

Activity 5: "The 10-Minute Tune-Up"

Focus: Editing for Impact and The "Anti-Dream" Ending. **Duration:** 40 Minutes.

The Mission

Students will take a "messy" piece of writing (either their own from a previous activity or a sample you provide) and perform three specific "surgeries" to make it professional.

Part 1: The "Banned Word" Hunt (10 Mins)

Give the students a list of "Weak Words." They must look at their previous writing and hunt them down. If they find one, they must replace it with a **Power Word**.

- **Banned:** *Nice, Good, Big, Scared, Said, Then.*
- **Power Replacements:** *Ethereal, Formidable, Towering, Petrified, Retorted, Consequently.*

Part 2: The "Anti-Dream" Ending (10 Mins)

Explain the "**Golden Rule of Endings**": The character must be different at the end than they were at the start.

- **Bad Ending:** "And then I woke up. It was all a dream." (The 'Story Killer')
- **Good Ending:** The character has a new scar, a new power, a new friend, or a new secret.
- **Task:** Write a 3-sentence ending where the character looks at the "Prompt Object" one last time. How has it changed them?

Part 3: The "Peer Surgeon" Sprint (15 Mins)

Swap work with a partner. Each student has two colored highlighters:

1. **Green:** Highlight the "Best Line"—the one that sounds most like a real book.
 2. **Yellow:** Highlight a "Speed Bump"—a sentence that is confusing or where a word is repeated too many times.
- *Partners then give the paper back and the author "fixes" the yellow sections.*

Part 4: The Final Read-Aloud (5 Mins)

Students read their favorite sentence to the class. This builds confidence right before the actual assessment.

Why this helps for the assessment:

- It turns "Editing" from a vague idea into a **to-do list**.
- It eliminates the "it was all a dream" ending which often lowers their marks.
- It teaches them to **self-correct** flow and rhythm.