Read Aloud a Mentor Memoir 2

1. Focus

Introduce the Mentor Memoir

Say: The memoir I’m going to read aloud today is written by a man named Efrain Hernandez.

Display the photograph of the writer on page 18 of The 1960s: Times of Change. Say: The title of this memoir is, “What Comes Before Wings.” Look at this picture of the writer as a young man and consider what the title might mean about the story you are about to hear in this memoir. 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 narrative, use “Make the Mentor Text Comprehensible for ELs.”

Read Aloud the Mentor Memoir

Read aloud the text, stopping at some or all of the places indicated (or at other points you choose) to highlight three key features of a memoir:
1. Memoirs focus on a short period of time or several related events.
2. Memoirs focus on events the way the writer remembers them.
3. Memoirs are written in narrative form.

Short Period of Time or Related Events
Page 22, after first paragraph. Say: Rather than focusing on just one event in his life, or telling his entire life story from birth to old age, this writer writes his memoir about a series of related events that all occurred within a certain time period during his youth. In this paragraph, I read about a particular month when many things happen to him at once. He enlists in the army, prepares to graduate from high school, and then gets attacked! As we continue reading, we will discover the reasons why this period in his life meant enough to the writer that he would write about it in his memoir.

Written in Narrative Form
Page 22, after second paragraph. Say: The writer includes many narrative elements—or story elements—that really bring the events to life. He has set the action in a specific time and place: three o’clock in the afternoon on a sidewalk in the South Bronx. He has also introduced a character who creates a problem in the plot: the incoherent young man who shoots the writer. Then comes a dramatic moment with the shooting, followed by a chase! These are examples of memoir writing that uses narrative form, and they help to engage me as a reader.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Listen to an interactive read-aloud to learn that a memoir focuses on a short period of time or several related events, is written in narrative form, and focuses on events the way the writer remembers them.
• Share personal responses to the memoir.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Mentor text: “What Comes Before Wings” from The 1960s: Times of Change
• Chart paper and markers
• Completed chart comparing personal narrative and memoir
• Interactive whiteboard resources
**2. Rehearse**

**Respond Orally to the Mentor Memoir**

After reading, invite students to share their personal reactions to the text by asking questions such as:

- *Were you surprised by anything in the memoir? Why?*
- *What feelings or experiences in the memoir could you relate to?*

If necessary, model the following sentence frames to support ELs and struggling students:

- *I was surprised by _____, because _____.*
- *I have also felt ______. I have also experienced ______.*

**Make the Mentor Text Comprehensible for ELs**

**Beginning**

On a world map, point to the locations written about in the memoir: Georgia, Puerto Rico, the South Bronx (New York), Queens (New York), South Carolina, Virginia, North Carolina, and Vietnam. Say the name of each location as you point to it. Show students the photograph of the writer on page 18. **Say:** This man went to all of these places. He learned how to jump out of airplanes.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

**Say:** This memoir is about a young man. His love of flying led him to many places and experiences. Encourage a conversation to build vocabulary and background information about topics from the memoir such as airplanes, paratroopers, and soldiers going to war.

**All Levels**

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: **aviation/**la aviación; **helicopter/**el helicóptero; **military/**los militares; **parachute/**el paracaidas.

Use the interactive whiteboard resources to find images of parachuting, paratroopers, and the Vietnam War to front-load key vocabulary and concepts for the read-aloud.

---

**3. Independent Writing and Conferring**

**Say:** Today we learned about some of the features of the memoir genre. We learned about sharing the feelings, thoughts, and experiences you had during a short period in your life. Instead of telling all the factual details in the times that you describe, you should tell about events in the way that you remember them. Keep in mind also that writing a memoir in narrative form—including strong settings, characters, and plot developments—will help you engage with your readers.

Ask students to write a paragraph in which they describe what they visualized as they listened to the mentor memoir. Encourage them to visualize with their five senses.

**4. Share**

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share what they visualized.