Revise Your Personal Narrative for Voice

1. Focus

Explain Revising for Voice

Say: We may be finished with our drafts, but we're not finished with the writing process. The next step is to revise our drafts to make them the best they can be. Revision is one of the most important parts of the writing process. We want to look at whether our voice comes through in our writing. If the voice in your narrative is strong, readers will be able to connect with you and the experience you are describing. Today I'm going to show you how to revise a personal narrative to strengthen the voice.

Model Revising for Voice

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read aloud the first example.

Modeling Text

My family and I drove into the parking lot at the beach. I got out of the car. My dad had rented a car. I looked at the view of the white sand and the crystal water. It was very nice.

Modeling Text

Say: This text sounds really dull and flat. I don't hear the writer coming through in these sentences. I don't get a sense for what she was feeling or what she was like. The first sentence says, “The family drove into the parking lot.” If I say “pulled into the parking lot” and “jumped out of the car,” I get a sense of action and how the writer feels. Adding that it was a black convertible and that the writer thought this was pretty cool of her dad to rent one helps give the reader an impression of what the writer is like and how she feels. Listen as I read the revised version.

Read aloud the second example. Ask students to tell how the revisions help them hear the writer's voice.

Modeling Text

My family and I pulled into the parking lot at the beach. I jumped out of the car—a black convertible. It was very cool of my dad to rent such a neat car. I took in the view. This place is twenty million times nicer than Corpus Christi, I thought.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn to revise a personal narrative to make the voice stronger.
• Revise a section of their own writing and share their revisions with the class.
• Discuss how they can apply these strategies to their own independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling and practice texts onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.
2. Rehearse

Practice Revising for Voice

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

1. We ran down the beach.
2. I saw a coral reef.
3. There were lots of fish swimming.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with a partner to revise the sentences so that the author’s voice comes through. Each pair should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class and explain how they made the writer’s voice stronger. Say: Remember, a strong narrative voice brings your reader closer to the experience you are describing. You can revise your writing for voice by letting your personality show in your writing.

Share Practice Revisions

Bring students together and invite pairs to read aloud their revised sentences. Ask students to discuss how the changes to the sentences make the author’s voice come through in the writing.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We just learned that a good personal narrative includes a strong voice. The writer’s personality comes through in the description of the events. As you revise your personal narrative, remember to strengthen your voice by adding your feelings and writing the way you would talk if you were describing the events to someone.

Encourage students to focus on voice when they revise their personal narratives 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 students to read aloud a section of their personal narratives that they revised for voice.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Beginning ELs are not ready to work on this writing process skill. While other students collaborate on the small-group activity or write independently, meet one on one with students to support developmentally appropriate writing skills based on their independent writing and language levels. Since this lesson focuses on adding details, you might present a familiar object to students and have them brainstorm a list of words to describe it.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with more fluent English speakers during the partner activity.

All Levels

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates to help them understand the lesson focus: revise/visar; voice/la voz.