1. Focus

Introduce the Mentor Biography

Say: Today I’m going to read you a biography about an important person in history. Her name was Cleopatra. Have you ever heard of Cleopatra? What have you heard about her? What made her an important person? Allow responses.

If your class includes English learners or other students who would benefit from vocabulary or oral language development to comprehend the biography, use “Make the Mentor Text Comprehensible for ELs.”

Read Aloud the Mentor Biography

Read aloud the text, stopping at some or all of the places indicated (or at other points you choose) to highlight three key features of a biography:

1. Biographies describe the subject’s personality and characteristics.
2. Biographies highlight the impact the person had on the world.
3. Biographies include quotations from the person or from others that help readers understand the person.

Describes Personality and Characteristics

Page 19, after third paragraph. Say: The author describes Cleopatra as intelligent and courageous, a wise administrator, and fiercely loyal to the men she loved. The author notes that Cleopatra gave her own life for one of the men she loved. She sounds like a strong-willed person! I wonder why she sacrificed her life for someone else? Writers of biographies include intriguing details like this one that make the reader want to know more about the subject.

A Person’s Impact on the World

Page 22, after second paragraph. Say: This paragraph explains that Cleopatra made good decisions that helped the country’s economy. She improved agriculture and increased exports to other countries. Under Cleopatra’s leadership, Egypt became wealthy and gained more influence in the world. This shows how the subject of this biography affected history.

A Person’s Impact on the World

Page 22, after third paragraph. Say: This paragraph shows that Cleopatra’s influence went beyond just Egypt and its people. The role that she played in the end of the Roman Republic shows her importance to the entire world. Biographers give us the “big picture” about the subject so we understand the person’s impact on the world and why we remember him or her today.
Quotations About the Subject
After reading page 23. **Say:** I know that Cleopatra lived in ancient times, so the author could not interview her or people who knew her. But there are often written accounts about historical figures, and that is the case here. The author describes what the Greek writer and historian Plutarch thought of Cleopatra. He wrote that she always made a memorable entrance in a beautiful boat accompanied by flute music. He made her seem like a magical person whom everyone admired and wanted to see when they had the chance. By showing me the subject from another person’s point of view, the author gives me a fuller picture of her.

2. Rehearse

Respond Orally to the Mentor Biography

After reading, invite students to share their own ideas and reactions to the text by asking questions such as:

- What do you think of Cleopatra?
- What did you visualize in your mind as you listened to this biography?
- Did you enjoy this biography about Cleopatra? Why or why not?

If necessary, model the following sentence frames to support ELs and struggling students:

- Cleopatra was ______.
- I visualized ______.
- I liked/didn’t like this biography because ______.

Make the Mentor Text Comprehensible for ELs

**Beginning**

Display illustrations depicting life in Ancient Egypt. **Say:** This is Ancient Egypt. (Point to the picture on page 18 of the mentor text.) This woman is Cleopatra. Cleopatra was a queen. She was a queen of ancient Egypt.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Using the pictures from the text as prompts, involve students in a vocabulary-building discussion about Cleopatra and the time in which she lived. **Ask:** What do you know about Cleopatra? What do you know about the time period in which she lived?

**All Levels**

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share the following English/Spanish cognates: agriculture/la agricultura; barge/la barcaza; spectacle/el espectáculo; throne/el trono.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** Today we read a biography of Cleopatra, and we focused on some important features of biographies. We learned that a biography describes its subject’s personality and informs readers about how the subject had an impact on the world. We also learned that a biography can include quotations from the subject or quotes from other people about the subject that help us get to know him or her better. As you do research for your biography, you can look for quotations that you might want to include.

Encourage students to respond in writing to the mentor biography. Ask them to consider the features of a biography that they’d like to include in their biographies. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share their responses to the mentor biography.