1. Focus

Introduce the Mentor Informational Report

Say: To learn more about becoming an informational report writer, we can read or listen to reports by other authors. Today I’m going to read an article titled “Migrating Animals in the Sea,” by Thea Feldman. As we read the text, we will look for key features that are important parts of informational reports.

Display the photograph on page 12 of the text and the title. Show students a map of the world or display it using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to help you identify the oceans and seas. You can also display the informational report on the interactive whiteboard resources.

Say: I know that when animals migrate, it means they move from one place to another. What sea animals might migrate? Why do you think these animals migrate? Allow students to share their predictions or “I wonder” questions.

If your class includes English learners or other students who would benefit from vocabulary and oral language development to comprehend the article, use the “Strategies to Support ELs” in this lesson.

Read Aloud the Mentor Informational Report

Read aloud the text, stopping at some or all of the places indicated (or at other points you choose) to highlight key features of an informational report:

1. Informational reports have strong beginnings, or first sentence, that hooks readers; graphics, such as maps and photographs, with captions that tell about the graphic; and a strong ending that makes readers think.

2. Graphics, such as maps and photographs, support information in the article.

3. Informational reports end with interesting sentences that make readers think about the topic.

A Strong Lead

Page 12, after first paragraph. Say: I’ve read the first paragraph and already I want to know more about gray whales. The author starts with a question that “hooks” me; it grabs my attention. It makes me want to find out, “How can an animal not eat for eight months?”

Graphic Feature

Page 13, after first paragraph. Say: The text says that people watch for gray whales when the whales swim close to shore. At the bottom of the page, I see a photograph. It shows some people watching a gray whale. The caption across the top tells me details. The people in this boat are off the coast of California. The photo gives me a feeling of what it might be like to go whale watching.
Graphic Feature
Page 13, after second paragraph. Say: At the top of the page I see a map. It shows the route the gray whales take when they migrate. I like being able to see where their journey takes them. The caption under the map tells me something new—that the whales travel 12,000 miles round-trip.

A Strong Ending
After reading page 14. Say: The last sentence is about baby eels migrating. By ending with this sentence, the author makes us think about how amazing it is that animals migrate and are able to find their way over a long distance.

2. Rehearse

Respond Orally to the Mentor Informational Report
After reading, invite students to share their personal reactions to the text by asking questions such as:
• Did you like this informational report? Why or why not?
• Why was the lead strong? Why was the ending strong?
• How did the photos and the map help you understand the text?

If necessary, model the following sentence frames to support ELs and struggling students:
• I liked this informational report because ______.
• The lead was strong because ______; The ending was strong because ______.
• The photos helped me ______; The map helped me ______.

Make the Mentor Text Comprehensible for ELs

Beginning
Point to the photograph on page 12. Say: This is a gray whale. (Point to the ocean the whale swims in.) This is the ocean. The gray whale lives in the ocean. (Point to the eel on page 14 and identify it.) Eels live in the ocean, too.

Intermediate
Say: This informational report is about gray whales. What do you know about whales? (Point to the map on page 13. Trace the route on the map on page 13 that the whales follow.) Every year the whales swim from here to here and back again. They migrate. (Point to the eel on page 14 and then trace its migration route on the map.) This is an eel. Eels migrate from here to here and back again.

Intermediate and Advanced
Point to the photographs of the whale and the eel or use the photos from the interactive whiteboard resources. Encourage a background-building discussion about gray whales and eels, their habitats, and why they migrate. Ask: What is the whale/eel doing in the photo? What do you know about whales/eels? What do they eat? Where do they live?

All Levels
If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates to help them understand the content of the mentor text: migrate/migrar; ocean/el océano; tourist/el/la turista.

Use the images provided on the interactive whiteboard resources to front-load key content vocabulary and concepts for the read-aloud.