RESPONDING AND CONNECTING USING VISUAL TOOLS:
Comment Productively and Kindly

TRY IT!

TRY THIS WHEN . . .

- ▪ students begin to use video responses as a tool to document and share learning
- ▪ you want to enable or allow students to make digital comments on each other's work
- ▪ you notice students leaving a string of short and general comments (like "good job")
- ▪ you want to showcase that digital publication is often a two-way conversation.

Peer feedback gives students opportunities to have digital conversations, build on each other's thinking, and consider fresh viewpoints and ideas. In this lesson, we establish clear guidelines that maintain a supportive and productive classroom culture. Students learn the classroom expectation: to give each other respectful, kind, helpful, and thoughtful comments that further conversations and support comprehension.

WHAT TO DO

Begin by sharing a variety of examples of digital comments with students as a genre study. You might use digital comments from previous years' student work—names removed, of course—or you might create your own examples. Comments may be text, audio, or video, depending on the tech tools that your students will be using. Include a range of comments for students to explore, like the ones listed in the chart on the right. Ask students to view all the comments and rate each on the following criteria:

- ▶ Are the comments **clear**?
- ▶ Are the comments **kind**?
- ▶ Are the comments **helpful**?
- ▶ Are the comments' suggestions **possible**?

Example Comments for Students to Analyze

- ° I really liked your video.
- ° This was good, but you should talk louder.
- ° I read this book too and I enjoyed it. What was your favorite part?
- ° This is too short.
- ° Something you said about this picture got me wondering: Do you think . . . ?
- ° You were very detailed and gave some good examples from the article. One question I had was . . . ?
- ° I learned a lot from your video. Do you know how . . . ?
- ° I don't agree with this.
- ° You make a good point but I would like to offer another idea.

Helpful Language

Before you comment, think about what types of comments you'd like to receive.

When we comment, we want to say more than just "good job." We want to tell the person what they did that went well. For example, "Maria, when you shared that quote from the article, I could really understand your point of view."

Use your comments to start a conversation about the ideas the person has shared.

Ways to Start a Comment

- I agree with you because…
- What I liked about you post is…
- When you wrote < quote from their said writing or video > it made me think…
- Thank you for sharing, can you tell me more about…?
- I really enjoyed your video/post. One question I have is…

This chart, designed for a minilesson for second and third graders, supports students in getting started with a productive comment while modeling kind and respectful language.

Comment Checklist

- ☐ I watched the person's video carefully and listened to all they had to say.
- ☐ I thought about what the person said.
- ☐ I left a comment that pointed out something positive the person did.
- ☐ I left a comment that asked a question to clarify or continue the conversation.
- ☐ I made a connection or shared my own thinking about this topic.
- ☐ I used kind and respectful language.

This infographic chart synthesizes the ideas that students came up with during a class discussion about commenting. The images included are more than decoration—they support young readers and present information in a memorable way, offering visual cues for what to do!

Have students discuss and reflect on the comments. What do they notice about specific comments? What kinds of comments would they like to receive?

Co-created checklists and guides (like those shown here) can also help scaffold students as they begin to comment on each other's work. If the checklist is done on chart paper, we ask students to take a photo with their device or we photograph it and provide miniature copies for students to use as they comment.

OUTCOMES AND WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Students should be able to read and respond to each other's thinking and work in a way that supports each other and the deep thinking we want them to do. Once students begin leaving comments on each other's work, can they
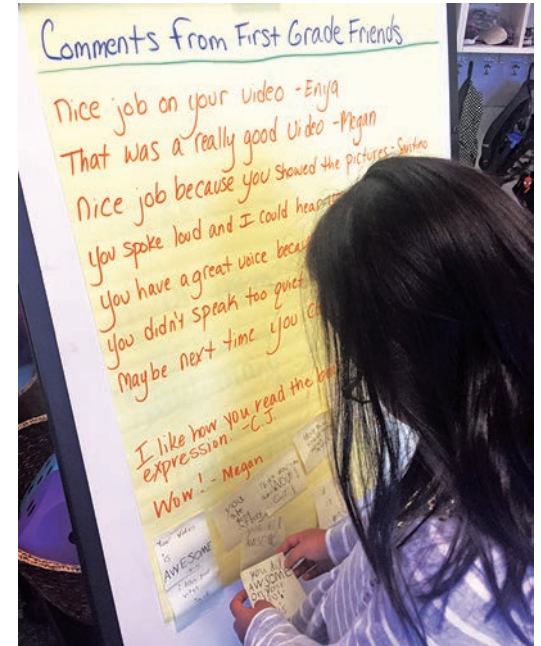
▶ show active and careful listening?

▶ point out specific elements of a classmate's work that are effective or that they connect with on a personal level?

▶ disagree using respectful language and clear reasoning?

▶ extend the discussion by responding to the classmate's work in a way that prompts conversation about meaningful topics and ideas presented?

Read or watch carefully · Say what they did well · Give evidence · Ask questions · Share your ideas · Be kind and careful · Stop to leave a comment · **Leaving Comments**

FOLLOW UP

Use commenting on a regular basis and establish a protocol for commenting:

▶ Make commenting an enjoyable time in the classroom. Play soft music, and have students make use of flexible seating.

▶ Allow students to watch videos with partners and comment together after talking.

▶ Students do not need to receive comments from every classmate on every piece of work. Establish commenting groups or circles so that all students receive comments from those in their group. Rotate groups frequently so that students can establish relationships and learn from everyone in the class.

▶ Use comments—either your own or others'—as a launch point for small-group discussion.

First-grade students brainstorm what to say before their first experience with commenting.