Recognize and Use the Descriptive Text Structure

1. Focus

Explain Descriptive Text Structure

Say: Many informational reports tell about a single subject. The author uses descriptive words to tell about the topic so readers can create pictures in their minds. When you write an informational report, you will include accurate information and descriptive words. When you write, ask yourself, “Did I include information so that my readers can draw a picture about what I wrote?”

Model Identifying the Descriptive Text Structure

Ask students to listen as you read (or reread) the description of caribou on page 8 of “Migrating Animals on Land.” You may want to display this page from the book using the interactive whiteboard resources so that students may read along.

Say: In the first paragraph, the author describes caribou as “large deer,” so we have an idea of what caribou look like. Then the author tells about where they live and that in fall “snow covers the grass.” This gives us an idea of what it’s like where caribou live in summer and why they migrate in the fall. As I read an informational report, I look for descriptive language that shows, rather than tells, me about the subject.

Practice Identifying Descriptive Text Structure

Read aloud the description of red crabs on page 9. If available, display this page using the interactive whiteboard resources so students may read along. Say: Now I’ll read about the red crabs of Christmas Island, near Australia. Listen for words that describe the crabs and their migration. Students should notice the description of the size of crabs, “about the size of a dinner plate,” and where they travel as they migrate—they “cross roads and crawl through buildings.”

Create a Class Descriptive Text Structure Anchor Chart

Say: Writers use descriptive words to help readers create pictures in their minds.

On chart paper, work with students to brainstorm descriptive words they found in the excerpts from “Migrating Animals on Land.” Reread and clarify the meaning of unfamiliar descriptive words and phrases.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using the Descriptive Text Structure in Oral Conversation

Turn and talk. Ask students to use the descriptive words from the anchor chart to tell a partner what they know about the red crabs. Encourage them to pretend that their partner knows nothing about the crabs, so they must describe them clearly and accurately.

Ask: How can you use words to help your partner create a picture in his or her mind?

Share Descriptions

Bring students together. Invite students to share their descriptions of the red crabs.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning
Work one on one with ELs to help them understand descriptive words. Ask them to describe something in the classroom. Record their adjectives on self-stick notes and place them on or near the objects.

Intermediate and Advanced
Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the turn-and-talk activity. Write the following simple sentence frames on chart paper and model how students can use them to contribute ideas.

All Levels
If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate to help them understand the content of the mentor text: descriptive/descriptivo(a).