Write an Informational Report

1. Focus (10 minutes)

Display the cover of *Children Past and Present*. Read aloud the title and author. 

**Say:** We have read all the chapters in this book! We have also written some interesting reports using facts we learned in this book. Today I will read the inside back cover. It’s called “Meet Laura Ingalls Wilder.”

Read the information aloud in a fluent, expressive voice. Discuss the photograph and caption. **Ask:** What is the topic of this page? (Allow responses.) This page is about Laura Ingalls Wilder. What should we write for the title of our report?

Close the big book and write the title you and students have agreed upon (for example, “Laura Ingalls Wilder”) on your chart paper. **Ask:** What did we learn about Laura Ingalls Wilder? (Allow responses. Generate a list of students’ ideas on the chart paper and reread them aloud.) Today you will think of a topic sentence that tells something you learned from listening to me read this chapter. Remember that a topic sentence tells the most important idea. Then you will write two facts. The facts should give more information about your topic sentence.

2. Rehearse (5 minutes)

Invite students to share with a partner what they will focus on during independent writing time.

If you have students who will be starting a new report, **say:** Tell your partner your topic sentence. Then tell your partner two facts about your topic sentence. After you talk about the topic sentence and facts, draw a picture.

If you have students at the revision stage of the writing process, **say:** Every writer can make his or her report better. As you reread what you wrote, ask yourself, “Could I make my facts clearer by adding some describing words? Could I support my topic sentence better by adding some additional facts?”

If you have students at the editing stage of the writing process, **say:** Remember, strong writers review their work carefully. They check to make sure they have a capital letter at the beginning of each sentence and punctuation at the end of every sentence. You will want to check for these things.
3. Independent Writing and Conferring (25 MINUTES)

Distribute students' writing folders and invite students to get started. If students are having difficulty coming up with a topic sentence related to the Laura Ingalls Wilder text, say: Remember, sometimes we have to put information together to figure out the main idea. We read that Laura Ingalls Wilder was born in 1867 and died in 1957, so we know that she lived long ago. The text tells us about her life long ago. A good topic sentence might be “Laura lived long ago.” Ask questions as needed to help students remember and state facts they learned about the topic. Continue to support students as they say words slowly, write the sounds they hear, write the high-frequency words they know, reread after each word, and revise and edit. Encourage students to get help and 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)

Use the Share time in one of the following ways depending on your observations of students during Independent Writing and Conferring:

- Provide extra modeling and practice in identifying and writing topic sentences using familiar nonfiction books in the classroom.
- As volunteers read aloud their reports, ask listeners to decide if the sentences tell complete thoughts and how they know this.
- Encourage students to share strategies they used to identify a main idea, write a topic sentence, choose important facts, and write difficult words.

Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers

Goal Oriented
- I learned that ______.
- I will check the start and end of each sentence I write.
- Notice that I ask myself questions to make sure I understand the main idea.

Directive and Corrective Feedback
- What is the main idea? How could you write it as a topic sentence?
- Can you think of any important information your topic sentence leaves out? Try rewriting to add it.
- How will you start your sentences? What will you put at the end of each sentence?

Self-Monitoring and Reflection
- Have you included all the facts you wanted to share about ______?
- What questions did you ask to help you find facts that tell about the main idea?
- Did you need to revise anything after rereading? Tell me about it.

Validating and Confirming
- You wrote the word ______! You worked that out!
- You put information together to find a main idea. That’s something strong writers do.
- You wrote an interesting fact about ______. It helped me understand more about your topic sentence.

Teacher Tip

Continue to reinforce the concept of a fact by pointing out examples from environmental print and pictures during the school day. For example, say, “Here is our schedule for the day. We will have lunch at ______. That is a fact.” Or say, “Here is a photograph of our class. We have ______ students in our class. That is a fact.”