1. Focus

**Objectives**

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Learn how to use questions in informational text for emphasis.
- Practice using questions in informational text for emphasis.
- Discuss how they can apply this strategy to their independent writing.

**Preparation**

**Materials Needed**

- Chart paper and markers
- Interactive whiteboard resources

**Advanced Preparation**

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text and practice text onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.

**Explain Using Questions for Emphasis**

*Say:* Writers of informational reports try to create interest in the topics they write about. They pull readers in, making them want to know more about the topic. One way to do this is to ask questions in the text. A question emphasizes, or calls attention to, a point the writer is trying to make. When I read a question in a text, it feels like the writer is talking directly to me, and I pay attention. Today I’m going to show you how to use questions for emphasis in your informational reports.

**Model Using Questions for Emphasis**

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen for questions as you read the text aloud.

Making potato chips was hard work. Potatoes were washed, peeled, and sliced by hand. Small batches were cooked in kettles. How did George Crum’s handmade chips get from his restaurant in upstate New York to just about every store across the United States?

**Modeling Text**

*Say:* In this paragraph, the author describes how potato chips used to be made by hand. At the end of the paragraph, the author asks a question: How did these handmade chips get from where they were first made in New York to stores across the United States? It makes me, the reader, say to myself, “Yeah, how did potato chips end up being sold all over the country?” I want to keep reading to find out the answer. The question leads me to the information that follows. In the next paragraph, the author tells how potato chips were delivered. So, you see, the author calls attention to his point by asking a question, and then he answers it.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Questions for Emphasis

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

**You probably don’t enjoy cleaning your room.**

**No one enjoys cleaning his or her room.**

**Practice Text**

Ask students to work with a partner to revise the sentences so that one asks a question for emphasis. Each pair should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class and explain how the question adds emphasis and interest.

**Share Practice Sentences**

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their sentences and explain their questions. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they draft or revise their informational reports.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** We learned that we can use questions in informational text to add emphasis. A question can address readers directly to help them pay attention. As you write and revise your informational report, remember to ask questions to add interest to your text.

Encourage students to keep the strategy of asking questions in mind as they draft and revised. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite students who have asked questions for emphasis to read aloud examples from their informational reports.

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**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

While other students complete the partner practice activity, work with beginning ELs to practice oral conversational questions. Invite students to talk with you or with a partner using questions such as the following:

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- How are you?

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.

**All Levels**

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate: *emphasis/el énfasis.*