STRIKING THE RIGHT TONE IN WRITTEN FEEDBACK

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1. LAY THE GROUNDWORK.
Explain that you’re giving feedback to help students succeed.

2. GET IN THE RIGHT HEADSPACE.
Assume that your students are trying their best.

3. POINT OUT POSITIVES.
Start with positive, genuine feedback to reduce defensiveness and increase motivation.

4. FOCUS ON THE WRITING—NOT THE WRITER.
Cut "you" and "your" from comments.

5. ROLE PLAY.
Phrase comments in terms of a generic reader’s needs:
"The reader here might wonder…"

6. USE YOUR VOICE.
Pair your written comments with audio or video feedback.

7. PUNCTUATE WITH CAUTION.
Avoid short, generic questions like "Really?" or "Are you sure?"