

Mini-Activity 1 of 4 - ADD - ARMS Strategy:

“Add to Grow Your Writing!”

Focus Skill:

Using the **A** in ARMS — **ADD**: Add details, examples, and descriptions to make writing clearer and more interesting.

Learning Objective:

Students will revise a basic paragraph by adding sensory details, specific examples, and elaboration to strengthen their writing.

Time:

20–30 minutes

Materials:

- Printed or digital student paragraph (provided below)
- “Add = Plant New Ideas” anchor chart or slide
- Highlighters or colored pencils (optional)
- ARMS student checklist
- Optional: garden-themed sticky notes or sentence stems

Step 1: Mini-Lesson Launch (5–7 minutes)

Say: “Today we’re going to focus on the first step in the ARMS strategy—**Add**. When we revise, we don’t just fix mistakes—we help our writing grow. Just like a garden needs seeds, our writing needs new ideas, details, and examples to bloom.”

Show the anchor chart:

- Add = Plant new flowers
- Add details, dialogue, description, or examples
- Ask: “What else can I say to help the reader see, feel, or understand more?”

Step 2: Model with a Sample Paragraph (5–7 minutes)

Original Paragraph (on board or slide):

I went to the park. It was fun. I played on the swings. Then I went home.

Ask students:

- What's missing?
- What could we add to help the reader picture this?

Model revision aloud:

I went to the park on Saturday afternoon. The sun was shining, and the air smelled like fresh grass. I raced to the swings and soared so high I could see the tops of the trees. After playing for an hour, I walked home with a big smile on my face.

Highlight what was added (sensory details, time, emotion, specific actions).

Step 3: Practice (5–10 minutes)

Student Paragraph to Revise:

I saw a dog. It was cute. It ran around. I liked it.

Prompt students to Add:

- What kind of dog?
- What did it look like?
- What did it do that made it cute?

Sentence stems to support struggling writers:

- “The dog had...”
- “It made me laugh when...”
- “I liked it because...”

Optional: Use green highlighters or sticky notes to mark added details.

Wrap-Up (2–3 minutes)

Share Out: Invite 2–3 students to read their revised sentences. **Reflect:** “How did adding details help your writing grow?”

Student Worksheet: “Add to Grow Your Writing!”

Name: _____ Date: _____

Step 1: What Does “Add” Mean?

Add = Plant new flowers in your writing! When you revise, you can add:

- Details (What did it look/sound/smell like?)
- Description (Use adjectives and vivid verbs!)
- Dialogue or thoughts
- Feelings or reactions

Step 2: Let’s Practice Together

Original Paragraph:

I saw a dog. It was cute. It ran around. I liked it.

Add at least 3 new details or descriptions. Use the space below to rewrite the paragraph with your additions:

My Revised Paragraph:

Check off what you added:

- A detail about what the dog looked like
- A description of what the dog did
- A sentence about how you felt or reacted

Mini-Activity 2 of 4 - REMOVE - ARMS Strategy:

“Pull the Weeds!”

Focus: REMOVE – Take out words or ideas that don’t belong

Objective:

Students will practice identifying and removing unnecessary or repetitive words from sentences to improve clarity and flow.

Materials:

- Printed or digital worksheet (Google Docs version linked below)
- Highlighters or colored pencils (optional)
- ARMS student checklist for reference
- Optional: garden-themed stickers or stamps for engagement

Activity Instructions:

Part 1: Model Together

Read this sentence aloud as a class:

“The flowers were really very extremely pretty and nice.”

Ask:

- Which words are saying the same thing?
- Which ones are not needed?

 Revised: “The flowers were extremely pretty.” (Or even better: “The flowers were stunning.” — if you want to combine with Substitute!)

 **Part 2: Student Practice**

Have students read each sentence and cross out or highlight the words they would REMOVE. Then rewrite the improved version.

 **Original Sentence**

The garden was big, large, and huge.

I saw a rose. The rose was red.
The rose smelled good.

It was very, very fun and exciting
and fun.

 **What Would You Remove?**

Big, large

rose

Very, fun

 **Revised Sentence**

The garden was huge.

I saw a red rose and it smelled good.

It was very fun and exciting.



Part 2: Student Practice Read each sentence, then cross out or highlight the words you would REMOVE. Rewrite the improved version.

Original Sentence	The garden was big, large, and huge.
What Would You Remove?	
Revised Sentence	

Original Sentence	I saw a rose. The rose was red. The rose smelled good.
What Would You Remove?	
Revised Sentence	

Original Sentence	It was very, very exciting and fun.
What Would You Remove?	
Revised Sentence	

Mini-Activity 3 of 4 - MOVE - ARMS Strategy:

“Move to Make It Flow!”

Focus Skill:

Using the **M** in ARMS — **MOVE**: Rearranging words, sentences, or ideas to improve the order and flow of writing.

Learning Objective:

Students will revise a short paragraph by moving sentences or ideas to improve clarity, sequence, and organization.

Time:

20–30 minutes

Materials:

- Printed or digital paragraph strips (provided below)
- Scissors and glue sticks (for hands-on learners)
- “Move = Rearranging Your Garden” anchor chart or slide
- Optional: color-coded sentence strips or digital drag-and-drop version
- ARMS student checklist

Step 1: Mini-Lesson Launch (5–7 minutes)

Say: “Today we’re focusing on the **M** in ARMS—**Move**. When we revise, we sometimes need to move ideas around so our writing makes more sense. Just like in a garden, we might move plants to a better spot so everything grows well together.”

Show the anchor chart:

- Move = Rearranging your garden
- Ask: “Does this sentence belong here, or would it grow better somewhere else?”

Step 2: Model with a Mixed-Up Paragraph (5–7 minutes)

Display this paragraph out of order:

(C) Then we went home. (A) I went to the zoo with my class. (D) I saw lions, monkeys, and giraffes. (B) We ate lunch near the elephant exhibit.

Ask students:

- What happened first? What happened last?
- Which sentence should come right after the introduction?

Revised Order:

(A) I went to the zoo with my class. (D) I saw lions, monkeys, and giraffes.
(B) We ate lunch near the elephant exhibit. (C) Then we went home.

Explain: “We didn’t change the words—we just moved the ideas to make the story flow better.”

Step 3: Guided Practice (5–10 minutes)

Provide students with this scrambled paragraph:

(C) I put on my helmet. (A) I rode my bike to the park. (D) I saw my friend and we played tag. (B) I got my bike out of the garage.

Task: Cut and rearrange the sentences in the correct order. Glue them down or rewrite them in the correct sequence.

 **Ask:**

- What should happen first?
- What makes the most sense next?

Step 4: Independent Practice (5–10 minutes)

Students choose a paragraph from their own writing or use this one:

I ate dinner. I washed my hands. I went to bed. I spilled my drink.

Prompt: Rearrange the sentences so they make more sense. Use arrows or rewrite the paragraph in a better order.

 **Checklist:**

- I moved at least one sentence
- My paragraph makes more sense now

- I reread it to check the flow

Wrap-Up (2–3 minutes)

Share Out: Invite students to read their revised paragraphs. **Reflect:** “How did moving your sentences help your writing grow?”

Mini-Activity 4 of 4 - SUBSTITUTE - ARMS Strategy:

“Swap to Strengthen!”

Focus Skill:

Revising writing by substituting weak or boring words with stronger, more descriptive, or more precise ones.

Learning Objective:

Students will identify vague or overused words in a paragraph and revise by substituting them with stronger, more specific vocabulary.

Time:

20–25 minutes

Materials:

- “S = Substitute” anchor chart or slide (e.g., swapping wilted flowers for fresh ones 

Step 1: Launch the Lesson (5 minutes)

Say: “Today we’re learning about the ‘S’ in ARMS—**Substitute**. When we revise, we can make our writing stronger by swapping out boring or weak words for better ones. It’s like replacing a wilted flower in your garden with a bright, healthy one!”

Show Anchor Chart:

- S = Substitute = Swap out weak words
- “Can I say this in a stronger or more specific way?”

Examples:

- “nice” → “kind,” “thoughtful,” “generous”
- “went” → “raced,” “wandered,” “hurried”

Step 2: Model the Strategy (5 minutes)

Original Sentence:

The girl went into the room and looked at the book. It was good.

Think-Aloud Revision:

"Hmm... 'went,' 'looked,' and 'good' are all pretty boring. Let's swap them out."

Revised Sentence:

The girl tiptoed into the room and examined the book. It was fascinating.

Highlight the substituted words and explain why they're stronger.

🤝 Step 3: Guided Practice (10 minutes)

Provide this paragraph to students:

I had a nice day. I went to the park. It was fun. I saw a dog. The dog was cute.

Instructions:

- Underline or highlight the weak words: “nice,” “went,” “fun,” “cute”
- Use a word bank or class brainstorm to choose stronger substitutes
- Rewrite the paragraph with improved word choices

Example Word Bank:

Weak Word	Stronger Options
nice	amazing, exciting, relaxing
went	walked, ran, strolled

fun	exciting, awesome, unforgettable
cute	fluffy, playful, adorable

Step 4: Independent Practice (5 minutes)

Option 1: Students choose a paragraph from their own writing and highlight 2–3 weak words to substitute.

Option 2 (provided sentence):

The food was good. I ate it fast.

Task: Rewrite the sentence using stronger words.

Checklist:

- I found at least 2 weak words
- I substituted them with stronger words
- My new sentence is more interesting

Wrap-Up (2–3 minutes)

Discussion Prompt:

- “How did your new words change the feeling of your writing?”
- “What’s one word you’ll try to use more often?”

Optional Exit Ticket: Write one boring word and its stronger substitute on a flower cutout to add to a “Word Garden” bulletin board 