Author’s Craft: Vary Sentences Using Personal Pronouns

1. Focus (15 minutes)

Display the Pronouns chart from Week 7/Day 1 and read it aloud with students. **Say:** Let’s see how Marta and Tom use the pronoun *we* in their journals.

Display page 9 of the mentor big book using the big book or interactive whiteboard resources. Discuss the picture and read the journal entry together. **Say:** First Marta uses the words *Our class*. Then Marta uses the pronoun *we* when she writes more about the class. That makes Marta’s writing sound more like talking.

Turn to page 13. Discuss the picture and read the journal entry together. **Say:** Tom uses the pronoun *we* in the second and third sentences. Who is Tom talking about? (Allow responses.) That’s right. Tom is talking about his dad and himself. He uses the words *Dad and I* before he uses the pronoun so readers know the people he means when he writes the word *we*. That’s what strong writers do! Let’s review what else writers do in their journals.

Refer to the Journals anchor chart and read it aloud with students. Then tell them that you are ready to draw and write in your journal. **Say:** I will write about something I did with another person in the first sentence. Then I will use a pronoun to tell more about myself and this person.

Model how to close your eyes and visualize a memory, using the think-aloud below as an example.

**Say:** When I was little, I had a friend named Gina. We liked to do school projects together. Sometimes my mom took us to the library to get books for our projects. Then Mom made snacks for Gina and me to eat while we worked on our projects after school. Now I will choose which details to draw. I will draw Gina and me eating apples and reading at my house.

Model drawing the scene on chart paper. Then say: I will write “Gina and I had a fun project. Mom got books for us. Mom even got us snacks!” As you write, continue emphasizing and modeling the writing skills detailed in Weeks 1–6.

Ask students to reread the journal entry with you. **Ask:** Did I use complete sentences? Did I use uppercase letters where I should have? Did I put end punctuation on each sentence? (Allow responses.) What describing word did I use to tell about the project? (Allow responses.) I also used the pronoun us. This pronoun refers to Gina and me. My readers know who I’m writing about because I write Gina and I 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 ______. We ______.
• My friend ______. He ______.

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 them 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’m going to reread and look for places where I can make my writing stronger by adding pronouns.
• I will reread to make sure I have remembered to use end punctuation.

Directive and Corrective Feedback
• You repeat this person’s name several times. What pronoun could you use instead?
• I’m having trouble picturing your sentence. Could you add describing words to help me?
• Reread this sentence. What’s missing?

Self-Monitoring and Reflection
• Tell me what you look for when you go back and revise your message.
• How could you fix this sentence so it sounds more natural?
• What problems did you have as you wrote your journal entry? What did you do to help yourself?

Validating and Confirming
• I like the way you used pronouns in your sentences. This makes your writing sound more natural and more interesting to read.
• I noticed that you checked the spelling of difficult words by saying the words slowly and listening carefully to the sounds.
• When I read this sentence, I can hear you talking!

Teacher Tip

If you have students who would benefit from additional modeling and support, you may wish to meet with a small group of these students during Independent Writing and Conferring.