Write Important Details

1. Focus (15 MINUTES)

Display page 5 of the mentor text using the big book or interactive whiteboard resources. Discuss the feelings depicted by the photographs and illustrations and ask students to share other feelings they could visualize.

Say: When we visualize, we see details in our minds about what is happening. We see details about how we feel, too. How can we decide which details to use in our journals? (Allow responses.) That’s right. We 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 think about something that happened last week and how I felt about it. 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 about the event and your feelings.

Say: I went shopping last week. I was looking for the perfect birthday gift for a friend. I looked at books and scarves and fancy writing paper and chocolates. Then I saw it—a mobile for hanging photographs! My friend is a great photographer, so I knew she’d love the mobile. I was so excited to find that gift! My friend was excited when she opened it, too. I just shared a lot of details about what I visualized. I can’t include all those details in my drawing, so I’ll just draw a picture of my friend seeing her mobile for the first time. She will have a giant smile on her face! I think that is the most important part of my memory.

Model drawing the scene on chart paper. Remind students that the drawing is simply a way to remember the most important details you have visualized. 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 “Photos hang from this mobile. My friend loves photos!” As you write your 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 from: f-r-o-m. I have seen this word many times in books. I can also hear the beginning and ending sounds and write the letters that match.

- Model how to say the other words slowly and use letter/sound relationships to help you write them: for example, consonants, short vowels, long vowels, common consonant blends and digraphs, regular plurals, and common inflectional endings such as -ed and -ing. For words

Objectives

Concepts About Print
- Begin a sentence with an uppercase letter.
- Use an uppercase letter for the pronoun I.
- Put spaces between words.
- Use end punctuation correctly.

Oral Language and Grammar
- Share an oral message about an past event.
- Use a complete sentence.

Purposeful Phonics Connections
- Listen for sounds in words.
- Recognize sound/symbol relationships.
- Write some high-frequency words.

Reflecting Reading in Writing
- Visualize.
- Determine importance.

Writing
- Draw and write a journal entry.

Materials
- Mentor big book: Journals
- Chart paper and markers
- Interactive whiteboard resources
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, and then say: I wrote the most important details. I used complete sentences, too. In the first sentence, the word Photos tells what the sentence is about and the word hang tells what the photos do. In the second sentence, the word friend tells “who” the sentence is about and the word loves tells what she does and how she feels.

2. Rehearse (5 MINUTES)

Invite students to close their eyes and visualize an event that happened last week to draw and write about in a journal. Say: Tell your partner about your memory. Tell how you or others felt, too. When you’re ready to draw and write, you will choose the most important details to use.

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

• Last week ______.
• ______ felt ______.

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. Remind students to focus on the most important details about what happened and how they felt. 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.

Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers

Goal Oriented

• The most important details of my memory are ______.
• I will say the word ______ and listen for the first sound I hear.

Directive and Corrective Feedback

• Think about something you did or saw last week. What happened? How did you feel?
• What do you need to put between the words in your sentence?
• Would a period or exclamation point work best here?

Self-Monitoring and Reflection

• What did you do to come up with your journal entry?
• What could you do to help you write that word?
• How did you decide which details were most important?
• Check that you have written complete sentences.

Validating and Confirming

• Your picture really shows the idea you described in words!
• You heard the ______ sound and wrote the letter!
• You wrote the word ______!
• You used uppercase and lowercase letters correctly. Good job!

Teacher Tip

If you have English learners and struggling writers who are not ready to draft independently, invite each student to tell you about an experience he or she has had and then draw it. Work with the student to write a message below the drawing and then read it aloud.