Use the Sequence-of-Events Text Structure

1. Focus

Explain Sequence-of-Events Text Structure

Say: Most personal narratives tell about an incident that happened in the past. The incident usually involves a series of events that have an order, or sequence. When you write a personal narrative, you organize your narrative based on this sequence of events. Writers use certain words, such as first, next, then, and after, to help readers recognize and follow the order of events.

Model Identifying the Sequence-of-Events Text Structure

Ask students to listen as you reread a paragraph from “The Catch.” Reread the first paragraph on page 17. Note: you may want to display this page from the book using the interactive whiteboard resources so that students may read along.

Say: In the first sentence the author writes, “Both teams came out swinging.” The second sentence is, “By the sixth inning the score was 13–12.” The words “by the sixth inning” let me know that the author has skipped ahead. Time has passed. If the writer had not included these words, I would not be able to follow the sequence of events. As I read a personal narrative, I look for sequence words to help me follow the events as they unfold.

Practice Identifying Sequence-of-Events Text Structure

Say: Now I’ll read the rest of the paragraph, and you listen for other words that help you follow the sequence. Students should notice the word “now” that signals the Cats’ turn at bat, and the word “then” that signals that the Cats have loaded the bases.

Create a Class Sequence-of-Events Signal Words Anchor Chart

Say: Writers use certain words to help their readers follow the sequence of events in their writing.

On chart paper, work with students to brainstorm a list of sequence words they might use in a personal narrative. Begin with the words you found in the excerpt from “The Catch.” Post this in your classroom as a Sequence-of-Events Signal...
Words anchor chart that students can refer to throughout the unit. Reread and clarify the meaning of unfamiliar sequencing signal words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequence-of-Events Signal Language</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– now</td>
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<tr>
<td>– then</td>
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<tr>
<td>– first</td>
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</tbody>
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Sample Sequence-of-Events Signal Words Anchor Chart

2. Rehearse

Practice Using the Sequence-of-Events Text Structure in Oral Conversation

**Turn and talk.** Ask students to use sequence-of-events words as they tell a partner what they did last night after school. Remind them to consult the anchor chart for ideas.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** One of the text structures writers use when they write personal narratives is the sequence-of-events text structure. Writers help their audience follow the events in their personal narratives by using signal words, the way you did in your conversations. Remember to use signal language for sequence to help your readers follow the sequence in your personal narratives.

Ask students to write a sequence of events using signal language. If possible, they should use a sequence from the personal narrative they are currently drafting.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite 2 or 3 students who used signal words particularly well to read aloud their sequence of events.

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**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Invite beginning ELs to draw their sequence of events. Meet with students one on one during independent writing time and ask them to tell you about their illustrations. Write captions for each image using simple sentences such as:

*First I ______. Then I ______. Finally I ______.*

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Provide the idea bank and sentence frames below on chart paper to support ELs and struggling writers as they talk about what they did last night. You may also wish to post photographs illustrating things people do at home.

**Idea Bank**

- read a book
- ate dinner
- brushed my teeth
- went to soccer practice

**Sentence Frames**

- *First I ______.*
- *Next I ______.*
- *Then I ______.*

**All Levels**

Display photos of things people do at home (provided on the interactive whiteboard resources) to visually support students’ discussion about what they did last night.