Organize Your Ideas Using a Planning Chart

1. Focus

Explain Organizing Your Ideas

Say: When we chose our topic for an informational report, we chose a topic that we knew we could research and find information about. We focused our research with a research question or questions. To write a report, we need to make sure to include facts and details that are accurate. Today I’m going to show you how to use an informational report planning chart to help you organize your writing ideas.

Model Organizing Your Ideas

Display the Informational Report Planning chart on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Sample think-aloud. Say: I’m going to use this planning chart to model how I organized my ideas for an informational report.

Topic and Focus. Say: The topic I chose when I narrowed my focus from a list of brainstormed ideas was migrating animals. I decided that I needed to focus on animals that live on land and that migrate. I’ll write this on the planning chart.

Model jotting down your ideas on the chart.

Research Questions. Say: I needed to decide on a research question or two that would guide my research. I wanted to find out what land animals migrate and why. Once I had the focus of my research, I could look for answers to my research questions in books and online. Model writing research questions on the chart.

Main Points. Say: As I researched my questions, I wrote down important details that I found and wanted to include in my report. I found out that there are three main reasons land animals migrate: to look for food and water, to escape the cold, and to mate. I can organize how I write my report using these main reasons. Each of these reasons could be a section in my report. I can add details, like the facts that weather has an effect on migration and migrating animals face dangers from predators. Model writing on the chart.

Conclusion. Ask: How do I want to conclude my report? I think a good way would be to sum up the main reasons for migration. Model writing on the chart.
#### Strategies to Support ELs

**Beginning**

Invite beginning ELs to draw a picture of the topic for their informational report. Encourage them to discuss their topic in any way they can, using words and/or gestures. Write important vocabulary on self-stick notes and model using the words in sentences.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Encourage ELs to use the following sentence frames to help them talk about their informational report:

- *My topic is ______.*
- *The focus of my report is ______.*
- *My research question(s) is/are ______.*

---

**2. Rehearse**

**Practice Organizing Your Ideas**

Invite students to organize their own ideas for an informational report based on the research they have conducted. If you have students who have not yet done their research, have them work with a partner who is ready to organize ideas.

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 ideas they organized on the chart. Use some of or all of the following questions to guide your discussion:

- *Were there enough research details to support the main ideas you want to discuss in your report?*
- *What should you do if you find, as you’re organizing, that you don’t have enough information?* (Students should recognize that they may need to conduct additional research.)

---

**3. Independent Writing and Conferring**

**Say:** We just learned that we can use a chart to organize our ideas for an informational report. This gives us an opportunity to review our research findings and think about how they support the main points we want to make in our report.

Encourage students to apply this strategy as they organize their ideas for their informational reports during independent writing time. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

**4. Share**

Bring students together. Invite volunteers who have not yet done so to share the ideas they organized on the Informational Report Planning chart. Discuss challenges that students have encountered.