Organize Your Ideas Using a Planning Chart

1. Focus

Explain Organizing Your Ideas

Say: Once we have chosen the book that we will review, we need to think about what we like and don’t like about the book. We need to be able to give specific reasons for our opinions and use examples from the text. We need to organize our thinking to help us write our book review. Today I’m going to show you how to use a planning chart to help do this.

Model Organizing Your Ideas

Display the planning chart for a book review on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Use some, or all, of the sample think-alouds below based on “Stay Under the Sea!”

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
- Learn how to use a planning chart to organize ideas for a book review.
- Practice organizing their own ideas for a book review on the planning chart.
- Discuss how to apply the strategy to their independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed
- Mentor text: “Stay Under the Sea”
- Chart paper and markers
- Book Review Planning Chart (BLM 4)
- Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the planning chart onto chart paper. If necessary, copy the sentence frames “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writer’s Initial Judgment</th>
<th>This story is beautiful but not for people who prefer a happy ending.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title and Author</td>
<td>“The Little Mermaid” by Hans Christian Andersen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot Summary</td>
<td>Little Mermaid, daughter of the sea, has five sisters. Each girl at age fifteen goes to the surface to explore Earth. Little Mermaid sees the handsome prince on a ship. A storm wrecks the ship. She saves the prince from drowning. The prince thinks another girl has saved him. Little Mermaid wants to marry the prince, so she goes to a witch for a magic potion. Potion will change tail into legs, but she must give up her voice and walking will be painful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Vivid descriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Evidence</td>
<td>“walls built of coral, roof formed of shells”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“clouds tinted with crimson and gold”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“through the glimmering twilight . . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Author makes readers care about Little Mermaid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Evidence</td>
<td>Describes her as gentle, kind, and beautiful with a sweet voice; willing to sacrifice for her love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>Didn’t like the way Little Mermaid was portrayed when she makes deal with the witch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Evidence</td>
<td>A stronger character would have decided the prince wasn’t worth it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>Sad story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Evidence</td>
<td>Doesn’t have a happy ending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Thoughts</td>
<td>Beautifully written story, enjoyable to read, but not everyone will approve of the decisions made by Little Mermaid, which could spoil the story for them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Book Review Planning Chart (BLM 4)

Sample think-alouds. Say: I’m going to use this mentor text to model how to organize ideas for a book review. I’ll imagine I’m the writer of this book review, and I’ll use the chart to organize my ideas before I begin drafting.
Initial judgment. **Say:** I want to start off by saying that the story is beautifully written but that it is not a story for readers who like a happy ending.

**Strengths.** **Say:** I need to explain what I liked about the story and give reasons. I can say that I loved the author’s vivid descriptions and I can use direct quotes of some descriptions from the book as evidence. I’ll put quotation marks around these words when I write them on the planning chart so that I remember that these are quotes from the book. I felt another strength was the way the author developed the Little Mermaid and made readers really care about her.

**Weaknesses.** **Say:** One weakness was the way the author had the Little Mermaid sacrificing so much. I think that some readers today would find this silly. Also, the story doesn’t have a happy ending, so I want to be sure to warn readers who are looking for a happy-ever-after fairy tale.

**Final thoughts.** **Say:** I’ll sum up my ideas by saying that the story is well written, but it might not appeal to readers who want a happy ending or who like a strong female character.

**2. Rehearse**

**Practice Organizing Your Ideas**

Invite students to share with a partner one strength and one weakness in the book that they have chosen to review.

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 strengths and weaknesses of their books.

**3. Independent Writing and Conferring**

**Say:** It’s important to provide reasons why you like the book and why you don’t like the book and to provide evidence to support your opinions. Using a planning chart helps you make sure to include all of this in your book review.

You may wish to make BLM 4 available to students who are ready to organize ideas for their book reviews 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 the class together. Invite volunteers to share some of the strengths and weaknesses of their chosen books. Ask them how using the planning chart to focus on strengths and weaknesses and evidence will help them write better book reviews.