1. Focus

Introduce the Mentor Biography

**Say:** Today I’m going to read you a biography about an important American. Her name was Sojourner Truth.

**Ask:** Who do you think Sojourner Truth was? The title says “From Slave to Legend.” What do you think that means? (Allow responses.) Why do you think she is called a legend?

If your class includes English learners or other students who would benefit from vocabulary or oral language development to comprehend the mentor biography, use “Make the Mentor Text Comprehensible for ELs.”

Read Aloud the Mentor Biography

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

1. Biographies include quotes from the person or from others that help readers understand the personality and characteristics of the person.
2. Biographies highlight the impact the person had on the world.

Quotes from the Subject

**Page 24, after second paragraph. Say:** The author includes a quote from Sojourner Truth about why she changed her name. She said that “truth is powerful and it prevails.” The word *prevail* means “to succeed or be superior in strength or power.” This quote gives me a clue to what Sojourner was like as a person. Biographies include quotes like this one that help the reader understand more about the qualities of the person.

The Subject’s Impact on the World

**Page 25, after third paragraph. Say:** This paragraph tells how Sojourner Truth was able to command respect from even the most hostile crowds. The writer says she could turn a jeering, noisy crowd into a silent one. By including information such as this, the writer of this biography demonstrates what an important person Sojourner was and what an impact she had.

The Subject’s Impact on the World

**After reading page 26. Say:** This page tells me how Sojourner Truth helped black families who had escaped from slavery find jobs and have a better life. By presenting details about her life, the writer shows me why Sojourner Truth is worthy of being the subject of a biography.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Listen to an interactive read-aloud to learn that a biography tells about a person’s personality and characteristics, includes quotes from the person or from someone who knew him/her, and tells about the impact the person had on the world.
- Share personal responses to a biography.

Preparation

**Materials Needed**

- Mentor text: “Sojourner Truth”
- Interactive whiteboard resources

**Advanced Preparation**

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, gather books with photographs depicting the lives of slaves on plantations in the South before the Civil War.
Quotes from Other People
Page 27, after third paragraph. Say: Notice how the writer includes a quote from Frederick Douglass in which he says that Sojourner Truth was devoted to the people of her race and that she was someone respected by social reformers. This quote helps me understand her impact on the world and also what kind of person she was.

2. Rehearse

Respond Orally to the Mentor Biography

After reading, invite students to share their own ideas and reactions to the text by asking questions such as:

- What do you think of Sojourner Truth?
- What did you visualize in your mind as you listened to this biography?
- Did you enjoy this biography about Sojourner Truth? Why or why not?

If necessary, model the following sentence frames to support ELs and struggling students:

- Sojourner Truth was ______.
- I visualized ______.
- I liked/didn’t like this biography because ______.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Today we read a biography of Sojourner Truth and we focused on some important features of biographies. We learned that a biography informs readers about how the subject had an impact on the world. We also learned that biographies can include quotes from the subject or quotes from other people describing the subject. These quotes help readers understand more about the subject.

Encourage students to write a paragraph that answers the following questions: Does the subject of a biography need to have had a great impact on the world? Why or why not? During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share the paragraphs they wrote about the subjects of biographies and their impacts on the world.

Make the Mentor Text Comprehensible for ELs

Beginning

Use the pictures from pages 18, 19, and 20 of the mentor text or use the interactive whiteboard resources to build background vocabulary for the topic of the biography (for example, slaves, work, fields, slave auctions, sell/sold).

Intermediate and Advanced

Show students the picture of the slaves working in the fields on page 20 or use the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask: What are these people doing? What do you know about slavery? Begin a background-building discussion to provide a context for the biography.

All Levels

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share the following English/Spanish cognate: slaves/los esclavos.