Write Captions for Graphic Features

1. Focus

Explain Writing Captions

Say: The graphics—photographs, charts, or illustrations—that accompany an informational report are an essential part of the whole. They aren’t just random bits of information, but must actually support the text. Charts and maps are generally accompanied by a title. Photographs and illustrations have captions. The caption describes the photo or gives the reader additional information about the photo, and the caption connects the graphic feature to the text. Today I’m going to show you how to write captions for the graphic features in your informational reports.

Model Writing Captions

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen as you read the captions from “World’s Favorite Sport” aloud.

1. Players from Uruguay celebrate during the first World Cup in 1930.
2. Pelé scoring a goal at the 1970 World Cup, which his Brazilian team won.

Modeling Text

After caption 1. Say: This caption describes what the photograph shows. Notice that it is written in the present tense. It is simple and very clear.

After caption 2. Say: This caption is very different from the first one. It starts with a different word—Pelé, the player’s name—instead of the common noun players. The verb is just the present participle, scoring. This makes the caption read more quickly and sharply, like scoring a goal. The sentence is concise, but the sentence structure is more complex than in the first caption. There are many ways to structure your sentences when you write captions. The most important thing is to describe the photo clearly and concisely.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn how to choose the best words to describe graphic features.
• Practice writing captions for graphic features in informational text.
• Discuss how they can apply this strategy to their writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Mentor text: “World’s Favorite Sport” from Soccer World Magazine
• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. You will also need to prepare two or three photographs for students to view and write captions for in the practice activity.
2. Rehearse

Practice Writing Captions

Display two or three photographs and ask students to work with a partner to write a caption for each one. Pairs should write down their captions and be prepared to read them to the class and explain why they wrote the captions they did.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their captions and explain the choices they made as they wrote the captions. Record students’ captions and post these as models for students to use as they draft or revise their informational reports.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned how to write captions to accompany graphic elements in our informational reports. A caption should clearly and concisely describe the image, but captions can be written in different ways. As you work on your informational reports, remember that you don’t have to make all your captions “match”—you should write each one in the way that is best for that particular graphic.

Encourage students to choose the best words to describe each graphic element in 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 volunteers to share examples of the captions they wrote.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Beginning ELs are still learning to articulate complete sentences in English. While other students work with partners, or during independent writing time, work with students on oral expression. Show students the photographs from the partner practice activity and ask them to describe the photos in any way they can, with words or gestures. Expand on their ideas with simple sentences.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: describe/describir; photograph/la fotografía.