Create a Title to Attract Attention

**1. Focus**

**Explain the Importance of a Title**

*Ask:* When you’re looking for a book to read, what kinds of titles get your attention? Encourage students to generate their own ideas about book titles they like.

*Say:* The title of a book is usually the first thing a reader sees. When you choose a title for a biography, you want to give some information about the person’s life that will catch your readers’ attention. The title can influence whether readers want to read the biography or not.

**Model Brainstorming a Title**

Display the mentor text “Frederick Douglass: Free at Last” in book form or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

*Say:* This biography was written about an important African American man who started out his life as a slave and ended up making important contributions to our country. The writer of this biography provided the name of the subject in the title of the biography so the reader can tell who it is about. But the author wanted to include more information. She wanted to add words to the title that would make readers pay attention and encourage them to read the biography. The title “Frederick Douglass: Free at Last” hints at the struggle that Douglass went through to become a freeman. It makes the topic sound interesting and makes readers want to find out about how he became a freeman.

Display the mentor text “Sojourner Truth: From Slave to Legend” in book form or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

*Say:* We can tell that this biography is about Sojourner Truth. The phrase “from slave to legend” prompt us to think of what kind of legend she was and how she became a legend. We want to read the book to find out. The writer used a creative title to stimulate our imagination and interest.

**Objectives**

In this mini-lesson, students will:
- Learn strategies for creating a title for a biography.
- Generate title ideas in a group.
- Discuss how to apply the strategies to their own biographies.

**Preparation**

**Materials Needed**
- Mentor texts: “Frederick Douglass” and “Sojourner Truth”
- Chart paper and markers
- Interactive whiteboard resources
2. Rehearse

Practice Generating Title Ideas

Invite students to work with partners and share facts about the subjects of their biographies. Encourage students to think about key phrases that would tell something about their subjects and stimulate the interest of readers. Remind them that the words in the title can capture an essential element about the life and achievements of their subjects. Ask partners to come up with a brainstormed list of possible titles to share with the class.

Share and Discuss

Bring students together and invite them to share ideas for their biography titles. Ask students how they chose titles for their biographies.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that the title of a biography can provide information that makes readers want to read the book. The title can capture important aspects of the person’s life or offer a kind of summary of it. Keep this in mind as you develop a title for your biography.

Encourage students to think of an interesting title when they publish their own biographies. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to share the titles they decided on and ask them to explain their choices.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Work one on one with ELs to help them come up with a title for a piece of their writing. Ask them to explain in any way they can what their writing is about and what the key ideas are in their writing. Show them how to use the key ideas to create a title.

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: title/el título.