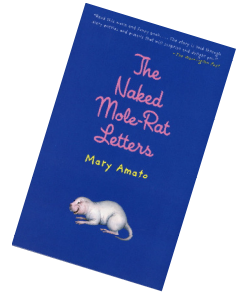


Example of Editing and Revising: The Naked Mole-Rat Letters

by Mary Amato



This is an actual page from the final draft that I sent to my editor, Regina Griffin. Regina wrote the comments on the right side and suggested some deletions and grammatical changes. After I received it back, I realized that the beginning was boring and vague, so the handwritten revision of the first few sentences is mine. I pretended I was Frankie and asked myself: Where would I be writing this entry? Where can you get privacy in school? The restroom! So, putting Frankie in the girl's restroom helped to liven up the beginning. (Page 124-125 hardcover edition.)

Amato/NMRL/95

12:30
Wednesday, October 22nd (9:00 p.m.)

DP

Dear Diary,
I am writing this in the girls' bathroom. That's the only place I can get a little privacy around here. If I can't believe how this day is going so far. It all started with math.

~~So much happened today. I have to start at the beginning, which unfortunately was math class. I forgot we were having a test.~~

If I have never been unprepared for a test in my life. Normally, when I get a test, I know what to do and calmly do it. Today, when Mr. Peter handed out the tests, I thought my eyeballs were going to explode. I stared at the first page, but I couldn't make sense of it. Meanwhile, everybody around me started scribbling right away. I felt the way Helen Keller must have felt when she could feel the lips of people moving but couldn't understand what the heck they were saying. I felt like I was drowning.

If Beth was already done with the first three problems. If I slumped in my seat and leaned a little to my left and squinted, I could see her answers floating on the page like little life preservers.

If in my moment of need, I did what I had never done before. I cheated. Halfway through, Beth glanced back at me a few times, as if she could feel my eyes grabbing onto her work.

If At the end of the period, I was exhausted. It's very tiring to cheat. It takes a lot of concentration. Not only do you have to get the answers down right, but also you have to keep the guilt from melting your conscience into a puddle at your feet.

If I fell asleep during science and woke up to the sound of Mrs. Keating yelling. I jumped up, sure she was yelling at me. But she was bawling out Johnny Nye for sneaking onto the internet and playing a computer game when he was supposed to be doing research for the big report that's due on Friday.

?
not needed
OK ✓

OK

ha!