1. Focus

Explain the Use of **B.C.E.** or **C.E.** in Running Text

**Say:** In biographies and other historical writing, you might see a date followed by the initials **B.C.E.** or **C.E.** For example, I can write, “Julius Caesar was born in 100 B.C.E.” In this sentence, the letters after the year represent the phrase “before the Common Era.” If you see a date followed by **C.E.**, these letters stand for the phrase “Common Era.”

**Say:** In the past, writers used **B.C.**, which referred to years “before Christ,” and **A.D.**, which referred to “anno Domini” or “in the year of our Lord (Jesus Christ).” The initials **A.D.** always come before the year. Today most writers use **B.C.E.** or **C.E.** instead to make the connection to years before or after the point that most of the world recognizes for a common calendar. Years in **B.C.E.** increase as the amount of time before the common year zero increases. Years in **C.E.** increase as the amount of time after the common year zero increases. So, the year 100 **B.C.E.** is one hundred years before the zero point in the calendar, but 100 **C.E.** is one hundred years after that zero point.

Model Using **B.C.E.** or **C.E.** in Text

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

1. In 75 **B.C.E.**, pirates seized Caesar’s ship as it sailed to Turkey.
2. In 48 **B.C.E.**, Caesar defeated his rival Pompey in battle.
2. In 14 **C.E.**, Augustus Caesar, the first leader of the Roman Empire, died.

**Modeling Text**

**Read sentence 1. Say:** I see that the abbreviation **B.C.E.** follows the year 75 in this sentence. So I know that pirates seized Caesar’s ship 75 years before the Common Era. If I were to change this to the older style, it would have been 75 **B.C.**, or before Christ.

**Read sentence 2. Say:** This sentence has another year followed by the letters **B.C.E.** I can tell that this is the date of another important event in Caesar’s story. I notice that the numbering of the years are decreasing as the years approach zero. This makes sense. The event in sentence 1 happened 75 years before the Common Era, and the event in sentence 2 happened 48 years before the Common Era.
**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Beginning ELs are likely not ready to work on this English convention. While other students collaborate on the partner activity or write independently, meet one on one with students to support developmentally appropriate grammar skills based on their independent writing and language levels. For example, you may want to work on students’ use of abbreviations in text.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair students with fluent English speakers to complete the practice sentences. Provide the following sentence frames to assist students in describing their choices:

*I change b.c. to ______.*

*I change a.d. to ______.*