1. Focus (15 MINUTES)

Display the cover of a read-aloud you have previously used during the year. Read aloud the title. Say: We have read this book before. I will read it again today. As I read, think about what you like about the book and what you don’t like. Read the book aloud in a fluent, expressive voice. Follow students’ lead in discussing the illustrations as you pause after each spread or page.

Close the book. Say: Think about the characters. Think about the story events. Think about the illustrations. What do you like? Why? (Allow responses.) Is there anything you don’t like? Why? (Allow responses.) Thank you for sharing your opinions and reasons! It sounds like most of us like/don’t like ______. I will draw a picture of ______.

Make a quick sketch on chart paper that illustrates what the group either likes or doesn’t like. Then say: Now I will write our opinion, or what we think. What can we write? Allow responses, and then write a “We like ______” or “We don’t like ______” sentence under the picture. As you write, model the following:

- Continue to emphasize the concepts about print that students still need to practice.
- Continue to model how to say a word slowly and use letter/sound relationships to write words. For words with higher-level spelling patterns, say: Remember that if you don’t know how to spell a word, you can just write the letters for the sounds you hear.
- Tell how you remember to write those words you see often in print, such as I, the, and my.
- Model rereading after each word by pointing to the words you’ve written so far and then pointing to where the next word should go. Say: We’re ready for the word ______. Then discuss and write the word.
- Model adding end punctuation and checking for the correct beginning and end to your sentence.

Ask students to reread the sentence with you. Ask: What do we need to write after we write our opinion? (Allow responses.) That’s right. We need to write a reason for our opinion. We need to tell why we like/don’t like the ______. What can we write?

Write a simple sentence stating a reason that supports the class’s opinion. Model applying the strategies listed above as you write.

Ask students to help you reread to check your sentence. Then put the chart tablet aside, and say: Next week we will read another book. Then we will discuss and write about our opinions and reasons. Remember that an opinion and a reason are two of the most important parts of a book review! Now we will write in our journals again.
NOTE: Although the mentor big book teaches four parts of a book review—title and author, opinion, reason, and recommendation—these kindergarten lessons focus on the opinion and reason.

For students who need more challenge, continue to display the book reviews in the mentor big book so they have models to refer to. Later you may also want to add the title/author and a recommendation to your modeled book reviews (while emphasizing that students need write only an opinion and a reason) to help reinforce the four parts.

2. Rehearse (5 MINUTES)

Invite students to close their eyes and visualize an experience that they could draw and write about in their journals. Say: Tell your partner what you plan to draw and write about. Tell what happened, and tell how you felt. Then act out your idea to make sure you have complete thoughts.

If your class includes English learners, you may wish to model using the following oral sentence frames to support their partner talk:

- One time I ______.
- I felt ______.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring (20 MINUTES)

Distribute students’ writing folders. Invite each student to draw a picture of what he or she described and to write a message. Ask questions as needed to help students develop their sentences, and remind them to reread after each word. Provide ongoing support for the skills taught in the Journal Writing unit.

Use the Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to help you provide differentiated support to individual students based on your observations.

4. Share (5 MINUTES)

Invite two or three students to share their drawings and written messages. Point out and celebrate examples of developing skills.

Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers

Goal Oriented

- When I write an opinion, I give a reason for that opinion.
- I will say the word ______ and listen for the first sound.

Directive and Corrective Feedback

- I see that you’ve written what happened, but not you how felt. Can you write your feelings here?
- Listen for sounds you know. Write any sounds you can hear.
- How could you describe ______? What other words could you use?

Self-Monitoring and Reflection

- How did acting out your idea help you get ready to write?
- Did you have trouble writing any words? What helped?
- Did you use words to describe your experience? Show me.

Validating and Confirming

- Good work drawing what you did and how you felt.
- I liked how you used the word ______ to describe ______.
- You wrote the word ______! You worked that out!
- You asked yourself questions. That’s something strong writers do to make sure they are writing complete thoughts.

Teacher Tip

Continue to use a simple checklist students can refer to as they edit and revise their writing, such as this example:

- Begin with an uppercase letter.
- Use an uppercase letter for the word I.
- Use a describing word.
- Put a period or exclamation point at the end of each sentence.