Use a Question as a Lead

1. Focus

Explain Using a Question as a Lead

Say: The lead, or opening sentence or sentences, in a biography can hook readers and make them want to read more. It’s important that we think about how we introduce our readers to our biography subject. Writers have different ways to grab their readers’ interest. Today we’ll look how using a question to begin your biography can make your writing more interesting.

Model Using a Question as a Lead

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

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn the strategy of using a question as a strong lead to hook the reader.
• Practice writing question leads.
• Discuss how to apply this strategy 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 on chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.

Preparation Tip

This mini-lesson uses the topic developed in the lesson “Organize Your Ideas for a Biography” to model rereading as you draft.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Questions as a Lead

Invite students to work together in pairs, choosing the topic from either of their research reports. Ask them to create a question as a lead that would attract a reader’s attention. Students should be prepared to share their leads with the class.

Share and Discuss Strong Leads

Bring students together and invite volunteers to state their topics and share their questions. Discuss with students which questions worked best as leads and why.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We just learned that how we begin our biographies is important. We want to use leads that grab the reader’s attention. We looked at using a question as a strong lead. Remember to use a strong lead when you write your draft.

Encourage students to focus on writing questions to serve as their leads when they draft 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 the class together. Invite volunteers to share the leads they wrote. Ask class members to tell why the leads are strong.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning
While other students complete the practice activity (or during independent writing time) work with beginning ELs to help them draft their research report ideas orally or in written text, using any language they have.

Intermediate and Advanced
Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the practice activity.

All Levels
If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate: biography/la biografía.