1. Focus

Explain Using Multiple Sources

Say: Researching your subject will involve using a number of different sources. You cannot rely on just one source, such as a biography about your subject, to provide you with information. Using multiple sources will help you write a more balanced and unique biography. What other sources are there? Besides the primary sources we’ve already talked about, you can look for newspaper articles about your subject, encyclopedia articles, information online, and books about the era when your subject was alive. All these sources will give you background information about your subject and the time in which he or she lived. They may also help explain events from the subject’s life.

Model Identifying Multiple Sources

Sample Think-Aloud

Say: I’m writing a biography of Abraham Lincoln. I’m focusing on his life during his presidency and the Civil War. Where should I begin my research? I could just find a good biography of his life, read it, and write my biography. But then, in a way, the work would barely be my own because I’d be relying on another writer’s research and thinking. Instead, I’ll need to find multiple sources. The first place I will look is on the Internet. I can do a search for Abraham Lincoln during his presidency. This search turns up a number of sites, including a White House website, a site sponsored by the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia, and an Encyclopedia Britannica article. Each of these Internet sites will provide me with a different perspective on Abraham Lincoln. I’ll scan each of them, and if I find the information useful, I’ll note the web address and take notes. I can also do a search on Lincoln during the Civil War, and that will return a different set of pages for me to look at.

Say: I can also go to the library and look for books about the Civil War. I can try to find copies of newspaper and magazine articles that were written at the time. If I need help, I can always ask the librarian for assistance finding materials.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Learn about using multiple sources for a biography.
- Practice using multiple sources.
- Discuss the strategy and how they can apply it to their independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed

- Chart paper and markers
- Interactive whiteboard resources
2. Rehearse

**Practice Identifying Multiple Sources**

Ask students to think about possible sources they may use for researching their biography subjects and to list these sources. Ask them to think about other angles for their research, for example, they may look for materials about the time in history when their subject was living. If possible, allow students to conduct an online search to see what types of articles they find.

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: *Besides just materials about your subject, what other topics can you research to learn about your subject and the time in which he or she was living?* Ask students to discuss how they can apply this strategy to their independent research.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** Today we learned about locating and using multiple sources for our biographies. Using multiple sources gives you a better understanding of your subject. They give you background information about your subject and can help explain events from your subject’s lifetime.

Encourage students to locate multiple sources as they research their biographies during independent writing time. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite students to share the sources they found that provided them with relevant information for their biographies.

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**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Pair beginning ELs with fluent English speakers during the practice activity. Keep in mind that they may not be able to contribute many ideas orally. You will want to work with them individually to reinforce concepts while other students write independently.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the practice activity.