Author’s Craft: Vary Sentences Using Personal Pronouns

1. Focus (15 minutes)

Display the Pronouns chart and read it aloud together. **Say:** We have learned that writers sometimes use pronouns instead of names or nouns to avoid repetition from sentence to sentence and to make their sentences sound more natural. What pronouns would I use if I were writing about a girl? (Allow responses.) What if I were writing about a group of people? (Allow responses.) Let’s see how Tom uses pronouns in his journal.

Display page 11 of the mentor big book using the big book or interactive whiteboard resources. Discuss the picture and read the journal entry together. **Say:** Tom uses the pronoun *we* to write about himself and someone else. In the second sentence, Tom writes about the sea lions. In the third sentence, Tom uses the pronoun *they* to tell more about the sea lions. We know that the pronoun *they* stands for the sea lions because Tom mentions them first. That’s what strong writers do! Let’s review what else writers do in their journals.

Read aloud the Journals anchor chart with students. Then tell students that you are ready to draw and write in your journal. Model how to close your eyes and visualize a memory, using the think-aloud below as an example.

**Say:** Mr. and Mrs. Frank and their children used to be my neighbors. They were so nice! They got our mail and watered our plants for us when we went on vacation. We helped them, too. One time the whole family had bad colds, so my mom made their lunch. Now I will choose which details to draw. I will draw a picture of me taking lunch to the Franks. I will have a big smile on my face to show that it made me happy to help them out!

Model drawing the scene on chart paper. Then say: *I will write about the family. I will use a pronoun to tell more about them. I’ll write “The Franks lived next door. One day, I took a yummy lunch to them. I told them to get well soon!” 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. I used uppercase letters where I should have, and I put end punctuation on each sentence. What describing word did I use to write about the lunch? (Allow responses.) I also used the pronoun *them.* My readers know I’m writing about the Franks because I mention them in the first sentence.
2. **Rehearse** (5 minutes)

Invite students to close their eyes and visualize someone (or some group) 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:
- _____ and I _____.
- My friend _____.

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.

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**Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers**

**Goal Oriented**
- I will remember to use pronouns.
- I will write complete sentences.

**Directive and Corrective Feedback**
- Try ______. Would that sound right?
- You use this name (pointing) several times. What pronoun could you use in place of the name?
- How could you describe ______? What other words could you use?

**Self-Monitoring and Reflection**
- Did you tell “who” or what the sentence is about and include an action in your sentence?
- Tell me what you like best about your message.
- What pronoun did you use to tell more about ______?

**Validating and Confirming**
- I like the way you used a pronoun here. This makes your writing sound better.
- You used a good word to describe ______. Strong writers use describing words to help their readers visualize the writing.
- You used the name ______ and then you used the pronoun ______. Now your writing sounds like talking!
- You went back and fixed your writing. Strong writers do that to make their writing as good as it can be.

**Teacher Tip**

Continue to add adjectives to the class word bank as students discover new examples in their reading and writing. Model using a primary-level student thesaurus to look up choices for adjectives.