Write a Book Review

1. Focus (15 MINUTES)

Display the cover of *The Enormous Watermelon*. Read aloud the title. **Say:** Do you remember this story? You wrote a book review about your favorite character. Today I’ll retell this story. As you listen, think about which character is your least favorite and why. Then you can write a book review. Retell the story in your own words using the illustrations as prompts.

Close the big book and **say:** My least favorite character is Wee Willie Winkie. That is my opinion. Remember that an opinion is an important part of a book review.

Write an opinion on chart paper, for example, “Wee Willie Winkie is the character I like the least.” As you write, model the following:

- 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.
- 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 your sentence with you, and then **say:** Another part of a book review is the reason for an opinion. I need to tell why I don’t like Wee Willie Winkie. I like him least because he hardly does any of the work. He could help Old Mother Hubbard.

Write a reason, for example, “He joins the group last.” Model applying the strategies listed above as you write.

Ask students to help you reread to check your sentences. Then **say:** Now I want you to think of a different character to write about. First write which character is your least favorite. Then write why the character is your least favorite. Remember that your opinion and the reason for your opinion are two of the most important parts of a book review!
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 tell a partner about the character they like the least. Say: Tell your partner which character you plan to write about. Remember to include the character’s name and why that character is your least favorite.

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

• My least favorite character is ______.
• I don’t like this character because ______.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring (20 minutes)

Distribute students’ writing folders. Invite students to write their book reviews. Ask questions as needed to help students develop their sentences, and remind them to reread after each word. Continue to ask students to say words slowly, write the sounds they hear, and write the high-frequency words they know. Reinforce the editing and revising strategies taught in the Journal Writing unit, such as adding adjectives, using an uppercase letter for the word I, and checking for the correct beginning and end on each sentence. Encourage students to get ideas from one another as well.

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 book reviews. Point out and celebrate examples of opinions supported by information from the text. You may wish to provide additional modeling based on your observations during Independent Writing and Conferring.

Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers

Goal Oriented
• I don’t like ______ because ______.
• Notice that I start each sentence with an uppercase letter.
• I will describe ______ with the word ______.

Directive and Corrective Feedback
• Which character will you write about?
• Can you tell me other words to describe the character? Write them here.
• I see your opinion, but not a reason for it. Can you write it here?

Self-Monitoring and Reflection
• Did you name the character? Did you tell what you don’t like?
• What did you tell your partner about your least favorite character?
• How could you fix that?

Validating and Confirming
• You wrote the letter that stands for the ______ sound.
• You wrote the word ______! You worked that out!
• I like the way you asked yourself questions to help you write your opinions.

Teacher Tip
Continue reinforcing the idea of forming an opinion by asking students to vote on various topics during the day, such as what song to sing at the end of the day. Remind students that they should always be able to provide a reason for their opinion, so “Why?” is an important question.