Use a Tone of Conviction

1. Focus

Explain Using a Voice with a Tone of Conviction

Say: When we write a personal narrative, we want to make a connection with our readers about an experience that is important to us. We want our audience to understand that we are writing about this experience because we have strong beliefs about it. One way to communicate that we care about our subject is to write with a voice that has a tone of conviction. Today I will show you how to include this type of voice in your personal narrative.

Model How Writers Use a Voice with a Tone of Conviction

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

1. I got a better feel for my family’s Albanian heritage. Also, I got to connect with my family.
2. We stayed in a house right next to the beach. This is a special place.
3. But the best meal was when my mom cooked “glush.” This is a typical Albanian meal of meat, peas, and mashed potatoes.

Modeling Text

Ask students to listen for a tone of conviction in the writer’s voice as you read the sentences aloud.

After example 1. Say: I see that the writer often uses direct, declarative statements. He tells just how things were and how he experienced them. This is one way of writing with conviction and having a tone of certainty about what you describe. Just stating the facts and events directly can help writers take a strong tone in a personal narrative.

After example 2. Say: The writer’s conviction comes through strongly when he says, “This is a special place.” I notice that there is no doubt in this statement. The writer is certain that the place is special. He is writing with conviction in his tone, which I respect as a reader. I appreciate when the writer of a personal narrative feels strongly and is certain about the places he or she loves. It makes me want to keep reading when a writer has a strong voice such as this.

After example 3. Say: When the writer uses the word best to describe the meal, he is again writing with conviction. Some people might not agree with him that the glush he describes was the best meal, but he is certain himself, and this comes through in his voice. Using strong language such as this helps establish the writer’s tone of conviction.
2. Rehearse

**Practice Writing with a Tone of Conviction**

Display the practice text on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources.

We drove to the city. We visited my mother’s old school.

**Practice Text**

Ask students to work with a partner to add a tone of conviction to these sentences. Encourage them to describe something about the mother’s old school and to make something up if necessary. Remind students to add a comment that conveys a sense of certainty and strong belief—possibly through direct, declarative sentences or else by stating something with certainty that others may or may not completely agree with. Each pair should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class. They should be ready to explain how they added language that showed conviction.

**Share Practice Sentences**

Bring students together and invite pairs to read their sentences aloud and explain how they added a tone of conviction. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they write their own personal narratives.

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**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Work one on one with beginning ELs to practice expressing a tone of conviction orally using sentence frames such as:

- I think _____. I like _____.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Supply the following sentence frames to help students create comments to add to the practice text:

- I learned _____. I believe _____.

**All Levels**

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: **conviction/la convicción, narrative/la narración, special/especial.**

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3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** We just learned that adding a tone of conviction to our personal narratives is one way to make a connection and gain our readers’ respect. Remember, a good personal narrative has a strong voice that readers can connect to. As you write your personal narratives, remember to add a tone of conviction to communicate your strong belief in the importance of the experience you describe.

Ask students to identify sections of their personal narratives in which they can strengthen the writer’s voice by adding a tone of conviction. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

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4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to read aloud sections of their personal narratives in which they improved the writer’s voice by adding sentences with a tone of certainty and strong belief.