Write Important Details

1. Focus (15 MINUTES)

Display page 4 of *Journals* using the big book or interactive whiteboard resources. Discuss the events shown in the photographs.

**Ask:** Where do people get ideas for what to write about in their journals? (Allow responses.) People often visualize to get their ideas. What does it mean to visualize? (Allow responses.) That's right. Visualizing is seeing pictures in your mind. You close your eyes and think of an idea. You picture it in your mind as if you are watching a movie. When we visualize, we see lots of details. But you can't write about everything you visualize. You have to choose the most important details to draw and write about. Choosing details is an important part of planning our writing. Today I'm going to visualize something that happened yesterday. Then I will show you how I choose the most important details to draw and write about in my journal.

Model how to close your eyes and decide on a memory. Then use the think-aloud below as an example of how to select important details.

**Say:** Yesterday I did a lot of reading. I read the newspaper, some magazine articles, and some new recipes in a cookbook. I also read some e-mails on my computer. Then I started reading a funny new book I got at the library. Wow! That's a lot of information to write about! I can't include all those details in my drawing and writing, so I'll choose one thing to draw and write about. The part I like best is reading my funny book, so I'll just draw a picture of me sitting in my favorite chair reading this book.

Model drawing the scene on chart paper. Remind students that a rough sketch is fine. Then tell students what you want to write.

**Say:** I want to add a message to this journal entry. Each sentence will be a complete thought. I will write “Yesterday I read a book. The book made me laugh!” As you write the journal entry, 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 *me: m-e.* I have seen this word many times in books. I can also hear the beginning and ending sounds and write the letters for the sounds.

- 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 letters for 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: I wrote the most important details. I used complete sentences, too.

**2. Rehearse (5 MINUTES)**

Invite students to close their eyes and visualize an event that happened yesterday to draw and write about in a journal. Say: Tell your partner about your memory. When you’re ready to draw and write, you will choose the most important details to use. Tell “who” or what your sentence is about and act out the action to make sure you have a complete thought.

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

- *Yesterday ______.*
- *I see ______.*

**3. Independent Writing and Conferring (20 MINUTES)**

Distribute students’ writing journals. Invite each student to draw a picture of the event he or she described to a partner and to write as many sentences as possible. Validate the decision of any student who chooses to draw and write about something else. Remind students to focus on the most important details of an event. Support and encourage students in their attempts to record the sounds they hear in words and to write high-frequency words.

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 important details and complete thoughts. You may also wish to provide additional modeling based on your observations during Independent Writing and Conferring.

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**Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers**

**Goal Oriented**

- I will close my eyes and visualize the things I did yesterday.
- 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 did or saw yesterday. What are the most important details?
- Say the word slowly. Listen for the sounds and then write the letters for the sounds you hear.
- Tell me how you felt. Can you write that?

**Self-Monitoring and Reflection**

- Check that your message matches your picture.
- What could you do to help you write that word?
- How did drawing your idea help you write about it?

**Validating and Confirming**

- Your picture really shows the idea you described in words!
- I like the way you worked out how to write that word. That’s what strong writers do.
- You wrote complete sentences. Strong writers know how to do that.
- You used the most important details in your drawing and message. Good thinking!

**Teacher Tip**

If you have students who would benefit from additional modeling and support, you may wish to meet with a small group of these students during Independent Writing and Conferring.