Organize Ideas for a Research Report

1. Focus

Explain the Process

Say: The writing process involves a series of steps as we move toward publishing our writing. We brainstorm ideas, then narrow the focus and choose the best idea. Once we have our topic, we need to set our research questions and do our research. Then we need to organize the information that we found from our research. We can use a planning chart to help us organize our ideas. Let me show you how I use my research about the Sphinx to organize my ideas on a planning chart.

Model Organizing Ideas

Display a planning chart like the one below on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Add information to the chart as you think aloud about organizing your research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Topic: The Sphinx</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Focus: circumstances surrounding its purpose and construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Research Question: What is the mystery surrounding the Sphinx?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Findings</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. where/what it is</td>
<td>a. on Giza Plateau, west bank of Nile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. largest monolith in world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. over 241 feet long, 20 feet wide, 66 feet high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. sphinx is mythical creature with lion’s body and human head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Date of construction</td>
<td>not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. only way to date it would be to use ancient texts written about it, but no texts have been found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Theories about its construction</td>
<td>a. most think built during reign of Pharaoh Khafre between 2558 and 2532 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. one theory suggests that evidence of water damage would date the statue earlier, at a time when the desert was a grassland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion:
1. What type of conclusion will I choose? Make observation; end with question.
2. What will my conclusion say? Restate why there is a mystery surrounding the Sphinx and leave question open to the reader.

Sample Research Report Planning Chart (BLM 5)

About topic, focus, and research question. Say: When I narrowed my topics for writing, I decided on the topic of the Sphinx. I was particularly interested in when, why, and how it was built. My research question was, “What is the mystery surrounding the Sphinx?” I’ll record this on the planning chart.

About research findings. Say: I needed some details about where the Sphinx is and what it is. I found out that it’s a large monolith and it’s located near the Nile River in Giza, Egypt. I also found details about its dimensions. I’ll write

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Learn how to use research information to organize ideas for a report on a research report planning chart.
• Practice using research information to organize ideas on a planning chart based on one of their own writing ideas for a research report.
• Discuss how to apply the strategy to their independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Chart paper and markers
• Research Report Planning Chart (BLM 5)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the planning chart onto chart paper. If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” onto chart paper.

Preparation Tip
This mini-lesson models organizing information for a research report based on answers to research questions developed during the research lesson “Use Multiple Sources to Develop Original Ideas.”
these on the chart. (Model writing details on the planning chart.) My research question was about the mystery of the Sphinx. It seems that the only way to date it is to refer to ancient texts about it. Unlike other constructions in Egypt, nothing written about it has been found. Some think it was built during the reign of Pharaoh Khafre. Others think that signs of water damage mean it could be older. The Sphinx is located in a desert, so where could the water damage have come from? Some believe that it could have been built at a time when the desert was once a grassland. I’ll write this information on the chart.

**About conclusion. Say:** The interesting thing about the Sphinx is the mystery surrounding its construction, so I want to conclude by giving my readers something to think about. I will make an observation about the theories and end with a question to my readers about what they think. Using this planning chart has helped me sort through all the information that I found and put it together in an organized way. Now I can write a research report that will be easy for my readers to follow.

### 2. Rehearse

**Practice Organizing Your Ideas**

Invite students to use the planning chart to organize their ideas for a research report. Students will not have time to complete their organization during the mini-lesson, but they can continue during independent writing time. If your class includes students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

#### Share Ideas

Bring students together and invite volunteers to share the ideas they organized on the chart. Discuss how using their research to plan their writing helps them write a better research report.

### Strategies to Support ELs

#### Beginning

Invite beginning ELs to draw a picture of the topic for their informational report. Encourage them to discuss their topic in any way they can, using words and/or gestures. Write important vocabulary on self-stick notes and model using the words in sentences.

#### Intermediate and Advanced

Encourage ELs to use the following sentence frames to help them talk about their research report:

- My topic is ______.
- The focus of my report is ______.
- My research question is ______.
- One important finding on my topic is ______.

#### All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate: organize ideas/organizar las ideas.