Write a Book Review

1. Focus (15 Minutes)

Display the cover of *The Enormous Watermelon*. Read aloud the title. **Ask:** Who remembers what this story is about? (Allow responses.) I will retell it today. As you listen, think about which part of the story you enjoy the most and why. Maybe some part surprises you. Maybe some part makes you laugh. Maybe some part makes you want to keep reading. Retell the story from memory and in your own words.

**Say:** My favorite part of the book is when Old Mother Hubbard talks to her watermelon. The watermelon must like it, because it grows to be enormous! Now I will write my opinion. Remember that an opinion is part of a book review.

Write an opinion on chart paper, for example, “I like it when Mother Hubbard talks to the watermelon.” 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 your sentence with you. Then **ask:** What do I need to write after I write my opinion? (Allow responses.) Yes! I need to write my reason. I need to tell why I like that part of the story best.

Write a reason, for example, “The watermelon grows for Mother Hubbard!” 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 part of the story to write about. First write which part is your favorite. Then write why that part is your favorite. Remember that an opinion and a reason are two of the most important parts of a book review!
Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers

Goal Oriented
• I like the part about ______ because ______.
• I will say the word ______ and listen for the first sound.
• When I write about characters, I use words to describe them clearly.

Directive and Corrective Feedback
• Which part of the story will you write about?
• Tell me your opinion about ______. Tell me a reason for your opinion. Use this to help you write.
• Check that your sentences each start with an uppercase letter.

Self-Monitoring and Reflection
• How did you explain why you liked one part of the story least?
• What letter would you expect to see at the beginning? In the middle? At the end?
• What was the hardest part about writing your review? Why?

 Validating and Confirming
• I thought you did a good job explaining your opinions.
• You made me think about the story in a new way.
• You asked yourself questions. That’s something strong writers do.

Teacher Tip
While each lesson in the unit provides a focus for the independent writing, validate the decision of any student who would prefer to focus a review on a different aspect of the story. This encourages students to take risks and express their independence as writers.

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 which part of the story they like best. Say: Tell your partner which part of the story you plan to write about. Remember to tell why that part is your favorite.

If your class includes English learners, you may wish to model using the following oral sentence frames to support their partner talk:
• My favorite part of the story is ______.
• I like this part 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.