

# Conferences

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From your experience so far,

**what are writing conferences?**

# Conferences (in the words of Donald Graves and Penny Kittle)

- Conferring = being an audience
- A space where a writer meets an audience/a listener to get help with the piece.
- Conferences help the writer maintain skillful control of the piece.
- The writer has a wish for the piece, and the listener/audience must want to help her accomplish that wish with a sense of satisfaction.

Out of the above, what are we already doing? What are we not?

# Conferences - Types

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- **Individual** - a teacher meets a student; teacher is being the audience, the student is being the writer
- **Peer** - student A is the writer, student B is the audience
- **Small group** - the writer chooses a small group of 2-3 members to be her audience
- **Whole group/Author's chair** - 1 writer, and the remaining students in the class serve as the audience together; the writer could be the teacher as well

# Ideally, how should it happen?

1. The writer is ready for the conference. She has
  - Given her best
  - — ○ Reread her piece
  - Knows/has thought about her wish for the piece
  - Has a question to the teacher/peer(s) - Say, “**I think** *this* is what I need help with . . .”
2. The writer reads outs a part of the piece or the whole piece OR let the audience read it in their mind/aloud.
3. The audience **receive/s** the piece. “I heard *this*, I heard *this and this*. *This* is what I think the piece is about. What do you think about doing *this*?”
  - Sometimes, the teacher/peer may even teach you something new that you can use in the piece.
4. The writer **listens** and takes notes and makes revision decisions *after* the conference.

## From now on . . .

- - Come prepared to the conferences: reread your work, list thoughts and questions you'd like to talk about.
- Ask for an author's chair just like you ask for booktalks.
- Once we do enough author's chair style conferences, we can move on to peer and small group conferences as well.