Stronger and Clearer

Students give a first response, then talk with a series of partners. After each round they revise, so the final version is stronger in evidence and clearer in wording than the first try.

What it is

Each student starts with their own first answer. They then rotate partners for a set number of rounds — often three. In each round, a partner asks a question or offers feedback, and the student revises. The period ends with a final version: the strongest, clearest response they can write.

The steps

1. **First response.** Students write or say a first answer to the prompt, on their own, before they hear anyone else.
2. **Partner rounds.** In each round they talk with a partner, using prompts such as “What do you mean by…?”, “Can you give an example?”, “What is your evidence?”, “How does that connect to…?”, or “Can you say that more clearly?”
3. **Revise.** After the talk, they change the response — not just copy a partner’s sentence, but qualify the claim or add evidence that holds up.
4. **Rotate.** Students find a new partner and take their latest version with them.
5. **Final version.** They write the strongest, clearest response they can stand behind.

When to use it

Use this when a first answer will be thin, and you want the writing to get better on purpose before it is turned in. It works well after a source or a short discussion, when students already have something to say but have not yet had to corroborate or clarify it.

Quick tip. Grade the final version, not how fluent the first talk was. The point of the rounds is whether interpretation and evidence survive into the sentence.

Stronger and Clearer is a structure from Jeff Zwiers.

STUDENT ORGANIZER

Stronger and Clearer

Name: _____ **Date:** _____ **Period:** _____

Prompt: _____

Partner prompts: What do you mean by…? Can you give an example? What is your evidence? How does that connect to…? Can you say that more clearly?

FIRST RESPONSE

ROUND 1 · PARTNER'S QUESTION OR FEEDBACK

ROUND 1 · MY REVISION

ROUND 2 · PARTNER'S QUESTION OR FEEDBACK

ROUND 2 · MY REVISION

ROUND 3 · PARTNER'S QUESTION OR FEEDBACK

ROUND 3 · MY REVISION

FINAL VERSION · STRONGEST, CLEAREST RESPONSE

Qualify the claim. Keep the evidence that holds up.