Introduce the Genre: Personal Narratives

1. Focus (15 minutes)

Say: Some writers get their inspiration from events in their own lives. They remember and write stories called personal narratives that have real events and real characters. For the next several weeks we are going to learn about personal narratives and write personal narratives to tell our own stories.

Display the cover of Personal Narratives using the big book or interactive whiteboard resources. Read aloud the title and authors of the book. Use the following questions to activate students' knowledge and initiate a background-building discussion. Allow time for students to respond to each question.

- What do you see on the cover?
- The title of this book is Personal Narratives. What do you think a personal narrative is?

Turn to the title page. Point out the title and author names. Read the text and discuss the photographs. Say: This boy is writing a personal narrative about moving. At first he had a problem—he was sad to move. Who helped solve his problem?

Read aloud the text on pages 2–3 in a fluent, expressive voice as you point to each word. Ask students to follow along as you read. Stop where indicated below and discuss the text.

After reading page 2. Say: The word resolution is a long word. A resolution is the way a person solves a problem. Discuss the following questions:

- Who are the characters, or people, in these photographs?
- What are the settings, or places, in these photographs?
- What might be some problems the people in the photographs have? Do these photographs make you think of a problem you have had? Were you able to solve the problem? How?


Read aloud the text on pages 4–5 in a fluent, expressive voice as you point to each word. Ask students to follow along as you read. Stop where indicated below and discuss the text.

After reading page 4. Ask: What does a personal narrative have that a journal doesn't always have? (Allow responses.) What is a resolution? Allow responses.

After reading page 5. Say: We can write about many different problems in a personal narrative. Which of the problems on this concept web have you experienced? (Allow responses.) Look at the personal narrative the girl has written on this page. What problem did she and her mom have? Allow responses.

Objectives

Concepts About Print
- Use uppercase letters and end punctuation correctly.

Oral Language and Grammar
- Share a message orally.
- Use complete sentences.
- Use common nouns, adjectives, and personal pronouns.

Purposeful Phonics Connections
- Apply phonics knowledge to encode unknown words.
- Write high-frequency words.

Reflecting Reading in Writing
- Analyze features of a personal narrative.
- Visualize and ask questions.
- Reread from the beginning of a sentence or text.

Writing
- Draw and write a journal entry.

Materials
- Mentor big book: Personal Narratives
- Journals anchor chart (from Week 7)
- Interactive whiteboard resources
Put the big book aside. Say: We’ll learn more about personal narratives tomorrow. While we’re learning, we’ll keep writing in our journals.

Based on your evaluation of last week’s journal writing assessment, emphasize a skill or strategy students still need to practice. Say: Today I want you to pay special attention to ______. Provide a quick review using the Journals big book or a previously modeled journal page. Say: Remember to use our Journals anchor chart, too. I will be here to help you if you need me!

2. Rehearse (5 MINUTES)

Invite students to close their eyes and visualize an experience to draw and write about in a journal. Say: Tell your partner what you plan to draw and write about. Tell what happened, who was there, and how everyone felt. Then act out your idea to make sure you have a complete thought.

If your class includes English learners, you may wish to model using the following oral sentence frames to support their partner talk:
• I remember when ______.
• This made me feel ______.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring (20 MINUTES)

Distribute students’ writing journals. Invite each student to draw a picture of what he or she described to a partner and to write as many sentences as possible. Say: Before you write, tell your partner what you need to remember to do today. Support students as they strive to implement the selected skill or strategy. Allow students to get ideas and help from one another as well, and use the Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to help you provide differentiated support to individual students based on your observations. Provide the Journals anchor chart for students to refer to as they write.

Ask students to stop five minutes before writing time is over. Say: Check your writing to make sure you included ______ (use today’s skill emphasis). Then assist students who need help checking, revising, or editing their writing.

4. Share (5 MINUTES)

Invite two or three students to share their drawings and written messages. Point out and celebrate examples of developing skills.

Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers

Goal Oriented

• I will close my eyes and think of something that happened to me.
• I will write how I felt when ______.

Directive and Corrective Feedback

• Tell me about a memory. What happened? Who was there? How did everyone feel? Now write about that memory.
• Look at your picture. What words go with your picture?
• Say the first word of your message slowly. What sound do you hear at the beginning of the word? What sound do you hear next? Write the sounds you hear.

Self-Monitoring and Reflection

• Show me where you wrote a complete sentence.
• Show me where you described your feelings.
• Show me a word you had trouble writing. What did you do to help yourself?
• Did you use any strategies such as visualizing or asking yourself questions? Tell me about that.

Validating and Confirming

• I like the way you worked out that word.
• You made your writing sound like talking!
• I noticed that you asked questions about your sentence. Strong writers do that when they write.

Teacher Tip

Begin collecting personal narratives from a variety of sources, such as primary grade magazines and older students at your school, and display them on a bulletin board. Include a photograph or description of the writer with each personal narrative when possible.