Use Sequential and Descriptive Text Structures

1. Focus

Explain Text Structures for Sequence of Events and Description

Say: Memoir writers usually organize events using a sequential text structure; they tell about most events in the order that they occurred. In addition to the sequential text structure, memoirs often use a descriptive text structure to help readers visualize the events and people involved. Certain signal words can help readers identify the text structures used in a memoir. Let’s review signal words for the sequential and descriptive text structures.

Ask students to listen as you read (or reread) pages 22 and 24 of “What Comes Before Wings.” Note: You may want to display these pages from the book using the interactive whiteboard resources so that students may read along.

Model Identifying Sequential and Descriptive Text Structures

Say: In the first paragraph on page 22, the writer uses date and time words to help the reader follow the sequence of events. I see the clues—June 5, 1967, September, and June 10—to help me understand when things are happening. Then, in the next paragraph, the writer uses many descriptive words to tell us details about the time he was shot. I see words and phrases such as three in the afternoon, two feet from each other, and two bullets, and the details help me picture the scene. Skipping ahead to page 24, I see more description and sequence signal words. The phrases after eight weeks and twenty minutes later help me follow the writer’s experiences at basic training. Later, there are words and phrases such as during the first two weeks, next, and last to help me follow the sequence of events at paratrooper training. There are also many descriptive words on this page that tell about the Special Forces officer. The writer’s use of signal words and phrases helps me follow the text structures.

Create a Class Sequence and Description Signal Language Anchor Chart

Say: As I read the rest of the memoir, listen for other words and phrases that help you follow the sequence of events and understand descriptions. We’ll add the examples you identify to a Signal Language anchor chart. Display a two-column chart like the one that follows on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Listen to a memoir and analyze the sequential and descriptive text structures.
• Recognize the sequence and description signal words and phrases in a memoir.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Mentor text: “What Comes Before Wings” from The 1960s: Times of Change
• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper.
3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that memoir writers often use sequential and descriptive text structures. As you write your own memoirs, use sequence signal words and phrases to help readers follow the sequence of events in your memoir. Use description signal words and phrases to help readers understand and visualize people, places, and things that appear in your story. You can refer to the Signal Language anchor chart when you write your memoir.

Encourage students to describe a sequence of events from a memoir that they are working on.

Strategies to Support ELs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fifteen-cent sideways</td>
<td>after, then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in Fort Jackson</td>
<td>now, the rest of 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black</td>
<td>until February 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white</td>
<td>by 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five</td>
<td>next, when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>down to Whitehall Street</td>
<td>in the late afternoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Signal Language Anchor Chart

Work with students to expand both columns on the anchor chart with other description and sequence signal words and phrases they are familiar with.

2. Rehearse

Practice Using Sequential and Descriptive Text Structures in Oral Conversation

Turn and talk. Invite students to work with partners. Ask partners to orally describe a series of related events in their own lives and to include words and phrases that help the listener understand the size, location, age, and shape of people and objects. Remind them to use the anchor chart to help them get ideas for helpful signal words and phrases.

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

Share Conversations

Bring students together and invite volunteers to share examples from their partner conversations.

Intermediate

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Write the following simple sentence frames on chart paper, modeling as necessary how students can use them to add description:

When I was _____, I ______.
I saw ______.
I heard ______.

Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.