1. Focus

Explain Genre Features

Say: Every genre of writing has features, or characteristics, that readers can expect to find in that type of text. When you read a persuasive text, for example, you expect to find facts, evidence, and a strong position statement. Similarly, memoirs include specific features. Identifying those features in a memoir will help you understand how they function in a text.

Build a Class Genre Features Anchor Chart

Say: Think about what you already know about memoirs as we identify and list the features in an anchor chart.

Display a blank chart like one shown here on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Also distribute copies of the chart to students on BLM 1. Work with students to record features of memoirs in the left column. If necessary, use the following prompts to guide students:
- What in the author’s life does a memoir focus on?
- Whose point of view is presented in a memoir?
- How does the author describe events in a memoir?
- What do authors reveal about themselves in a memoir?
- What does the author include in a memoir to show the characters’ important thoughts and feelings?
- What form does a memoir take that makes it lively and engaging?
- How does a memoir usually end?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memoir Features</th>
<th>Examples from the Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on a short period of time or several related events in the author’s life</td>
<td>This memoir tells about the year that the author moved from Colombia to the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person point of view</td>
<td>Narrator is the author. She uses I, me, my, and we.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on events the way the author remembers them</td>
<td>page 19: The author doesn’t include many details of her birthday party because what she remembers most about that day are her feelings about her grandmother’s news.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes author’s thoughts and feelings</td>
<td>page 20: “I did not want to leave…” “I did not need new opportunities…” “…was I miserable then!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes dialogue</td>
<td>page 20: The author includes dialogue as she remembers it to show her confusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written in narrative form</td>
<td>page 23: The description of the setting of the author’s apartment is an example of using the narrative form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes a strong ending that makes the reader think</td>
<td>page 26: The ending reminds us of the beginning of the memoir and the author’s sad birthday. It makes us think about how much things have changed for her.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
- Identify memoir genre features to create a class anchor chart.
- Listen to a memoir mentor text and find the features of the genre in the memoir.

Preparation

Materials Needed
- Mentor text: “From Colombia, 1969” from Newcomers to America
- Chart paper and markers
- Memoir Features (BLM 1)
- Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy a blank Memoir Features chart onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper.
Read Aloud a Memoir

Before you read, point out the right-hand column on your chart and on students’ BLMs. Explain that you are going to read aloud (or reread) a memoir and that students should listen carefully to the text to identify examples of the genre features in the memoir. Explain that after the reading, students will work in small groups to complete the chart by recording examples of each genre feature in the text. Read aloud (or reread) “From Colombia, 1969.” Note: You may wish to project the text using the interactive whiteboard resources.

2. Rehearse

Analyze the Mentor Text

Form small groups of students to complete the second column of the graphic organizer on BLM 1. If you are using the interactive whiteboard resources, invite students to revisit parts of the text as they look for the examples they need.

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

Share Ideas

Bring students together and invite volunteers to share the examples they found in the text you read aloud. Record their findings on your anchor chart. Post this anchor chart for students to refer to throughout the unit as they think about the memoir features they need to include in their memoir.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Think about the memoir features we identified today as the building blocks you will use to create your memoir. Refer to the anchor chart to remind you of these features as you work on your memoir.

Ask students to continue brainstorming ideas for their memoirs. To explore an important feature of memoirs, you may also wish to have them write a paragraph in which they describe their thoughts and feelings about an event in their past.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to report on their brainstorming progress and/or to read aloud paragraphs describing their thoughts and feelings about a past time in their lives.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Pair beginning ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group “Analyze the Mentor Text” activity. Keep in mind that they will not be able to contribute many ideas orally. Work with ELs individually to reinforce concepts while other students write independently.

Intermediate

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group activity. Display the following simple sentence frames on chart paper and model how students can use them to contribute ideas in the group.

For example:

A memoir focuses on ______.
A memoir has ______.
Authors of a memoir include ______.

Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group activity.