Parentheses

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Identify parentheses used to supply supplemental information in sentences.
• Practice using parentheses in sentences.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Chart paper and markers
• Parentheses (BLM 9)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text and practice text (without parentheses) on chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.

1. Focus

Explain Using Parentheses

Say: Parentheses are punctuation marks that writers use to add information that is interesting but not necessary to a sentence. Text enclosed in parentheses may be as short as a single word or as long as a sentence. (When the parentheses contain a full sentence, that sentence should have punctuation just like other full sentences.) Parentheses are especially useful to writers of research reports because they provide a way to fit in some of the extra information the writers find while doing research.

Model Using Parentheses

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

1. In Capua, Italy, a town 130 miles (209 kilometers) south of Rome, the general sits with friends.
2. Someone must have noticed the cocoons woven by the Bombyx mori (bahm-BIKS MOR-ee) moth.

Modeling Text

Read sentence 1. Say: I look at the information enclosed in the parentheses in the sentence. The phrase 209 kilometers is helpful information, but I can understand the sentence without it. This phrase gives us a metric unit of measurement equal to 130 miles. I know that writers often put an alternative measurement in parentheses.

Read sentence 2. Say: In this sentence, I see parentheses around a pronunciation. Providing a pronunciation is another good use of parentheses. It wouldn’t change the sentence to leave out this information, but it’s helpful to the reader to have it there. I’ve now seen two ways that a research report writer can use parentheses to add extra information.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Parentheses

Display the practice text (without parentheses) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to identify which information in each sentence could be enclosed in parentheses. Remind students to look for interesting information that is not necessary for understanding the sentences. (Students do not need to copy the sentences.)

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

| 1. One camel could carry about 1,100 pounds (500 kilograms) of goods at a time. |
| 2. Caravans moved very slowly, about 2 ½ miles (4 kilometers) an hour. |
| 3. Ammianus Marcellinus (am-ee-AY-nus mar-suh-LY-nus) declared incorrectly, “Silk fabrics are made from soil.” |

Practice Text

Share Uses of Parentheses

Invite volunteers to say where they would insert parentheses in each sentence. Discuss their choices as a class. Ask students the following questions:

- Where would you put the parentheses in the sentence?
- Why would you put this information in parentheses?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that writers use parentheses to add information to a sentence. The information may be helpful but not necessary to understanding the rest of the sentence. Research report writers often have extra information from the research they do. We’ll use parentheses in our writing to add information that might help readers but is not important to the overall meaning of a sentence.

If you would like to give students additional practice using parentheses in sentences, have them complete BLM 9.

4. Share

Review and provide corrective feedback based on students’ answers to BLM 9. Ask students to share what they learned about using parentheses in sentences.