Take Notes on Your Research

1. Focus

Explain Taking Notes

Say: Before you begin to write a report, you do research to learn about your topic. To make sure you remember what you learn and to record the facts correctly, you take notes. You don’t write down everything you read word for word. Instead, you write down just the most important details and you don’t worry about using complete sentences. Today we’ll practice taking notes.

Model Taking Notes

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Also, display BLM 3. As you talk about note-taking and the bibliography, model recording the information on the BLM.

The Leafy Sea Dragon

by Martin Lee

The leafy sea dragon may sound like a scary creature, but it's actually a small, unusual-looking fish. It is related to the sea horse but is larger; it grows to about a foot long. Its most noticeable feature is its camouflage. The leafy sea dragon is covered with leaf-like parts that make it look like a piece of seaweed floating along in the ocean current.

Sample Think-Aloud

Say: My topic is the leafy sea dragon. I have a chart here that I will write my notes on. First, I’ll write down the title, author, and page of my source. (Write these details on the chart.) I’ve got a question in mind, which is, “What is a leafy sea dragon?” All the notes I take will be about that question. I’ll read this text and take notes about what I read.

Read first sentence aloud. Say: What is the most important detail in this sentence? I think it’s that the leafy sea dragon is a small fish. I will write that on the chart. Write the words on the chart.

Read next sentence aloud. Say: There are two details in this sentence that I want to remember. First, the sea dragon is related to the sea horse. Second, the sea dragon is about a foot long. (Write the notes on the chart.) I don’t use complete sentences when I take notes. And I used the number 1 instead spelling out the word. When you take notes, you can take shortcuts.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn about taking simple notes, without using sentences.
• Practice taking brief notes.
• Discuss the importance of taking notes.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Chart paper and markers
• Informational Report Note-Taking Chart (BLM 3)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling and practice texts onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. Make copies of BLM 3 for your class.
**Read last two sentences.** Say: The sea dragon’s camouflage is the most important detail here. I’m going to write that word on my chart, along with the words “leaf-like parts” and “looks like seaweed.” Write the notes on the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question:</th>
<th>What is a leafy sea dragon?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Title:</td>
<td>The Leafy Sea Dragon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author:</td>
<td>Martin Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td>small fish, related to sea horse, about 1 foot long camouflage—leaf-like parts, looks like seaweed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Informational Report Note-Taking Chart (BLM 3)

**2. Rehearse**

**Practice Taking Notes**

Leafy sea dragons have no teeth. They suck their food—sea lice, shrimp, and plankton—down their tubular-shaped snouts. Scales cover the sea dragon’s body and spines protect it from predators. Its eyes move independently, which means a sea dragon can look in different directions at the same time!

**Practice Text**

Distribute copies of BLM 3. Ask partners to read the practice text and take notes to answer “What is a leafy sea dragon?” If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

**Share Ideas**

Bring students together and invite partners to share the notes they wrote. Discuss how students can apply this strategy to their independent research.

**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Pair beginning ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Keep in mind that they will not be able to contribute many ideas orally. You will want to work with them individually to reinforce taking notes from simple text using key words.

**Intermediate**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Write the following sentence frames on chart paper and model how students can use them to contribute ideas:

- Leafy sea dragons have ______.
- A sea dragon’s body is ______.
- A sea dragon’s eyes ______.

**Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.

**3. Independent Writing and Conferring**

Say: Today we learned about taking notes for our informational reports. We learned that a question helps us focus our research. And we learned how to take notes that answer the question. When we take notes, we include only the important details. We don’t need to use complete sentences. Also, we learned that we need to write down the title of the book or article, the author’s name, and the page where we read the information.

Make BLM 3 available to students who are ready to research their informational reports during independent writing time. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

**4. Share**

Bring students together. Invite them to talk about the process of taking notes on their research. Ask them if they were able to write notes without writing full sentences.