Write Important Details

**1. Focus** (15 Minutes)

Ask students to share some things they do to plan their journaling. Then say: *We have learned that visualizing is a good way to get ideas for our journals. We choose the most important details from what we visualize 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 a long time ago. 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:** One time I went to an animal shelter to get a pet. I looked at all the dogs and all the cats that were available to adopt. I chose a kitten. When I picked her up, she was so happy that she purred. I bought some food for the kitten, and then I drove home with my new pet. Now I need to decide which details I’ll draw from what I visualized. I can’t draw every detail, so I’ll pick what is most important to me. I’ll draw a picture of me holding my new kitten at the shelter. We’ll both look happy!

Model drawing the scene on chart paper. Remind students that a rough sketch is just a way to remember the most important details you have visualized. Tell students what you want to write.

**Say:** I want to write two sentences about my picture. Each sentence will be a complete thought. I’ll write “I got a kitten at the shelter. The kitten purred for me!” 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 the: t-h-e. I have seen this word many times in books.*
- 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.

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**Objectives**

**Concepts About Print**
- Write from left to right.
- Begin a sentence with an uppercase letter.
- Use an uppercase letter for the pronoun *I*.
- Use end punctuation correctly.

**Oral Language and Grammar**
- Share a message orally.
- Use a complete sentence.

**Purposeful Phonics Connections**
- Listen for and record beginning, middle, and end sounds in words.
- Write some high-frequency words.

**Reflecting Reading in Writing**
- Develop genre awareness.
- Visualize.
- Determine importance.
- Demonstrate one-to-one correspondence through pointing when rereading.

**Writing**
- Draw and write a journal entry.

**Materials**
- Chart paper and markers
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. In the first sentence, the word *I* tells “who” the sentence is about and the word *got* tells what I did. In the second sentence, the word *kitten* tells what the sentence is about and the word *purred* tells what the kitten did and how she felt.*

2. Rehearse (5 MINUTES)

Invite students to close their eyes and visualize an event that happened a long time ago that they can draw and write about in a journal. Say: *Tell your partner about your memory and how you felt. 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:

- *A long time ago I ______.*
- *______ 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. Validate the decision of any student who chooses to draw and write about something else. 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 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 remember to tell who or what and include an action.

**Directive and Corrective Feedback**
- Think about something you did or saw a long time ago. What happened? How did you feel?
- Tell me “who” your sentence is about. Tell me the action. Now write that.

**Self-Monitoring and Reflection**
- What did you see in your mind before you started to write?
- What strategies did you use to help you write?
- Which words were difficult?
- Did you tell your feelings?

**Validating and Confirming**
- I like the way you listened to the sounds and then wrote the letters.
- You asked yourself questions. That’s what strong writers do to help them write.
- You tell “who” your sentence is about and what happens. That’s a complete sentence.
- You used the most important details in your drawing and message. Good thinking!

**Teacher Tip**

For students who are competent in the skill of writing complete sentences, begin using the terms *subject* and *verb* in your validating/confirming prompts. For example, *say:*

- You started with the words *My bike.* The word *bike* tells what the sentence is about. Your sentence has a subject!
- You said that your mom washed the dog. The word *washed* tells what happened. You used a verb to help make a complete sentence!