Author’s Craft: Vary Sentences Using Personal Pronouns

1. Focus (15 MINUTES)

Display the Pronouns chart you created yesterday and read it aloud together. **Say:** We learned that writers sometimes use pronouns instead of names or nouns to make their sentences sound more like talking. Let’s see how Marta uses another pronoun in her journal.

Display page 8 of the mentor big book using the big book or interactive whiteboard resources. Discuss the picture and read the journal entry together. **Say:** In the first sentence, Marta writes about Jill. A little later in the sentence, Marta calls Jill her. In the second sentence, Marta uses the pronoun her again. What does Marta do in the last sentence? **(Allow responses.)** That’s right. Marta uses both the name Jill and the pronoun her. We know that the pronoun her stands for Jill because the name Jill is in two of the sentences. Strong writers use pronouns! Let’s add this to our Journals anchor chart.

Display the Journals anchor chart. Reread what you’ve written so far. Then add the last bullet.

**Writing in My Journal**

- I write about things I do and see.
- I write about feelings.
- I choose the most important details.
- I write complete sentences.
- I check for upperc case letters.
- I check for end punctuation.
- I add describing words.
- I use pronouns after I use someone’s name.

**Journals Anchor Chart**

Explain that you will now draw and write in your journal. **Say:** I will mention someone I know in the first sentence. Then I will use a pronoun to tell more about the person. Model how to close your eyes and visualize a memory, using the think-aloud below as an example.

**Say:** My cousin is a great trumpet player! One time I went to a concert. My cousin was the star of the show! Everyone cheered and clapped when he finished his solo. Now I will choose which details to draw. I will draw my cousin playing his trumpet at the concert. The audience will be smiling and clapping!

Model drawing the scene on chart paper. Then **say:** I will write “My talented cousin plays the trumpet. I went to hear him play. I clapped for him!” As you write, continue emphasizing and modeling the writing skills detailed in Weeks 1–6.
Ask students to reread the journal entry with you. Say: I wrote the most important details and used complete sentences. Did I use uppercase letters and end punctuation where I should have? (Allow responses.) I used the describing word talented to tell about my cousin. I also used the pronoun him. My readers know I’m writing about my cousin because I mention him in the first sentence.

2. Rehearse (5 MINUTES)

Invite students to close their eyes and visualize someone (or some group of people) to draw and write about in a journal. Say: Tell your partner about your memory. Name the person or group in the first sentence. Then use a pronoun when you tell more.

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

• They ______.
• My friend ______. He/She ______.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring (20 MINUTES)

Distribute students’ writing journals. Invite each student to draw a picture of what he or she described to a partner and to write as many sentences as possible. Help students circle any pronouns they include, or refer to the pronoun chart you created to help them replace a name with a pronoun. Continue to support students in their current understandings and watch for those students who are ready to move to the next level in their thinking and writing. Allow students to get ideas and help from one another as well.

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 appropriate uses of pronouns in their writing. 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
• I will use the pronoun _____ when I write about ______.
• I will reread to see if I can start this sentence in a different way.

Directive and Corrective Feedback
• Tell me about this person. What words can you use to describe him/her?
• You use this name several times. Can you think of a pronoun you could use instead to vary your writing?

Self-Monitoring and Reflection
• Show me places in your writing where you used pronouns. How did adding pronouns make your writing better?
• What strategies did you use to help you write that?
• How did you know which pronouns to use?

Validating and Confirming
• I like the way you revised this sentence by adding some pronouns. Now your sentence sounds more natural and more interesting.
• I noticed that you repeated ______ several times and you fixed that by using pronouns. Strong writers look for ways to use pronouns to make their writing more natural.

Teacher Tip

Keep the Journals anchor chart on display in the classroom and encourage students to refer to it both as a writing tool and as a checklist for editing and revising their writing.