Abbreviations

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Identify abbreviations in sentences.
• Practice finding abbreviations.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Chart paper and markers
• Abbreviations (BLM 8)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text (with underlining) and the Abbreviations anchor chart (with underlining but without the entries in the second column) onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.

1. Focus

Explain Abbreviations

Write the following sentence on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources: “I attended 4th grade at P.S. 62.” Read the sentence aloud. Say: In this sentence, P.S. is an abbreviation. Abbreviations are letters that stand for a word or words. In the sentence, the abbreviation P.S. stands for Public School. Sometimes, an abbreviation is the first letter of each word in a phrase or name. At other times, it is a shortened form of a word or words. Abbreviations that use first letters may or may not have periods after the letters. Abbreviations are especially helpful to memoir writers when there are many places to name in a text.

Model Using Abbreviations

Display the modeling text (with underlining) on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources. Read the text aloud to students.

1. In 1967, U.S. combat units were sent over to Vietnam in great numbers.
2. There was once an airline called TWA, which stood for Trans World Airlines.
3. I was looking for the address “39 Whitehall St.” in Manhattan.

Modeling Text

After sentence 1. Say: In this sentence, I see the letters U.S. This is an abbreviation that stands for the name of a country: United States. I also notice that this text uses the traditional form of the abbreviation, with a period after each letter. Some books do not, but it is most important to be consistent. I know that most readers will recognize what the letters stand for in this abbreviation. So, it is safe to use it in this sentence instead of using the longer form of the name.

After sentence 2. Say: In this sentence, I see the abbreviation TWA, and then an explanation of what this stands for. I know that I won’t always see abbreviations explained in this way, but it is helpful—especially when an abbreviation appears for the first time in a text. I also notice there are no periods in this abbreviation (unlike in U.S.) When we use the abbreviation of a company name, we should check that we use it as the company itself uses it—or used it, in this case.

After sentence 3. Say: In this sentence, the abbreviation St. stands for the word Street. I remember that abbreviations can be shortened words as well as the initials in names. I have seen addresses like this before, so I know what the abbreviation stands for.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Abbreviations

Display the Abbreviations anchor chart (with underlining but without the entries in the second column) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to work with partners to identify the abbreviation for each underlined word or words.

If your class includes English language learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I went to visit Doctor Smith.</th>
<th>Dr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We once lived in Dallas, Texas.</td>
<td>TX or Tex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The United States Postal Service handles mail.</td>
<td>USPS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Abbreviations Anchor Chart

Share Abbreviations

Invite volunteers to tell the abbreviations they chose to fill in the chart. Discuss their choices as a class. Prompt with questions such as:

• Which abbreviations include the first letters of the words?
• Which abbreviations were shortened versions of words?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that some abbreviations are made up of the first letters of the words that they stand for and other abbreviations are shortened versions of the words. Some abbreviations include periods, and others do not. We can use abbreviations in our memoir writing to save space—especially when we include many place names.

If you would like to give students additional practice using abbreviations in sentences, have them complete BLM 8.

4. Share

Review and provide corrective feedback based on students’ answers to BLM 8. Ask students to share what they learned about abbreviations.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Work with beginning ELs to name simple abbreviations. Write the words United States of America and the abbreviation U.S.A. on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Write a familiar state name and say it aloud. Erase or cross out letters so that only the abbreviation remains. Read the abbreviation aloud. Repeat this exercise with other familiar place names.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair students with fluent English speakers to complete the practice activities and BLM 8.