Write an Introduction

1. Focus

Explain Writing an Introduction

Ask: What information would you like to have before you read a piece of historical fiction? Encourage students to generate their own ideas about what kind of information they might need about the actual historical events on which the historical fiction is based.

Say: Historical fiction stories include actual events in history. These stories often require an understanding of the actual people and events. For this reason, some authors include an introduction at the beginning of a story. This section provides background information that a reader needs to know in order to understand the story. Authors will write an introduction to include details about the actual events and people on which the story is based.

Model Writing an Introduction

Read aloud pages 5–6 of the mentor text “The Lewis and Clark Expedition,” which provides background information for the Lewis and Clark historical fiction story. If available, display the book using the interactive whiteboard resources so that students can follow along.

Say: The writers of the historical fiction story about Lewis and Clark wanted to be sure that their readers were familiar with the history of that time and the true story behind the expedition. They provided these details before the story. When we read this information before we read the story, we have the background we need so that we can put the fictional events in the story into a true historical context. We know that the story is made up, but we also know that it is based on facts. Many writers of historical fiction provide this kind of information. The background information introduces us to the people involved, the time frame of the expedition, and the route.

Show students examples of historical fiction books that provide background information about the topic of the book.
2. Rehearse

Practice Writing an Introduction

Invite students to work with a partner. Ask partners to talk about their historical fiction stories and brainstorm ideas for the kind of information they would include in a background information section.

Share and Discuss

Bring students together and invite students to share their ideas. Discuss how writing a background information section will make their stories more accessible to readers.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that writers of historical fiction often provide background information for the time period and true events that the story is based on. This information can help readers make better connections to the people and events in the story. Keep this in mind as you choose which information to include in the introduction to your own historical fiction.

Encourage students to add a background information section when they prepare to publish their own historical fiction stories. 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 their ideas on the background information they decided to include in their introductions.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Beginning ELs are not ready to work on this writing process skill. While other students collaborate on the partner activity or write independently, meet one on one with students to support developmentally appropriate writing skills based on their independent writing and language levels. For example, you may want to work with students on identifying graphics such as timelines that help them understand historical events.

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: *introduction/la introducción.*