

Alternate Ways to Assess Writing

Try **peer review and feedback**. If you model the process and show students what good feedback looks like, they can provide some great feedback for each other. That decreases the feedback you have to provide.

When asking students to work in response groups, try using peer review templates and questions to help focus and guide students.

Share **clear assessment guidelines** with your assignments. A rubric will work but use the method you're comfortable with. There are online rubric makers that can help as well. RubiStar.com is the best site I know.

Don't grade everything in every piece of writing. Don't try to mark every spelling, grammar, and mechanical error in every piece of student writing. Match your feedback to the work. Provide more feedback on significant pieces (e.g., a research paper) and provide shorter comments on less formal work (e.g., journal entries).

Provide **lots of modeling**-both of writing strategies and how to use writing tools like rubrics. If students understand how to compare a rubric to a paper, they have a better idea of how to evaluate their own and their peers' work. By giving public feedback on sample papers to the whole class, you show them how to evaluate and improve their work. Again, that's less work for you. Demonstrate it a few times rather than writing margin comments on scores of papers. Try the ReadWriteThink lesson Prompting Revision through Modeling and Written Conversations, which includes videos of authors revising their work. <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/prompting-revision-through-modeling-1183.html>

Try **draft letters** to focus your feedback on the questions students have. Students can be quite savvy about knowing where they need help. There's a [ReadWriteThink lesson plan](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/draft-letters-improving-student-902.html) that explains the strategy. <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/draft-letters-improving-student-902.html>

Focus on only ONE aspect of the writing. For example, grade only for content or for organization or format. You can add in other aspects of writing depending on the purpose of the writing.