Draft a Journal Entry

1. Focus (15 minutes)

Review the Journals anchor chart that you created with students in a previous lesson. Say: Let’s reread our anchor chart to remind ourselves what we do when we write in our journals. (Reread the chart with students.) We will keep practicing these skills today. I’m going to think about something that happened at school this week. I’ll also think about how I felt when it happened. Then I will show you how I draw and write about it in my journal.

Model how to close your eyes and visualize a recent event. Then use the think-aloud below as an example of how to select important details about the event and your feelings.

Say: I have a mailbox in the school office. One morning I checked my box and it was empty. I checked again at lunchtime, and it was still empty. It was even empty at the end of the day! I was surprised because I usually get mail every day. I got lots of mail the next day, though! Now I will choose which part of my memory I want to write about in my journal. I will draw a picture of me looking in my empty mailbox. I will have a puzzled look on my face.

Model drawing the scene on chart paper. Remind students that a rough sketch is fine in a journal as long as it helps you show the most important events and feelings you visualized. Share what you want to write with students.

Say: I want to add a message to this journal entry. Each sentence will be a complete thought. I will write “Nobody put mail in my box. I was surprised!” 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 put: p-u-t. 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 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.

Objectives

Concepts About Print
- 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.
- Vary sentence beginnings.

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

Reflecting Reading in Writing
- Visualize.
- Determine importance.
- Demonstrate one-to-one correspondence.

Writing
- Draw and write a journal entry.

Materials
- Journals anchor chart (from Day 2)
- Chart paper and markers
Ask students to help you check your journal entry by rereading it with you. Then say: I wrote the most important details. I used complete sentences, too. In the first sentence, the word Nobody tells “who” the sentence is about and the word put tells what happened (or didn’t happen in this case). In the second sentence, the word I tells “who” the sentence is about and the words was surprised tell how I felt.

2. Rehearse (5 MINUTES)

Invite students to close their eyes and visualize an event that happened at school this week to draw and write about in a journal. Say: Tell your partner about your memory and how you or others felt. 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:
• This week ______.
• Something that happened at school was ______.
• This made me feel ______.

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 one-syllable and 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 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
• I will put spaces between the words in my sentence.
• The most important details of my memory are ______.
• Notice how I check the beginning and end of my sentence.
• I will say the word ______ and listen for the first sound I hear.

Directive and Corrective Feedback
• Tell me what you visualized. What part will you write about?
• What sound do you hear at the beginning of the word ______? In the middle? At the end?

Self-Monitoring and Reflection
• What did you see in your mind before you started to write?
• Check that your message matches your picture.
• Tell me the strategies you used to help you write your message.

Validating and Confirming
• You wrote the letter for the ______ sound!
• You wrote the word ______!
• You used the most important details in your drawing and message. Good thinking!
• I notice that you put spaces between your words. That’s an important part of writing.

Teacher Tip
Continue to monitor students’ attempts to put spaces between words. For students who struggle with this concept, demonstrate how to place your finger on the paper after a word and leave it there as you start the next word on the other side of your finger. Then encourage students to create their own “finger spaces” as they write their messages.