Write About the Author

1. Focus

Explain Writing About the Author

Ask: Have you ever read the book jacket of a book you are reading to find out about the author? Why do you do that? (Allow responses.) Many readers like to know whose work they are reading. They want to feel a connection to the author. Knowing something about the author makes the writing seem more real.

Model Writing About the Author

Display the information about the author on page 27 of “What Comes Before Wings” in book form or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read it aloud to students.

Say: From this author feature, I can learn about Efrain Hernandez and some of his life experiences, including the awards he received. I can also see his photograph today and compare it with the photographs of him included in the memoir. Knowing these things makes him seem real to me. I can better appreciate the time of his life that he writes about in his memoir.

Display additional books and read the author information from the back or inside jacket flaps of the book. Discuss the different kind of information authors reveal about themselves (for example, where they live, their interests, their education, life experiences, awards, previous publications). Point out that writers provide different information to their audience, depending on the genre they are writing in. For example, an informational text writer would probably include information that explains why the writer is qualified to write about his or her topic. The writer of a memoir would be more likely to tell about his or her personal likes and dislikes.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn what “about the author” features are.
• Discuss the purpose of “about the author” information in a published work.
• Work with partners to write “about the author” information for their memoirs.
• Discuss how to apply the strategies to their own memoirs.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Mentor text: “What Comes Before Wings” from The 1960s: Times of Change
• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

Gather books (from many genres) with examples of “about the author” information.
2. Rehearse

Practice Writing About an Author

Invite students to work with partners. Ask students to tell their partners three things they would want to share in their “about the author” feature. Ask students to jot down their ideas in their writer’s notebook so that they can share them with the class.

Share and Discuss

Bring students together and invite them to talk about the type of information they would want to include in an author feature in their memoir. Discuss whether or not this information would help readers of their memoirs connect to them.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that it helps to know personal information about an author of a memoir. This information helps readers connect to the author and provides background information on who the author is and what he or she has experienced.

Encourage students who are ready to publish a memoir to use the ideas they discussed with their partners to write a short author feature about themselves. 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 who developed features about themselves to read them aloud. Discuss their choice of details and how they engaged the students in the class.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Meet with beginning ELs one on one during the partner activity or independent writing and conferring time. Support them to develop simple “about the author” sentences using sentence frames such as:

- I am ______.
- I like to ______.
- I have ______.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Support oral language by giving students simple sentence frames to work with such as:

- An important fact about me is ______.
- One of my favorite things is ______.
- Someday I will ______.