

# Personal Stories, Part 2:

## Revising and Editing

(2 hours)

### Lesson at a Glance

#### SUMMARY

Do students know the old saying: "Genius is 10 percent inspiration, 90 percent perspiration"? It definitely applies to writers and their published works. The easy part is to get the idea for a story and write out your uncensored thoughts. The hard part is to cut and revise the material so it keeps a reader engaged and is the best it can be.

#### GOALS

- To understand the process of rewriting and editing
- To rewrite and edit the rough draft from Part 1 of this lesson

#### LEARNER OUTCOMES

Students will...

- Reinforce their knowledge of the writing process: write freely, revise, edit.
- Read a steelworker's personal story and discuss its style.
- Rewrite the first draft of their personal stories (see Part 1 of this lesson).
- Learn the meaning of "synonym" and discover how a thesaurus can help enhance their writing.

#### MATERIALS

##### VIDEO:

*Write Now: Jimmy Baca & "The Heat"*  
Episode 27: Length: 7:04, Start Time: 7:06

##### PRINT:

*An excerpt from "Day One" by Jennifer Jones*  
Issue 27, p. 10

##### DICTIONARY

##### THESAURUS

#### ACTIVITIES

- View and discuss one **TV411** video segment.
- Read one *In Print* article related to the video.
- Review eight vocabulary words or terms.
- Talk about strategies for writing and revising.
- Revise a personal story using a thesaurus.

**"You've got four pages  
and I know it's going to  
sound blasphemous, but we  
could do that in about  
two paragraphs!"**

## Personal Stories, Part 2: Revising and Editing

### Step by Step

#### 1. INTRODUCING THE CONTENT

##### Pre-Viewing Activities

##### Brainstorm

Ask students to define "synonym."

[A word that has the same meaning as another word.]

Write a simple word on the board, such as the verb *jump*. Can students think of other verbs with the same meaning (such as *leap*, *plummet*, *dive*)? See how many synonyms the group can come up with.

Discuss the different values of the synonyms: do some convey a stronger feeling than others? Why or why not?

What reference book has a handy list of synonyms?

[A thesaurus.]

##### Teacher Talk

When writers revise their work, they look for opportunities to replace dull words and dry descriptions with ones that make the story come alive. They also look for ways to get their ideas across concisely, cutting out unnecessary words or phrases and adding others that make their points clearer.

In this video segment, we listen as poet Jimmy Baca and the steelworkers in his class give important tips to beginning authors about how to make their writing the best it can be. If you wish, take notes on some of the advice that the writers offer.

#### VOCABULARY REVIEW

- looming
- blasphemous
- fluff
- quagmire
- thesaurus
- apologia
- peruse
- standing ovation

## WRITING

### Personal Stories, Part 2: Revising and Editing

#### Step by Step (cont.)

#### 2. MODELING THE STRATEGY

[View Video](#)

*Write Now with Jimmy Baca & "The Heat"*  
Episode 27: Length: 7:04  
Start Time: 7:06

TV411's author-in-residence, poet Jimmy Santiago Baca, gets back together with three steelworkers who took his writing workshop and whose stories were published in a book, *The Heat: Steelworker Lives and Legends*.



#### 3. MINING THE STRATEGY

**Post-Viewing Activities**

##### Discuss

What strategies or tips did you pick up from Jimmy Santiago Baca and the workers in his writing workshop?

**Possible responses:**

- When you start writing, don't worry about grammar or spelling; just write from your heart.
- When you're rewriting, it's good to use a thesaurus to find just the right word.
- Learn how to make your point concisely; for example, cut down six pages into two paragraphs.
- "Every sentence has got to mean something."
- Write about what you know and the people you know.

Which steelworker's writing did you like best and why?

#### 4. EXTENDING AND PRACTICING THE STRATEGY

##### Workbook Activities

Distribute copies of Jennifer Jones' "Day One," which describes her first day working at a steel mill. In small groups, students should read the passage and discuss the strategies Jennifer used to make her experience come alive.

## Personal Stories, Part 2: Revising and Editing

### Step by Step (cont.)

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#### Workbook Activities (cont.)

Ask students to share what they've talked about and write their findings on the board.

#### Possible responses:

- All her verbs are in the present tense, making the reader feel that her story is happening right now.
- She takes you along step by step, as if you were right at her side.
- She describes what she sees in the Cold Strip mill and tells you what she's feeling and thinking at the moment she sees it.

#### Rewrite

Keeping in mind the rewriting strategies that have been talked about so far, students reread and revise the rough drafts of the personal stories they wrote during the last class. Encourage everyone to use a thesaurus to enrich his or her language.

**Note:** You may have students read each other's writing and give feedback on passages that need to be clarified or strengthened with details.

Questions to keep in mind while rereading and revising:

- Are there any unnecessary or repetitive words or phrases I can cut?
- Are there any details I can add to make the story more interesting?
- Are my words powerful or precise enough, or should I look for synonyms to replace weak nouns, adjectives, and verbs?

**Note** (*for students who are writing on computers*): For final drafts, make sure your learners know how to use the Spell Check function on the word processing program.

## WRITING

### Personal Stories, Part 2: Revising and Editing

#### Step by Step (cont.)

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#### 5. PORTFOLIO

Students save the revisions of their stories in their portfolios.

#### 6. HOMEWORK

Students reread Jennifer Jones' story and answer the comprehension questions on the opposite page.

#### 7. WEB CONNECTION

For a Web lesson on this topic, go to [www.tv411.org](http://www.tv411.org), click on **Writing** and then on **How to Use the Editing Checklist**.

Check out our online index at [www.tv411.org](http://www.tv411.org) for other **TV411** lessons on this topic and much, much more.

#### RELATED VIDEO AND PRINT MATERIALS

For more on Personal or Autobiographical Writing:

##### VIDEO

*Write Now: Letters and Memories*  
Episode 8: Length 2:37  
Start Time: 22:29

*Book Club: I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*  
Episode 5: Length: 5:06  
Start Time: 18:53

*Book Club: Angela's Ashes*  
Episode 9: Length 5:37  
Start Time: 18:57

For more on Revising and Editing:

##### VIDEO

*Milestones: The Freedom Writers*  
Episode 17: Length: 6:47  
Start Time: 17:22

##### PRINT

*Make an Editing Checklist*  
Issue 2, pp. 4–5

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou  
Issue 5, pp. 5–6

*Working* by Studs Terkel  
Issue 10, pp. 6–7

*One Writer's Beginnings* by Eudora Welty  
Issue 15, pp. 10–11

*A Letter to Zlata from one of the Freedom Writers*  
Issue 17, p. 8