Visualize Before Drafting

1. Focus

Explain Visualizing for an Informational Report

Say: When I write about a topic in an informational report, I want readers to feel as if they can “see” what I’m writing about. I want my words to create images in the minds of the readers—almost as if they are watching a movie or video. So before I write my first draft, I visualize. I imagine, or form pictures in my mind, of what I want to tell the readers. Today we’re going to practice visualizing before we draft.

Model Visualizing

Use the think-aloud below to model how a writer uses the strategy of visualizing information in order to help draft an informational text.

Sample think-aloud. Say: I am going to show you how the writer of “Migrating Animals on Land” might have used visualizing before she wrote her report. I am going to think aloud as if I am the writer. I want to explain to my readers how big the crabs are. In my mind, I visualize a crab about the size of a dinner plate. I could share this image with my readers so they see the same image in their minds. I also need my readers to understand how long it takes for the crabs to make their trip and what they travel over. In my mind, I see these crabs crawling on and on (I know they travel for ten days or more). I see them crawling over roads. I see them crawling through buildings. If I share these images with my readers, they will understand how amazing and dangerous this trip is for the crabs.

Modeling Text

Each crab is about the size of a dinner plate. They normally do not move very much or go very far. But during mating season, the crabs crawl for ten days or more. They cross roads and crawl through buildings! This is dangerous for the crabs.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Learn how to visualize before writing a draft.
• Learn to use words to create visual details in writing.
• Practice visualizing and then comparing the draft to the visualization.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Mentor text: “Migrating Animals on Land” from Animal Migration
• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text onto chart paper.
2. Rehearse

**Orally Practice Visualizing Before Drafting**

Ask students to work with a partner. Partners should decide on a place to visualize that they both know, such as the ocean, a park, or a desert. Ask them to close their eyes and picture the sights, sounds, and smells of this place. Then ask each partner to describe the place using the following sentence frames:

- *In a ______ you can see ______.*
- *In a ______ you can hear ______.*
- *In a ______ you can smell ______.*

**Share and Discuss Visualizing Before Drafting**

Invite partners to share their visualizations with the class. Use the following questions to help students reflect on how the process of visualizing details can help them draft an informational text.

- **What pictures came into your mind to describe your place? What images did you use to describe the place?**
- **What sounds and smells did you visualize?**
- **How could you use these images, or pictures, in an informational text?**

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**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Work with beginning ELs one on one. Invite students to visualize what they will write about, as if they were watching a video or movie. Then suggest they draw pictures of the images they imagined. Encourage them to tell you what is happening in each picture. Help them write a sentence describing each picture.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Model the sentence frames provided for the oral visualizing practice. If students have difficulty, encourage them to draw pictures of their mental pictures, and to talk about them.

**All Levels**

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: *describe/describir; details/los detalles; imagine/imaginar; information/la información; visual/visual.*

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3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** We just learned how to visualize a topic before writing. As you draft your informational report, remember to visualize first. Then add details. See if you can find some strong words to help the reader “see” what you “saw.”

Encourage students to apply the strategy of visualizing before drafting during independent writing time, as appropriate. 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 volunteers to share their ideas about visualization before drafting. Discuss how the strategy has or has not been helpful to students.