1. Focus

Explain Using Elaboration in an Informational Report

Say: Informational reports have some features that are different from those of other genres. Informational reports may include headings or graphic features with captions, and they may have alternative sentence structures, such as lists. A list is one form of elaboration, or adding details about an idea. A list stands out from the text, so it often includes information the author wants the reader to remember. It may have numbers or bullets in front of each item. Today I’m going to show you how to elaborate or add details in the form of lists within sentences.

Model Using Elaboration in an Informational Report

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

If your skull cracks or is badly shaken or bruised, your brain will be injured. So it’s extremely important to always:
• wear a seat belt whenever you ride in a car,
• walk across streets safely, and
• wear a helmet while bike riding and skateboarding.

Model Text

Say: In this passage, the author is telling about the importance of protecting your brain. She doesn’t just say that it is important to protect our brains. She tells us how to protect our brains. This is obviously something the author wants readers to pay attention to and remember, so she gives the details in the form of a list. The list is easy to see in the text. I can look back and find the list later if I want. She introduces the list with the phrase, “So it’s extremely important to always:” A colon follows the word always. Each item in the list is introduced by a bullet. As items in a series, the first listed item ends with a comma, the second item ends with a comma and the word and, and the last item ends with a period.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Elaboration in an Informational Report

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

Certain foods, such as salmon, sardines, nuts, blueberries, strawberries, and dark, leafy green vegetables, are good for your brain.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with partners to revise the sentence so that it includes a list. Remind students that they should write an introductory sentence. Pairs should write down their sentences and lists and be prepared to read them to the class.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their sentences and lists and explain their changes. Discuss how students chose to write the introductory sentence and what they included in the list. Record students’ sentences 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 that lists are one form of elaboration we can use to add details to text. Remember, lists are useful for adding details about an idea, especially when you want the information to stand out. As you draft and revise your informational reports, consider whether a list might be the strongest way to present details about an idea.

Encourage students to find places in their informational reports where they can elaborate by using lists. 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 two or three students who found opportunities in their reports to elaborate with lists to share examples with the class.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning
While other students work with partners, or during independent writing time, work with beginning ELs to generate simple written lists. For example, you may write a list of things to do when students come into class:

- Hang up your coat.
- Sit down.
- Get out your books.

Use pantomime to reinforce the meaning of each item in the list.

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: details/los detalles; elaboration/la elaboración.