Draft a Journal Entry

1. Focus (15 minutes)

Review the class Journals anchor chart. Say: Let’s review what we do when we write in our journals. (Reread the chart with students.) What are some events that you have written about in your journals so far? (Allow responses.) What kinds of feelings have you written about? (Allow responses.) We’ll keep writing in our journals and practicing these skills the rest of this week. Today I’m going to think about something that happened a long time ago. 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 remembered event. Then use the think-aloud below as an example of how to select important details about the event and your feelings.

Say: When I was little, I had a friend named Andy. Andy and I loved to climb trees! We climbed trees in my yard and in his yard. Our parents wouldn’t let us climb trees at the park, though. They thought the branches were too high. We always wanted to climb those trees! Now I will choose which details to draw. I will draw a picture of Andy and me pointing to a tall tree in the park. We will look like we’re imagining climbing the tree.

Model drawing the event on chart paper, pointing out that a rough sketch is all you need to record the most important ideas you visualized. Then share 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 “Andy and I went to the park. We wanted to climb the trees!” 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. 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 help you recheck your writing by reading it with you. Then say: I wrote about one part of my memory. I included the most important details and used complete sentences, too. In my first sentence, the words Andy and I tell “who” the sentence is about and the word went tells what we did. In the second sentence, the word We tells “who” the sentence is about and the word wanted tells what we did and how we felt.

2. Rehearse (5 MINUTES)

Invite students to close their eyes and visualize an event that happened a long time ago 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:
• A long time ago _______.
• _______ 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 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
• The most important details of my memory are _______.
• I will make sure to start my sentences with an uppercase letter.

Directive and Corrective Feedback
• Think about something you did or saw a long time ago. What happened? How did you feel?
• What do you need to put here?
• Say the word slowly and listen for the sounds. Then write the letters that stand for those sounds.

Self-Monitoring and Reflection
• How did drawing your idea help you to write about it?
• Which words were difficult? How did you figure out how to write them?
• Check that you tell “who” or what each sentence is about and include an action or feeling verb.

Validating and Confirming
• Your picture and your message match!
• I like how you listened for the sounds when you wrote that word. That’s what strong writers do when they are writing words.
• You remembered to use uppercase letters for people’s names. 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 wrote that your mom washed the dog. The word washed tells what happened. You used a verb to help make a complete sentence!