Introduce the Genre: Book Reviews

1. Focus (15 minutes)

**Say:** Raise your hand if you have a favorite book. Think about why you like that book. Do you like the pictures? Is there a funny event that you enjoy? Do you have a favorite character? Allow responses. Engage students in a discussion about their reasons for liking a particular book.

**Say:** When you tell what you like or don’t like about a book and why, you are sharing your opinion about that book. You are sharing your personal feelings and ideas. Sometimes writers share their ideas about books, too. They write book reviews to share their opinions. In this unit we are going to learn about book reviews, and we are going to learn to be book review writers!

Display the cover of *Book Reviews* using the big book or interactive whiteboard resources. Read aloud the title and author names. Use the following questions to activate students’ knowledge and initiate a background-building discussion:

- This illustration is from a story in this book. What do you think the tortoise and the hare (rabbit) are doing? Have you heard or read this story before?
- The title of this book is *Book Reviews*. What is a book review? Why do you think we read and write book reviews? Today we will read about book reviews and find out.

Explore the title page together. Then point out how the text is set up in the book. **Say:** Notice that there is a question about book reviews at the top of each of the first few pages. Then the rest of the page answers the question. On page 4, there is a question, the answer, and then an example of a book review written by a student. I’ll read aloud these pages so we can learn about book reviews.

Read aloud the text on pages 2–5 in a fluent, expressive voice as you point to each word. Ask students to follow along as you read. Follow students’ lead in discussing the information as you pause after each page. Use the discussion prompts below.

**After reading page 2. Say:** We just learned what an opinion is. A book reviewer gives an opinion by telling what he or she thinks about a book. We have opinions about the books we read, too! We can share our opinions by writing book reviews.

**After reading page 3. Say:** We just learned that many people read book reviews to help them choose a book. Where do people find book reviews? (Allow responses.) People will read the book reviews we write, too!

**After reading page 4. Say:** This page tells us what things to include in our book reviews. What are they? (Allow responses.) A student wrote this review about The Three Billy Goats Gruff by Brenda Parkes. The student wrote the title, the author’s name, a summary, an opinion, a reason, and a recommendation.
Does the student like the book? (Allow responses.) Yes! The student didn’t get bored reading this story because it has great action. The student thinks we should read this book, too!

After reading page 5. Ask: What parts of a story can we review? (Allow responses.) It’s fun to review the different parts of a story! Tomorrow we will read a story called “The Tortoise and the Hare” together. Then we’ll summarize the story and discuss what we like and don’t like about the characters, story events, and illustrations.

Put the big book aside. Say: We’re just learning about book reviews, so we’ll continue to write informational reports this week. Make previously read nonfiction books available, and ask students to work in pairs to reread a book in order to plan and draft a report.

2. Rehearse (10 MINUTES)

Say: Read the book together. Then talk about what the title of your report will be, what your topic sentence will be, and which facts you will use.

NOTE: Allow students who prefer to read and write independently to do so.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring (15 MINUTES)

Distribute students’ writing folders and copies of BLM 2. Say: Work with your partner on your report. Use the graphic organizer to help you plan your report. Support students as they write and draw together, asking questions as needed to help them get their ideas on paper. Reinforce the editing and revising strategies they have learned, and use the Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to help you provide differentiated support based on your observations.

4. Share (5 MINUTES)

Invite two pairs or individuals to share the progress they have made on their reports and cite their sources. Point out and celebrate examples of developing skills. You may wish to provide additional modeling based on your observations during Independent Writing and Conferring.

Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers

Goal Oriented
• I’m not going to worry about my spelling or punctuation right now. I’m just going to get my ideas down on paper. Then I will come back and check my writing.
• I will use the graphic organizer to help me with my writing.

Directive and Corrective Feedback
• Your topic sentence should be the most important information. Before you write it, tell me what the main idea of your report is.
• It helps the reader visualize the information if you use describing words. How could you describe ______?

Self-Monitoring and Reflection
• Point to your topic sentence. What is the purpose of your topic sentence? What do your fact sentences do?
• How did you use the graphic organizer to help you write?
• What could you ask yourself here to come up with a better word?

Validating and Confirming
• You wrote a topic sentence that is the most important information. Then you wrote sentences that support, or tell about, your topic sentence.
• You asked yourself questions. That’s something strong writers do.

Teacher Tip
Begin collecting book reviews from a variety of sources, such as newspapers, magazines, and older students at your school. Start a bulletin board to display the reviews. Include a photocopy of the book cover for each review when possible.