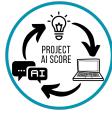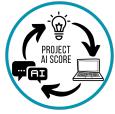# ARMS

Best Practices and Adaptations

Understanding the ARMS Strategy

- **A**dd: Include enough detail, examples, or support.
- **R**emove: Eliminate any unnecessary or off-topic words and sentences.
- **M**ove: Rearrange words or sentences for better flow.
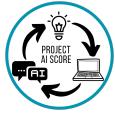- **S**ubstitute: Replace weak words with stronger, more precise ones.

Understanding the ARMS Strategy

This strategy…

Supports: Revising.

Applies To: All Genres (narrative, informative, persuasive).

Grade Levels: Grades 3–8.

Suggestions for Implementation

- Teach ARMS one step at a time. Break it into mini-lessons, such as focusing on "Add" on one day.
- Use visuals, metaphors, and color-coding, such as a gardening analogy or colored pens for each step.
- Model each revision step with think-alouds, showing how a sentence changes and explaining why.

Suggestions for Implementation

- Provide sentence stems and word banks to help students substitute and add with confidence.
- Use short, manageable texts for practice, such as paragraphs or even single sentences.
- Pair students for peer revision with structure, using checklists or guided questions.
- Connect ARMS to real writing goals, for example, using "Add" to make a story more exciting.

WRITE
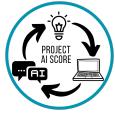
Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Don't present all four steps at once without modeling or guided practice.
- Don't rely only on verbal explanations; many struggling learners need concrete supports.
- Don't assume students know what "revise" means. Clarify how it's different from editing.
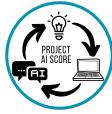
Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Don't expect students to generate stronger words without scaffolds or examples.
- Don't start with full essays. It can overwhelm students who struggle with writing.
- Don't treat ARMS as a checklist-only task. Help students see the purpose behind each step.

Troubleshooting

Issue/Challenge	What to Do
Students skip steps	Assign one step per revision round
Students make surface level changes	Use mentor texts to show depth
Students confuse revising with editing	Clarify that ARMs is about ideas, not spelling
Overwhelmed by too many changes	Focus on one ARMS letter for session
Struggle to identify what to revise	Use peer models and guided questions
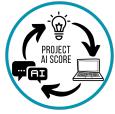
Adapting ARMS for ALL learners

- Use icons to represent steps visually for younger students.

- For English Language Learners (ELLs), include ARMS sentence frames such as, "I added a detail about ___".

- Provide audio-recorded instructions for each step of ARMS.

Adapting ARMS for ALL learners

- Use digital tools like Google Docs with comment features for revision.
- Offer sentence starters for each type of revision.
- Allow students to revise using speech-to-text tools.
- For advanced writers, add a layer of stylistic revision focused on tone and pacing.

WRITE

Interested in learning more? Check out WritingClassroom.org