

# ARMS Revision Strategy

Type of Writing Supported:

**All Types**

Grade Level: **Grades 3-8**

**Upper Elementary to Middle School**

Stage of Writing Supported:

**Revising**

## PURPOSE:

**What does this strategy help students do?**

What the strategy helps students do: The ARMS Revision strategy helps develop the habit of revising their writing with intention—improving organization, clarity, and precision.

## Why is this strategy effective?

ARMS gives students a manageable way to approach revision. Rather than seeing it as a vague or overwhelming task, it breaks it into four actionable steps: Add, Remove, Move, and Substitute.

**A**

### Add

Did I include enough detail, examples, or support?

**R**

### Remove

Are there any unnecessary or off-topic words/sentences?

**M**

### Move

Would this sentence or detail make more sense somewhere else?

**S**

### Substitute

Can I replace weak words with stronger ones?

# ARMS Revision Strategy: Case study

## Growing Writers with ARMS in Ms. Rivera’s 6th Grade Class

### Background:

Ms. Rivera teaches a diverse group of 6th grade students, many of whom struggle with writing fluency, organization, and confidence. Several students have IEPs for learning disabilities in written expression. She notices that when asked to revise, most students either make surface-level edits (like fixing spelling) or say, “I’m done.”

She decides to implement the ARMS strategy—Add, Remove, Move, Substitute—using a garden analogy to make revision more concrete and engaging.

### The Lesson:

Ms. Rivera introduces ARMS over the course of a week, focusing on one letter per day. She uses anchor charts with garden visuals (e.g., “Add = Plant new seeds”) and models each step with a shared paragraph on the board.

On Day 3, she focuses on “Move.” She shows a paragraph written out of order and uses sentence strips to physically rearrange ideas with the class. Students then try the same with their own writing using scissors and glue sticks.

### Student Example:

Jamal, a student with ADHD and writing anxiety, writes:

“I saw a butterfly. Then I went to the garden. It was fun. The flowers were red and yellow.”

Ms. Rivera sits with Jamal during writing time and uses the ARMS checklist. Together, they:

- Add: Jamal adds a sentence about the butterfly landing on a flower.
- Remove: He deletes “It was fun” and replaces it with a more specific feeling.
- Move: He rearranges the sentences so the garden visit comes first, then the butterfly.
- Substitute: He changes “red and yellow” to “bright red tulips and golden sunflowers.”

### Revised version:

“I went to the garden and saw bright red tulips and golden sunflowers. A butterfly landed on one of the petals. I felt amazed watching it flutter away.”

### Outcome:

Jamal beams when he reads his revised paragraph aloud. Ms. Rivera notices that using ARMS gave him a clear structure and purpose for revision. Other students begin using the garden terms (“I’m pulling weeds!”) to talk about their writing. Over time, revision becomes less intimidating and more creative.

### Key Takeaways for Teachers:

- Scaffold each ARMS step with visuals, modeling, and hands-on tools.
- Use metaphors (like gardening) to make abstract concepts concrete.
- Support struggling learners with conferencing, sentence stems, and color coding.
- Celebrate revision as growth—not correction.

# ARMS Revision Strategy: Adaptations

## Ideas to further differentiate

- For ELLs: Include ARMS **sentence frames** ("I added a detail about \_\_\_")
- For younger students: **Use icons** (+ — ↺ abc) to represent steps visually
- For advanced writers: Add a layer of **stylistic revision** (tone, pacing)
- Use **digital tools** like Google Docs with comment features for revision.
- Provide **audio-recorded instructions** for each ARMS step.
- Allow students to revise using **speech-to-text tools**.
- Offer **sentence starters** for each revision type.

# ARMS Revision Strategy: Troubleshooting

ISSUE/ CHALLENGE	WHAT TO DO	HELPFUL PROMPTS
<b>Students skip steps</b>	Assign one step per revision round	“Today, focus only on moving ideas.”
<b>Students make surface-level changes</b>	Use mentor texts to show depth	“What new detail would help the reader visualize better?”
<b>Students confuse revising with editing</b>	Clarify that ARMS is about ideas, not spelling	“Does this change help the reader understand better?”
<b>Overwhelmed by too many changes</b>	Focus on one ARMS letter per session	“Let’s just work on ‘Add’ today.”
<b>Struggle to identify what to revise</b>	Use peer models and guided questions	“What part feels confusing or boring?”

# Publication Details

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## What is the Writing Classroom?

The Writing Classroom was developed to help educators apply effective, evidence-based writing interventions. Originating at the University of Kansas with funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, this initiative supports instructional strategies for all students, especially those who struggle with writing.

## What is AI SCORE?

AI-SCORE enhances writing competency for students with learning disabilities by:

- Integrating evidence-based instructional strategies
- Providing immediate AI-generated feedback
- Personalizing the writing process to improve outcomes

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## Learn More

 [WritingClassroom.org](https://WritingClassroom.org)

 [ProjectAIScore.org](https://ProjectAIScore.org)

 [KUCRL.KU.edu/aplm-online](https://KUCRL.KU.edu/aplm-online)

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