Write a Postscript

1. Focus

Explain Writing a Postscript

Ask: When you get to the end of a text, do you ever want to know what happened after the end? For example, after you read a fairy tale, do you ever want to know what became of the princess or the wicked witch? Have students share their experiences of times when they wanted to know more about what happened after the end of something they read.

Say: When an author writes a memoir, he or she wants to include additional information after the subject of the memoir ends, like what happened to the people after the events of the memoir. This is called a postscript. In a memoir, postscripts usually include several paragraphs that have been added after the writer finished writing the piece. The postscript is used to add additional information about the story.

Model Writing a Postscript

Display the mentor text “From Columbia, 1969” in book form or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read aloud the postscript on page 27.

Say: This memoir tells the story of an eight-year-old girl’s move from Columbia to New York City with her family in 1969. The time period extends to January 1970 when she turned nine. The author added the postscript to give her readers some information about what happened after her family moved to the United States. She tells her readers that the move her family made was a good one and that she has done well. By adding a postscript, the author satisfies the curiosity of readers who might wonder whether the family did the right thing in moving to New York City. Postscripts are ways for a writer to include additional information to a memoir that is not a part of the writing piece. Sometimes the writer does this on purpose; other times, the writer thinks of interesting details after finishing the memoir.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn strategies for writing a postscript to a memoir.
• Brainstorm ideas for a postscript with a partner.
• Discuss how to apply the strategies to their own memoirs.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Mentor text: “From Columbia, 1969” from Newcomers to America
• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources
2. Rehearse

Practice Writing a Postscript

Invite students to work with a partner. Each partner should share details of his or her memoir. Then the partners will work together to decide on details that could be included in a postscript.

Share and Discuss

Bring students together and invite students to talk about the process of writing a postscript. How did talking about their memoir with a partner help them decide what information to include in the postscript?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that postscripts include additional information that was not a part of the memoir. Writers use postscripts to provide interesting details that might answer a question presented in the memoir or give added experiences after the memoir ended. Keep this in mind as you publish your own memoirs.

Encourage students to write a postscript when they prepare to publish their memoirs. 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 the postscripts they wrote and explain why they chose the additional information they did.

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. For example, you may want to help students write simple sentences about an important event at school.

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 this English/Spanish cognate: memoirs/las memorias.