

## **Our Teaching Philosophy: Writing Students**

### **Grading:**

In private lessons we teach to mastery, and our students eventually receive 100% on each paper that they turn in. For students in group workshops (or those with grading packages), we grade based on an effort to complete the checklist. Parents are expected to edit for spelling and punctuation before the paper is submitted, but we will occasionally give pointers about mechanics, especially if we feel that the student is on the verge of understanding.

### **We don't deduct points for mechanics (spelling, grammar, and punctuation):**

We refuse to grade students on concepts that we have not personally taught them. Every student is in a different place, and they come into our writing classes from all backgrounds and skill levels. We don't feel that a student should be shamed for being at a lower-than-average level in those subjects. They are where they are, and therefore our grading doesn't scream, "You're struggling, and we know it."

If it's obvious to us that grammar or punctuation is an issue, we usually recommend Fix-It Grammar, where those issues can be resolved gradually and methodically. If students struggle with spelling, we usually recommend All About Spelling (or Barton if we suspect dyslexia).

### **Students usually get a 100% for these reasons:**

- If we think they did make an effort and if it appears that they understand the concepts, we'll explain a few things in our feedback and look forward to them doing better on the next paper.
- If we don't feel they've made an effort or that they don't understand the concepts, we will return the paper without a grade and ask them to complete the checklist. In some cases, this may result in the student needing a private 15-minute lesson in order for us to reteach concepts or explain something in-depth.

**When students struggle with a concept**, we have all sorts of ways for them to get help between classes:

- We record and upload group classes to a playlist. (Clients may record private lessons if they wish.)
- Miss Amy has recorded more than ninety short videos that students can watch about specific topics.
- Teachers often help students during workshops or via the comments left on their papers.
- We are available during office hours; see [our homepage](#) for more information.

- If all that fails, and their papers do not improve with further in-class review, parents can arrange to meet with an instructor one-on-one via Zoom.

Our grading practices reflect our philosophy that merely giving a child a grade will not help them master their coursework. We aim for 100% mastery with all of our students.

If you have time, listen to IEW's episode "[Marking and Grading](#)."