1. Focus

Introduce the Mentor Informational Report

Say: Reading informational reports can help us become better informational report writers. Today I’m going to read a short report about the two sides of the brain. As we read, we will identify some of the key features typically found in an informational report. You will use these features in your reports, too.

Read aloud the title. You may wish to display the informational report using the interactive whiteboard resources so that students can follow along as you read.

Say: The title of the article is “Right Brain, Left Brain.” I have heard people use phrases such as “she’s left-brained” or “he’s right-brained” to describe people, but I only have a little understanding of what these phrases mean. I wonder if this article will explain these phrases. What do you think this report will tell us about the parts of a brain? Allow students to share their predictions.

If your class includes English learners or other students who would benefit from vocabulary and oral language development to comprehend the article, use “Make the Mentor Text Comprehensible for ELs.”

Read Aloud the Mentor Informational Report

Read aloud the text, stopping at some or all of the places indicated (or at other points you choose) to highlight key features of an informational report:

1. Informational reports have strong leads that hook the reader.
2. There is a logical organization of concepts.
3. Reports often include graphic images, such as charts, that support the facts.
4. Reports have strong endings that make readers think.

Strong Lead

Page 17, after first (partial) paragraph. Say: The author grabs my attention right away. I read that there was an incredible experiment and want to know how it changed everything scientists had known about the brain. I like the way the author holds my attention by telling a story. Strong story leads such as this “hook” readers, or get them interested about a topic, so they keep reading.

Logical Organization of Concepts

After reading page 20. Say: I like the way the author organizes the parts of the report. First she writes about the jobs of the right brain and the left brain. Then she tells how the two hemispheres of the brain work together. On pages 19 and 20, I learn that the terms right-brained and left-brained refer to people who have a preference in the way they use information. If the author had brought up these last concepts first, they wouldn’t have made sense.
**Using Graphic Features**

**After reading page 20.** Say: I can just glance at the chart to remind myself of the key features of each hemisphere of the brain. Writers of informational reports include graphic features such as charts to present information that might be harder for readers to find or understand quickly in paragraph form.

**Strong Nonfiction Ending**

**After reading page 20.** Say: I notice that the author uses the last paragraph to sum up the report. She uses a specific example to show how the two sides of the brain work together. As a reader, I’m left thinking about other ways the brain hemispheres might work together. A strong ending to an informational report will usually lead readers to think more about the topic.

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**3. Independent Writing and Conferring**

Say: We just learned that when you write an informational report, you begin with a strong lead so your readers want to keep reading. You present concepts in a logical order. You use graphics that support the text. And, at the end, you sum up the topic with a strong nonfiction ending, leaving your readers with something to think about.

**4. Share**

Invite students to write as many facts about the brain as they recall from the mentor text.

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**Make the Mentor Text Comprehensible for ELs**

**Beginning**

Point to the picture of the brain on pages 16 and 17. Use gestures, such as holding up two fingers and pointing to each side of the brain, to explain the subject of the text. Say: This is the human brain. It has two sides. It has a left side. It has a right side.

**Beginning and Intermediate**

Say: This is my right hand. (Lift your right hand.) This is my left hand. (Lift your left hand. Follow the same procedure, pointing to the right and left sides of your brain, to identify the right brain and left brain.) This informational report tells about the human brain. It tells about the two sides. It tells what each side does.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Point to your head. Say: My brain is inside my head. It has two sides. This side of my brain (point to the right side of your head) controls this side of my body (point to your left side). This side of my brain (point to the left side of your head) controls this side of my body (point to your right side). Encourage a background-building discussion about students’ knowledge of how the brain works.

**All Levels**

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates to help them understand the content of the mentor text: control/controlar; human/humano(a); intuition/la intuición; language/el lenguaje.

Use the interactive whiteboard resources to front-load key content vocabulary and concepts for the read-aloud.