



Step 6: Ban the Boring

Jen Richards – Food Writer

Before watching Jen Richards' video, discuss what you know about using Step 6: Ban the Boring in informative writing.

Now watch the interview and use the following questions to prompt discussion as a whole class or in groups.

Discussion Questions

1. How much of her time does Jen Richards estimate she spends on editing a piece of her writing?
2. When she's cutting things out, what sorts of things does Jen say she is looking to cut?
3. Does Jen add anything when she is editing? What sorts of things does she say she might add?
4. Jen uses the analogy of making a pottery vase to explain the three stages of creating a piece. What's the first stage she talks about?
5. Once she has gathered all the material in one place, Jen says the editing (shaping) begins. She gives several examples of changes she would make in the shaping stage – what's one of them?
6. What Jen is doing when she is shaping her work is what we call structural editing. What's another thing you might do to a piece of writing during the structural editing?
7. What is the final stage of editing Jen goes through? Can you remember and retell the two tricks she uses to find mistakes or awkward moments in her work?
8. What's the definition of what Jen calls 'clean copy'?

FOLLOW-ON ACTIVITY

Ask students to select a text they have written and already done some big-picture editing on (structural editing). When they are ready to line edit or proofread, have them read their writing out loud, first from the beginning to the end, then from the end – one sentence at a time – to the beginning. Students may do this in pairs to get help spotting and writing down a list of improvements they would like to make.