Write a Complete Sentence

1. Focus (15 MINUTES)

Display page 13 of the mentor big book using the big book or interactive whiteboard resources. Discuss the picture and read the entry together.

Say: We often use the word I in our journals to write about things we have seen and done. But sometimes our memories include other people. In this journal entry, Tom wrote about an experience he had with his dad. He started the first sentence with the words Dad and I. The words Dad and I tell “who” the sentence is about. What word comes after Dad and I in the first sentence? (Allow responses.) The word went tells what Dad and Tom did—they went for a long walk in the park. This sentence is a complete thought because it tells “who” and then tells what happened. Now I’m going to think of an experience I have shared with another person. I will use that person’s name along with the word I to tell about the experience.

Model how to close your eyes and decide what to write about. Then use the think-aloud below as an example of how to describe a journal idea.

Say: One time my friend Lola and I were at a birthday party. Lola accidentally spilled her ice cream on the floor. That made me laugh, but while I was laughing, I spilled my cake on the floor! Then we both laughed and cleaned up our mess. I will draw a picture of Lola and me spilling our food at the birthday party. We will look surprised!

Model drawing the scene on chart paper. Remind students that journal drawings don’t have to be detailed and that their purpose is to show what we visualize. Then tell students your sentence and model writing it.

Say: I want to add a sentence to this journal entry. Can I write “Spilled our food”? (Allow responses.) You’re right! I can’t write that as a sentence because it doesn’t tell who spilled the food. Can I write “Lola and I?” (Allow responses.) Right again! I can’t write that as a sentence because it doesn’t tell what Lola and I did. How can I fix my sentence so it will be a complete thought? (Allow responses.) Good! I’ll write “Lola and I spilled our food.” As you write, model the following:

- Emphasize the concepts about print that students need to practice based on your daily informal observations and notes. (See list in Objectives.)
- Tell how you remember high-frequency words. For example, say: I know how to write and: a-n-d. I have seen this word many times in books. I can also hear the sounds: /a/ /n/ /d/.
- Model how to say the other words slowly and use letter/sound relationships to help you write them. Depending on the message and the phonics skills you’ve taught, this discussion might include consonants, short vowels, long vowels (final e and common vowel teams), common
consonant blends and digraphs, regular plurals (-s and -es endings), and common inflectional endings such as -ed and -ing. For words with irregular or higher-level spelling patterns, say: Remember that if you don’t know how to spell a word, you can just write the sounds you hear.

- 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.

Ask students to reread the journal entry with you to check it. Then say: We wrote a complete thought. The words Lola and I tell “who” the sentence is about. The word spilled tells what happened.

2. Rehearse (5 MINUTES)

Invite students to close their eyes and visualize a shared experience that they could draw and write about in a journal. Say: Tell your partner what you plan to draw and write about. Start with the other person’s name and the words and I. Then tell what you and the other person did.

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

- ______ and I ______.
- It was fun when ______ and I ______.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring (20 MINUTES)

Distribute students’ writing journals. Invite each student to draw a picture of the idea he or she visualized and to write a message. Validate the decision of any student who chooses to draw and write about something else. Support and encourage students in any attempts to record the sounds they hear in words and to write high-frequency words. Remind students that each sentence should be a complete thought that tells whom or what and what happens.

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 at different stages of writing development to share their drawings and written messages. Point out and celebrate examples of complete thoughts. You may also 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
- ______ and I ______.
- I will draw the part about ______.
- I will say the word ______ and listen for the first sound I hear.

Directive and Corrective Feedback
- Think about something you’ve done with someone else. Tell me about it.
- Try ______. Would that sound right?
- What do you need at the end of your sentence?
- Say the word ______. What sound do you hear at the beginning? In the middle? At the end?

Self-Monitoring and Reflection
- Did you write a complete sentence? How do you know?
- What could you do to help you write that word?
- How did visualizing help you come up with your writing idea?

Validating and Confirming
- Your picture really shows the memory you described in words!
- I like the way you wrote a complete thought here.
- You wrote the word ______!
- You used uppercase letters correctly. That’s an important part of writing.

Teacher Tip

Reinforce examples of compound subjects in students’ everyday conversations in the classroom, for example, “Brian and I went to the water fountain” and “Gage and Marta can tell time.” If students inadvertently start the sentence incorrectly, such as “Me and Brian . . .,” simply repeat the sentence modeling correct grammar.