Include Authentic Artwork in Your Biography

1. Focus

Explain Choosing Authentic Artwork

Say: Many historical texts, including biographies, use authentic artwork. Authentic artwork represents the period in which the person lived or the events happened. When you write about a person in history, you want to include authentic artwork that helps a reader visualize the people and events in your biography.

Model Choosing Authentic Artwork

Display the mentor text “Julius Caesar” in book form or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Discuss artwork on page 8. Say: The artwork on page 8 shows Julius Caesar with his soldiers. Including an illustration of what Caesar might have looked like helps the reader visualize him and the time in which he lived. This piece of artwork helps me visualize the setting as well as the subject of the biography.

Discuss artwork on page 11. Say: This page tells about gladiators. The authentic artwork at the bottom of the page shows the reader what a gladiator did in ancient times. This helps the reader visualize the meaning of the word gladiator.

Discuss the artwork on page 12. Say: This illustration shows Caesar leading his army across the Rubicon. This artwork supports the text as it discusses Caesar’s conquests.

Discuss artwork on page 15. Say: The assassination of Julius Caesar was an important event in ancient Roman history. This painting illustrates that importance and helps the reader connect to the text.

Show students examples of biographies and discuss the connection between the artwork and the subject and theme of the biographies.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Learn strategies for choosing authentic artwork to include for a biography.
• Generate ideas for authentic artwork in a group.
• Discuss how to apply the strategies to their own biographies.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Mentor text: “Julius Caesar”
• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
Gather together from your classroom or school library several biographies that contain artwork.
2. Rehearse

Practice Choosing Authentic Artwork

Invite students to think about the biographies they are writing and decide on one illustration that would enhance their biographies and help their readers connect with their writing.

Share and Discuss

Bring students together and invite them to share their ideas for a piece of artwork. Discuss as a class how each piece helps the reader connect with the subject of the biography.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that authors include authentic artwork in their biographies to help their readers visualize the people and events. Artwork is considered authentic if it accurately shows the people, setting, and events as they happened. Keep this in mind as you choose authentic artwork for your biographies.

During independent writing time, encourage students to focus on choosing authentic art for their biographies (if appropriate). 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 authentic artwork they chose for their biographies and to explain their choices.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Work with beginning ELs one on one to help them develop ideas for a piece of artwork for their writing. Ask them to tell you using words and gestures what kind of art they think would make their writing more interesting.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the practice activity.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: authentic/auténtico(a); biography/la biografía.