From Vague to Clear

Trace how a writer uses a source and feedback to revise.

6.W.4.a "Plan and develop, draft, and revise writing using appropriate reference materials. Rewrite, try a new approach, and edit to produce and strengthen writing that is clear and coherent with some guidance and support from peers and adults."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details the writer checked against the sign, and circle the feedback from the classmate and teacher. Number the vague opening, clearer opening, and edited warning in the order they were written.

Where Does the Book Go?

1. For the school newsletter, I planned a short guide to returning library books. My notes began with a question: Where should students put books when the library is closed? I looked at the library's posted return directions instead of guessing. The sign said to use the blue drop box by the front doors when the library is closed. I copied that detail into my notes and wrote down the sign's location as my source. My first draft began, "Put it over there when no one is around."

2. A classmate read my draft and asked, "What is it, and where is there?" I tried a new approach: I started with the reader's situation instead of a vague command. My next draft said, "If the library is closed, place your library book in the blue drop box by the front doors." I added a second sentence: "Do not leave it outside the library door." That warning came from the posted directions, too. Now a student could act without asking what I meant.

3. My teacher noticed that "it" in the warning could mean the drop box rather than the book. I changed the warning to "Do not leave books outside the library door." Then I checked both sentences against the sign once more and added a source line: "Source: Library return directions, posted beside the front doors." I read the guide aloud to catch a missing period. The final version gives the reader a clear action, a useful warning, and a way to check the information.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What detail did the writer check on the sign before adding it to the guide?

2. What problem did the classmate find in the first draft?

3. How did the writer change the opening so a reader could follow it?

4. Why did the writer change “Do not leave it” to “Do not leave books”?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a school change you care about. Write one vague draft sentence, name a reference you could check for useful details, then rewrite your draft as two clear, connected sentences. State one word or phrase you edited for clarity.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 6 · 6.W.4.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details the writer checked against the sign, and circle the feedback from the classmate and teacher. Number the vague opening, clearer opening, and edited warning in the order they were written. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What detail did the writer check on the sign before adding it to the guide?	**The sign said to use the blue drop box by the front doors when the library is closed.**
2	What problem did the classmate find in the first draft?	**The draft did not make clear what "it" meant or where "there" was.**
3	How did the writer change the opening so a reader could follow it?	**The writer began with the situation, a closed library, and named the book and the drop box's location.**
4	Why did the writer change "Do not leave it" to "Do not leave books"?	**The teacher pointed out that "it" might mean the drop box. "Books" makes the warning clear.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Draft: We need a better thing in the hall.
Reference to check: The school building map.
Revision: Our hallway needs a water refill station. A station there would give students a place to refill bottles between classes.
Edit: I replaced "thing" with "water refill station."

Accept answers that identify the source detail and explain how feedback led to clearer wording or order. For Part 3, the reference should fit the proposed change, and the two revised sentences should be more specific than the draft.