.

**To get my dream job, I'll have to work hard in order to finish my study successfully.  
And I need good luck unless my dreams won't get true.**

## Text Sample 2:

Task:

*We have read an article that claims that people in the US are more patriotic than people on the “Old Continent” and that this patriotism is a consequence of the history of the United States. What about patriotism here in Austria? Are we patriotic? Try to answer these questions and compare attitudes here with attitudes in the US for an article for our school magazine, suggest a headline.*

### The good and the bad patriots

Many people in Austria reject to be called patriots. They seem to think that being called a patriot is the same as being called a Nazi. There is no denying that a destructive form of patriotism was an essential part of the Nazi ideology. In that days it was very important to be a “good” German, and those which were not German were discriminated and made guilty for everything that was bad, such as crime, the bad economical situation, even diseases. In times of economical difficulties patriotism is often being abused. However, I belief that there isn’t any danger of such abuse in Austria right now.

Most Austrians are, in fact, quite proud of their country, what is shown by their enthusiasm for Austrian skiers or football players, or by buying the novels from Austrian writers, and so on. But only a small group of people feel superior than members of other nations or races.

As far as our special relationship to Germany is concerned, I guess most Austrians believe now that Austria is an independent nation and shall remain one. For more than fifty years we have now an own government, an own foreign policy, and although we speak German, or better Austrian German, the language we speak is not the same language than the language spoken in Germany.

Some people say that the Americans are better patriots than we are. I think that American patriotism is complete different from European patriotism. There is no doubt that the Americans have developped their special brand of patriotism. The USA was found because many people were trying to escape political or religious prosecution in their home countries. They wanted that the country that they had emigrated to became the first really democratic country of the world. So it seems quite logical that in America there is a form of patriotism that has nothing to do with language or tradition but is based on a certain spirit, that is typical of this country. The Americans are proud of their country because the US is the superpower that defences human rights all over the world. And the terrorist attacks of the recent past have made them even more patriotic than they used to be.

**Peer Conferencing:**

Peer conferencing can be very helpful for both parties. The author of the text will get helpful feedback on different levels and the feedback giver will learn to read a text critically. Depending on the specific genre and aims of the writing task, both learners will focus on different aspects of a text such as formal aspects, accuracy, content, organization, register etc.

Peer conferencing is not easy for learners and must be introduced and practiced as a specific skill. The first peer-comments may be very flattering, unspecific or even aggressive. Students who have received helpful feedback from their teacher, will easily learn this skill by imitating their teacher's feedback behavior. It also helps to give students clear feedback rules and to teach an introductory skills-lesson on giving feedback using one text and inviting the class to suggest improvements. The following peer-conference forms may also be helpful in the beginning stages or after introducing a new genre. Each of these forms focuses on a particular text-type and guides the learners through the important features of this genre. After a few rounds of guided feedback, most learners will be able to give helpful, constructive feedback without the help of such forms.

Look at the feedback forms and the free learner comments on the following pages. Then design a short feedback form for an oral book presentation of a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> form. What criteria might be helpful?

***Peer-feedback: Book Presentation***

**Peer Editing Form: Essay**

Give your paper and this form to a classmate. Ask him or her to read through your text. Then tell this person to answer the questions below. Ask your friend to provide you with specific comments that will help you improve your paper.

**Peer editor's name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title of paper:** \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Comments, Suggestions, Tips</b>
Do you get a clear picture of the topic after the first reading?	
Is the introduction clear and interesting?	
Have I conveyed my main point(s) clearly and convincingly? Can you find a clear thesis statement?	
Does the paper stick to the topic or have I included any irrelevant information or arguments?	
Do you have enough information? Are my arguments clear? Have I confused you at some points? What do you miss?	
Have I answered all questions of the assignment?	
Does the title fit the piece? Can you suggest a better one?	
Is the writing smooth, logically sequenced, coherent?	
Does each paragraph contain one main idea?	
Is my conclusion convincing? Are YOU convinced?	
Have I used fitting vocabulary (descriptive adjectives, vivid verbs, specific nouns) or is my writing wordy? Please mark passages that need to be reworded.	
Have the paragraphs been indented?	
Have I used correct language (grammar and spelling)? Please mark any passages that need to be corrected.	

**Please use the back of this sheet for additional comments.**

## Peer Conference: Magazine Texts

Give your text and this form to a classmate. Ask him or her to read through your text. Then tell this person to answer the questions below.

Ask your friend to provide you with specific comments that will help you improve your text.

**Peer editor's name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title of text:** \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Comments, Suggestions, Tips</b>
Is my text interesting? Does it hold your attention? What could I add to make it more interesting?	
Is my text clearly organized or are you confused at any point? Where? Is there anything you do not quite understand?	
Is the introduction strong and interesting? Do you want to read on? How could I improve it?	
Do you have enough information? Should I add anything? What?	
Is my conclusion convincing? How could I improve it?	
Does the title fit the text? Does it sound interesting? Can you think of a better title?	
Have I quoted my sources properly?	
Have I used correct language (grammar and spelling)? Can you give me any language tips?	
How do you like the layout and presentation of my text? What could be improved?	

**Please use the back of this sheet for additional comments.**

**Peer Conference: Stories**

Give your story and this form to a classmate. Ask him or her to read through your text. Then tell this person to answer the questions below. Ask your friend to provide you with specific comments that will help you improve your story.

**Peer editor's name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title of story:** \_\_\_\_\_

	Comments, Suggestions, Tips
1. Is my story interesting? Does it hold your attention? Did you find a boring passage that I should revise? Which one???	
2. Is my story clearly organized or are you confused at any point? If so, where?	
3. Do the main characters come alive? Can you imagine them well? Do we know how they feel, what they think...? How could I make them more real?	
4. Do the main characters have good reasons for their actions? Do we understand them well?	
5. Are the main events realistic? Could they really happen? How could I make them more realistic?	
7. Have I described the setting well? Can you imagine where the story plays? Do you see, hear, smell... what the characters see, hear, smell...? If not, what do you miss?	
8. Have I used good names for my characters and places? Can you suggest any better ones?	
9. Have I used good vocabulary (lots of adjectives, vivid verbs) Can you suggest any additional words I should use?	
10. Have I used correct language (grammar and spelling)?	Please mark my errors in the story.
11. Please check my use of the tenses. Have I switched tenses a lot? Have I used the past simple to talk about <i>events</i> and the past progressive to describe the background ( <i>circumstances</i> )?	
Does my story have a good ending? Can you suggest any changes?	
Does the title fit the story? Can you suggest a better one?	
Do you have any further comments or suggestions?	

Writer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Peer Editing Form #1

Peer editor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Manuscript title: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Things I like best about this piece of writing are

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2. To make your text better , I suggest that you \_\_\_\_\_

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**Basic Peer Feedback:**

24.9.2023

Feedback for: CHILD LABOUR in big companies!

First of all I really have to say that's a REALLY good topic to write about, because with this text you really open the reader's eyes!! But I think you could add your own personal thoughts about what those companies like Milka and Cappy<sup>are</sup> doing. You could maybe put your thoughts either at the top, where you wrote "the following text is about..." or at the bottom after you write about what "Cappy" is doing for a crime! But you can decide yourself. I think the graphic is very good and you wrote a very catchy title.

Feedback for: STARMANIA NG

I think the text is very <sup>well</sup> good written. You get very much information about the to-dates and about the candidates.

- But I would write the names of the candidates, the web-page-address and the to-dates in different colors.

\*Bobo Schercher

Feedback for: Starmania NG

I think your text is great. I like that you know all the names and details

Just write it thinner. - I agree!  
= a different font  
Doris

Feedback book for:  
"the orks!"

- I like your text very much! It's a very interesting topic for readers who like fantasy. It's a good idea to write on the end of the text your own comment!

also

- I would put pictures from Orks and the other figures. Write also more about tribes, like: what they do what they like and their enemi

The title isn't catchy enough I think. I would call it something like:  
Who are the top 10 in Austria?  
Read it and you'll know it!

I like your small comments, they're great! I also like the layout! I would change the title, just this.

Yours Martina

I think the title is not catchy enough but you can write something like:  
Do you know the Top 10 in Austria?  
But your comments are very good.  
I also like your beautiful layout!

Yours Vanessa

**More advanced feedback samples**

Year 7 and 8

*Dear Sarah,*

*I have just finished reading your story and I find it really good. It was unpredictable and unexpected. At the parts where Paul is afraid you used short sentences and I think that has a good effect! Also the description in the beginning is very good.*

*Maybe you could describe Paul more and also put more description into the part when the neighbor comes into his room. Like maybe, 'the door creaked and the footsteps got louder...' so there is more suspense. Otherwise I enjoyed reading your story.*

*Victoria**Dear Xin,*

I find your story very confusing indeed. It's well written and all, good vocab, but the content is confusing. So are the characters, if you can call them that. Who on earth are Sue and Dan, are they Anthony's parents? What Anthony's father says at the end is totally unexpected, and doesn't seem to fit to the rest of the story. 'Gay people don't go to heaven. Anthony you know that? You can pray for them, but it won't help.' According to that sentence it would seem that a friend of Anthony's is gay, and Anthony is praying for him. You definitely have to explain a little more, the story isn't coherent. And the end is very abrupt as well, and leaves the reader (me anyways) very confused. The scene where he and his brother are running, and Anthony's bible hits the mud seems to be more connected to his promise not to cry rather than being an indication that he's gay. So, you should try and make the whole thing a bit clearer, and if Anthony is supposed to be gay, then make him gay.

All in all the story is good, but confusing and incoherent. The language and so on and so forth is great as usual, there are still some small mistakes, but nothing too bad. So work on it a bit, and it'll be great!

*Ben**Dear Christoph,*

*I can see very well that the hectic atmosphere of a metropolitan area like New York has inspired you. The main character comes across very good, he is a perfect 'victim' of Wall Street. I also think that the mobile phone as the symbol for his society fits perfectly. What you could add are some street names. You could think of some street or place which stands for his behavior like Times Square or something close to Wall Street. At the end you could describe the fact that he feels irrelevant more indirectly. Instead of letting him scream his situation out you could portrait him being lost in the City and feeling out of touch with the rest of the world. Besides this I really have no complains, well done.*

*Arno***Writer's answer to his friend's tips:**

I really have to admit, that this sort of correction/first feedback was of great help to me. To be honest it helped more than I had expected. Despite the obvious fact that the reader found some mistakes, this exercise even encouraged me to read through the text again after some while and even to find some mistakes by myself. I guess the reason for this is that if you leave the text for at least 24 hours and afterwards read through it again, yo may see some extracts from a different and more objective point of view.

All in all I included all the corrections made by my first reader, apart from the word 'opponent' (on the first page), for which I didn't manage to find another similar and more fitting word.

**HOMEWORK:**

Respond to the following two text samples and give feedback to the learners. Take on different roles (audience, assistant, evaluator) that seem fitting and choose appropriate marking strategies to point out the mistakes.

If you are unsure about certain language problems, post a comment in our **online discussion forum**. Please also try to answer some of your peers' questions there.

After discussing the feedback in class, revise and improve it and collect your work for your course portfolio. Collect difficult language points in your TRF.

**ASSIGNMENT: Choose one of the two ballads and write a newspaper article about the events, as if they had just happened yesterday.**

**John Hardy** was a brave little man,  
He carried two guns ev'ry day.  
Killed him a man in the West Virginia  
land,  
Oughta seen poor Johnny gettin' away,  
Lord, Lord,  
Oughta seen poor Johnny gettin' away.

John Hardy was standin' at the barroom  
door,  
He didn't have a hand in the game,  
Up stepped his woman and threw down  
fifty cents,  
Says, "Deal my man in the game, Lord,  
Lord...."

John Hardy lost that fifty cents,  
It was all he had in the game,  
He drew the forty-four that he carried by  
his side  
Blowed out that poor Negro's brains,  
Lord, Lord....

John Hardy had ten miles to go,  
And half of that he run,  
He run till he come to the broad river  
bank,  
He fell to his breast and he swum, Lord,  
Lord....

He swum till he came to his mother's  
house,  
"My boy, what have you done?"  
"I've killed a man in the West Virginia  
Land,  
And I know that I have to be hung, Lord,  
Lord...."

He asked his mother for a fifty-cent piece,  
"My son, I have no change."  
"Then hand me down my old forty-four  
And I'll blow out my agurvatin' [sic]  
brains, Lord, Lord...."

John Hardy was lyin' on the broad river  
bank,  
As drunk as a man could be;  
Up stepped the police and took him by the  
hand,  
Sayin' "Johnny, come and go with me,  
Lord, Lord...."

John Hardy had a pretty little girl,  
The dress she wore was blue.  
She come a-skipin' through the old jail  
hall  
Sayin', "Poppy, I'll be true to you, Lord,  
Lord...."

John Hardy had another little girl,  
The dress that she wore was red,  
She came a-skipin' through the old jail  
hall  
Sayin' "Poppy, I'd rather be dead, Lord,  
Lord...."

They took John Hardy to the hangin'  
ground,  
They hung him there to die.  
The very last words that poor boy said,  
"My forty gun never told a lie, Lord,  
Lord...." LYRICS AS REPRINTED IN ALAN  
LOMAX, *FOLK SONGS OF NORTH AMERICA*,  
GARDEN CITY, 1960

## Learner Text A: GIBS year 7

## Newspaper article based upon the poem 'John Hardy'

## Desperate man shot Negro after loosing money in bar

Yesterday at noon, John E. Hardy, former horse dealer was sentenced to death after killing Dave Campbell in the Golden Nugget Bar.

The Golden Nugget Bar was the scene were the 30 year old Dave Campbell was shot after one of his clients lost all his money. Some witnesses spoke of a young lady, who lend Hardy money after his loss at gambling. He must have had a real streak of bad luck because the woman's money was not long in Hardy's hands, he gambled it away. Hardy immediately started to complain and all of a sudden his forty-four caliber gun pointed right at Dave Campbells head. Some people said that he looked like the devil, like a person who lost his mind, and then he shot him.

After the assasination Hardy fled and left the town immediately. The police started to persue him and towards the dawn they found him; drunk and totaly off his head lying on a river bank. Finally they arrested him.

His attractive wife, Lucy Hardy collapsed in tears, as she heard of the crime her husband admitted. She and her daughters spent the day at jail talking the last to John E. Hardy before he was hung the next day. His wife said: 'I would have done anything to help him, but John found it difficult to settle he'd led such an eventful life before we met.'

**Learner Text B: Year 7 GIBS**  
**Newspaper article based upon the poem: The Triangle Fire**

## Devastating Fire killed 146 workers

### Ten Stories High Building Going Up In Smoke

Yesterday at 7pm close to Washington Square the usual workday for 146 underage sweatshop workers ended fatal. Due to no known reason until today, a giant fire broke out in the tenth floor in the Triangle Building. When the fire department came a few minutes later, the damage was already done. The building top was wrapped in flames and all they could do was keeping the fire under control as well as evacuate the surroundings. Sadly the girls only had very little chance of survival and worse not all of them could be identified.

#### Illegal sweatshop in bad conditions

We know today that the shop was definitely in very bad conditions with only one single fire exit. Furthermore it was one stuffy room with small windows and extremely unhealthy air and working conditions, where about 150 girls were employed from morn until late at night. They were for sure sewing for very low wages every day. Moreover all of them died under unequal circumstances for which nobody has taken responsibility yet.

#### Two men arrested

Still shortly after the dramatic scene ended in the middle of the night, the police have taken to suspects into custody. Two men, both are in their late fifties and probably responsible for the sweatshop as well as the 146 dead. Though there si a row of reasons for why the fire could have started, the firefighter T.L. McLeo did not exclude a case of arson.

#### Demonstrators and mourners in the streets

Starting in the morning about a hundred thousand mourners were beginning to crowd the streets around the Triangle Building. Families are weeping bitter tears for their beloved ones, friends are crying over the big loss and others in the angry crowd are demanding justice.

### Ballad of the Triangle Fire by Ruth Rubin

In the heart of New York City, near Washington Square  
 In nineteen eleven, March winds were cold and bare.  
 A fire broke out in a building ten stories high,  
 And a hundred and forty-six young girls in those flames did die.

On the top floor of that building, ten stories in the air  
 These young girls were working in an old sweatshop there;  
 They were sewing shirtwaists for a very low wage.  
 So tired and pale and worn-out! They were at a tender age.

The sweatshop was a stuffy room with but a single door;  
 The windows they were gray with dust from off that dirty floor;  
 There were no comforts, no fresh air, no light to sew thereby,  
 And the girls, they toiled from early morn till darkness filled the sky.

Then on that fateful day — dear God, most terrible of days!  
 When that fire broke out, it grew into a mighty blaze.  
 In that firetrap way up there with but a single door,  
 So many innocent working girls burned, to live no more!

A hundred thousand mourners, they followed those sad biers.  
 The streets were filled with people weeping bitter tears.  
 Poets, writers everywhere described that awful pyre,  
 When those young girls were trapped to die in the Triangle Fire.

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 Summer Institute for Union Women, New York State School of Industrial and  
 Labor Relations, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1993.