Analyze the Features of a Personal Narrative

1. Focus

Explain Genre Features

Say: You and your relatives might share certain characteristics, like brown eyes or red hair. That's because you are part of the same family. A genre of writing is like a family. It has features that help us identify it. Personal narrative is a genre. That means that all personal narratives share certain features. That doesn't mean they tell the same stories. It just means they tell stories in similar ways. Today we will talk and think about those features.

Build a Class Genre Features Anchor Chart

Say: Think about the personal narratives we've read. Focus on what they have in common. We're going to create an anchor chart that helps us understand the features that are common to personal narratives.

Display a blank chart like the one shown here on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Also distribute copies of the chart to students on BLM 1. Work with students to record features of personal narratives in the left column. If necessary, use the following prompts to guide students:

- What does a personal narrative usually tell about?
- What do authors show about themselves in their personal narrative?
- What does the author include in a personal narrative to show more about the characters and bring the readers into the action?
- What kind of details would you find in a personal narrative?
- How long can a personal narrative be?

### Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Identify personal narrative genre features to create a class anchor chart.
- Listen to a personal narrative mentor text and find the features of the genre in the narrative.

### Preparation

**Materials Needed**

- Mentor text: “Spacers” from Memorable Misadventures
- Chart paper and markers
- Personal Narrative Features (BLM 1)
- Interactive whiteboard resources

**Advanced Preparation**

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy a blank Personal Narrative Features chart on chart paper prior to teaching the mini-lesson. If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper.

### Personal Narrative Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Narrative Features</th>
<th>Examples from the Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on one particular incident in the author’s life</td>
<td>This narrative focuses on the author’s dreaded first visit to the orthodontist’s office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes author’s thoughts and feelings</td>
<td>page 16: “But I did not like brushing.” page 20: “I knew that when I came back to the orthodontist, I would be a lot less scared. I would have a lot more confidence, too.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes dialogue</td>
<td>page 16: The author uses dialogue right away to draw the reader into the action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes specific details about the time, place, and people involved</td>
<td>page 18: The author identifies the date (April 13, 2009), the place (the orthodontist’s office), and details that tell about other characters (the lady at the front desk and the girl lying down).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sample Personal Narrative Features Anchor Chart (BLM 1)**
2. Rehearse

Analyze the Mentor Text

Form small groups of students to complete the second column of the chart on BLM 1. If you are using the interactive whiteboard resources, invite students to revisit parts of the text using the interactive whiteboard as they look for the examples they need.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Share Ideas

Bring students together and invite volunteers to share the examples they found in the text you read aloud. Record their findings on your anchor chart. Post this anchor chart for students to refer to throughout the unit as they think about the personal narrative features they need to include in their narratives.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: When you work on your own personal narratives, remember that the features we looked at today are the same features readers will expect to see in your writing. The anchor chart we made will be available to remind you about these features.

During independent writing time, encourage students to think about the memorable misadventures they’ve been writing about. Ask them to choose one feature of a personal narrative and write about why that feature is important to the telling of their own memories. 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 volunteers to share their ideas about the features of a personal narrative.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Place beginning ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group “Analyze the Mentor Text” activity. Keep in mind that they will not be able to contribute many ideas orally. Work with ELs individually to reinforce concepts while other students write independently.

Intermediate

Place ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group activity. Display the following simple sentence frames on chart paper and model how students can use them to contribute ideas in the group:

A personal narrative tells ______.
A personal narrative includes ______.

Advanced

Place ELs with fluent English-speakers during the small-group activity.

All Levels

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: camera/la cámara; confidence/la confianza; dentist/el dentista; orthodontist/el ortodoncista/la ortodoncista.