

# Selective marking



Tom Sherrington and Sara Stafford

## What's the idea?

Selective marking involves selecting one section of work to mark in depth and using this to give specific feedback with focused, manageable improvement targets.

## What does it mean?

With this strategy, rather than trying to mark everything a student writes, teachers 'zoom-in' and specifically focus on smaller sections of work and particular skills. You mark these in your usual way, yet, by marking less but in more detail, you can reduce workload while improving the quality of feedback.

You also give students space and directions on how to respond with this method. Underneath the marked section, give specific instructions for pupil responses and draw an empty box for students to fill out before moving on. This technique ensures that students know where to work and how

to (and how much to) improve. It is sometimes referred to as 'The Yellow Box' strategy (although the colour of the pen used to mark is irrelevant!)

## What are the implications for teachers?

Even if your school has a strict marking policy or code, you can still employ this strategy. Mark a focused area of work using your school's marking policy, rather than looking at everything the student has written.

Feedback can be written or verbal. You could draw a box under the piece of work after a one-to-one discussion during class, for example, so that the student has to respond to your input before carrying on.

Ensure that your expectations for responses are easy to act on. Do you want your pupils to answer questions, redraft, correct spellings or develop their idea in more depth? Set clear, manageable goals and plan time for students to respond. This

method works as a really effective starter or plenary activity and could even be set for homework.

You don't have to mark everything at once. Focus on one specific skill or concept and use your feedback to support mastery before moving on.

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

- » Dann R (2017) *Developing Feedback for Pupil Learning: Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Schools*. Routledge: London.
- » Brookhart SM (2017) *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students*. ASCD: Virginia.
- » Morrison McGill R (2018) *Yellow Box Methodology*. Available at: <https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2018/05/19/yellow-box-methodology/> (accessed 25 October 2018).