Think About Our Everyday Lives

1. Focus

Introduce Procedural Writing

Display an object that you made by following steps in a process. Note: If you bring in something that you baked or cooked, be sure to keep in mind any allergies of students in the class. Use the sample think-aloud below as a model of how to talk to students about the object you are sharing.

Sample think-aloud. Say: I want to share with everyone something that I made. I baked this banana bread for you. I have been making this banana bread for years. I serve it to my family and all of my friends. In fact, everyone knows me for this banana bread. I used to make it with my mother when I was growing up. My mother never used a written recipe. She had memorized all the steps and ingredients. Later, people started asking me how to make it. I decided that it was about time to write the recipe down so that I could share it with friends. I had to think back to every little step I took to make the bread. I wrote down every ingredient and the exact amount I used. I explained every step in order. Now I can share the recipe with anyone who wants it.

Say: The steps I took to write down my banana bread recipe are the steps that someone would take to write down any important process. I went through the steps one by one and wrote them down. I was as clear as possible so that someone else could follow them. This kind of writing is called procedural writing. Procedural writing explains something in order from beginning to end. For the next several weeks, we are going to read, write, and share our procedural writing. We will think about things we do that follow a procedure, and we will try to explain the steps so that someone else can follow them.

Introduce the Purpose and Audience for Procedural Writing

Ask: How many of you have ever followed a recipe? Why did you follow the recipe? (Allow responses.) You followed that recipe because you didn’t know how to do something, and the person who wrote that recipe was your guide. When you write a procedural text, you are like a teacher to your readers. You help them learn how to do something you already know how to do.

Say: All kinds of people read how-to, or procedural, texts to learn how to do things. We can learn how to cook a new recipe, plug in our computers, put together a kite, make a toy, or knit a sweater.
2. Rehearse

Practice Telling Procedures Orally

Invite students to work with a partner. Students should tell their partners about one procedure they know how to do well. Possible procedures include making a sandwich, riding a bike, getting dressed, setting a table, or taking care of a pet. Partners should explain their procedure using clear steps in order. The partner listening to the procedure should be prepared to retell it to the class.

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

Share Procedures with the Class

Invite volunteer pairs to retell the procedures their partners shared with them. Explain that they do not have to remember the steps word for word, but they should try to remember the general steps that should be followed during the procedure. Use one or more of the following questions to engage students in an open discussion about the topic.

Person Telling the Procedure
- How easy or hard was it to list your steps in order?
- What words did you use to help your partner pay attention to the order of the steps?

Listener
- What did it feel like listening to your partner’s procedure? Was it easy or difficult to follow? Why do you think that was?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: You know how to do many things. You can use what you know to help others learn new things. During the next several weeks, we will all use what we know how to do to help us write how-to texts. We will get to play the experts and put directions into writing to share our knowledge.

Invite students to write three steps in a simple procedure, such as how to brush your teeth.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud the steps they recorded.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning
Meet with beginning ELs one on one. Focus on transitional words that are used in procedural writing, such as first, next, and then. Use pictures that show a procedure and point to each step in the process as you say each transitional word.

Intermediate
Pair ELs with fluent English speakers. Encourage partners to use simple sentence frames to communicate their procedures to each other:

I know how to ______.
First, I ______.
Then, I ______.

Advanced
Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during partner practice.

All Levels
If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate to help them understand the lesson focus: procedure/el procedimiento.

Display the images using the interactive whiteboard resources as additional visual prompts for explaining procedures.