Use Selective Research

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Learn about using selective research and using interviews or text-based research to find quotes from experts.
- Practice using selective research to find quotes from experts.
- Discuss the strategy and how they can apply it to their independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed

- 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 prior to the mini-lesson.

1. Focus

Explain Selective Research

Say: Conducting interviews with people who have firsthand knowledge of your topic is a good way to research information for your writing. When you use an interview as research for an informational report, you are interested in all the information your interviewee has to give. But when you conduct your interview for a persuasive letter, you might get quotes that do not support your argument. You are selective in the quotes you use from your interviewee, choosing only those quotes that support your viewpoint. You do not change the information, and you make sure that the information you do use is accurate, but if you don’t like the information you get, you can decide not to use it.

Model Using Selective Research

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Teacher Interview
(Ms. Smith)

Q: Do you find that drinking bottles on students’ desks are a problem?
A: Yes. They are very distracting. Students play with them when they should be paying attention in class.

Student Interviews

Q: Do you think it’s a problem that some kids have water bottles on their desks while you don’t?
(Student 1) A: No. It doesn’t really bother me. I don’t get thirsty during the day.
(Student 2) A: Yeah. It kind of bugs me that some kids have them and others don’t. It doesn’t seem fair.

Modeling Text

Sample Think-Aloud

Say: The problem I’m writing about in my persuasive letter is water bottles on kids’ desks during class time. My position is that we shouldn’t allow them. I interviewed teachers and students for my research. I may be able to use quotes from a teacher and a student to support my arguments. Because they have firsthand knowledge about the issue, both could be considered “experts.” When I interviewed the teachers and the students, I took notes. I wrote down quotes that I might want to use in my letter.
Read aloud the “Teacher Interview.” Say: I think I can definitely use some or all of this quote in my letter. When I write my letter, I could use the teacher’s quote this way: “When asked about the problem of drinking bottles on students’ desks, Ms. Smith said, ‘They are very distracting. Students play with them when they should be paying attention in class.’”

Read aloud the “Student Interviews.” Say: I am not going to use a quote from the first student. Her comment does not support my argument. But I could use something from the second student. I probably wouldn’t use the whole thing because it’s not very succinct. But I could write something like, “One student mentioned that he felt ‘it doesn’t seem fair’ that some kids have water bottles and others don’t.”

2. Rehearse

Practice Using Selective Research

Ask students to think about the problem they are presenting and the position they are taking in their persuasive letters. Have them generate a list of possible experts they could interview for quotes to use in their letters. If it is not possible to interview people, suggest they generate a list of areas they may research to look for quotes that will support their arguments.

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 ideas they generated. Ask students to discuss how they can apply this strategy to their independent research.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Today we learned about using selective research to find quotes we can use to support our arguments in our persuasive letters. We may interview experts or we may look for quotes in other sources, such as books or magazine articles. We learned that we should use only information that supports our arguments. Also, we can quote just part of a sentence or something someone said, as long as we don’t change the content of what the person or article said.

Encourage students to use selective research to find quotes they can use to support their arguments. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Share Ideas

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share quotes they found. Ask them to explain which quotes they decided to use and which they did not.

Strategies to Support ELS

Beginning

Help beginning ELS set up basic interview questions and conduct interviews with their peers. Model using simple interview questions and asking a student the questions as you model taking notes; for example, What is your name? Where do you live? What do you like to do? Point out that you do not write the whole answer to the question, just key words. Then ask students to use the questions to conduct interviews.

Intermediate and Advanced

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