Using the Lessons

For ease of use and to help you establish a consistent routine in your writer’s workshop, every day follows a consistent 4-step gradual-release structure.

Step 1: Mini-Lesson—Focus

Teachers explain and model the lesson focus section to the whole class. Each focus section includes think-alouds and step-by-step instruction for effective modeling.

Introduce the Genre: Journals

Display the cover of Discover Journals using the big book or interactive whiteboard resources. Read aloud the title and authors of the book. Use the following questions to activate students’ knowledge and initiate a background-building discussion. Allow time for students to respond to each question.

- What do you see in this picture? What is the child with the pencil doing?
- The title of this book is Discover Journals. What is a journal? Tell me in your own words.
- Does anyone know someone who writes a journal?

Say: I am going to read to you about journals. Follow along as I read. Read aloud pages 2–5 one section at a time in a fluent, expressive voice as you point to each word to model concepts of print. Stop and discuss where indicated below before continuing to read.

After reading the title page. Say: What is this girl doing? (Allow responses.) That’s right. She’s writing in a journal. Many people write in journals.

After reading page 1. Say: We just learned that people write journals about themselves. They write so they can remember things that happened to them. I know that’s true for me. I have kept a journal since I was a child.

After reading page 3. Say: You can write many things in a journal, can’t you? I like to keep a journal when I go on a trip. I write down everything I see each day. Then I can reread it and remember my trip after I come home. What else could you write about in a journal? (Allow responses.) Encourage students to look at the photographs on page 4 for examples of events they could write about. Also ask them to look at the faces on page 5 and identify some of the feelings people might write about in their journals.

Objective

Concepts About Print
- Recognize book cover.
- Recognize title page.
- Understand which direction to read.
- Demonstrate one-to-one matching.

Language and Grammar
- Share a memory orally.

Reflecting Reading in Writing
- Develop genre awareness.
- Visualize.

Writing
- Draw a journal entry.

Materials
- Mentor big book: Discover Journals
- Interactive whiteboard resources
Step 2: Mini-Lesson—Rehearse

Students work with a partner to practice and discuss the lesson focus prior to independent writing.

Step 3: Independent Writing and Conferring

Students write independently at whatever stage of the writing process they are in. If appropriate, students apply the mini-lesson focus. Teachers use Responsive Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers to meet individual students’ needs.

Step 4: Share

Each day’s workshop ends with teacher and students reflecting on their writing experiences.

Ask students to close their eyes and think of one event they could draw and write about in a journal. Say: Maybe it’s something that happened to you on the way to school. Maybe it’s something you remember from the past. Turn to your partner and tell him or her about your idea.

If your class includes English learners, you may wish to model using the following oral sentence frames to support their partner talk:

- When I was _____, I _____.
- I remember when I _____.
- I could draw about when _____.

Distribute students’ journals. Invite each student to draw a picture of the memory he or she described to a partner. If students prefer, they can draw a different memory, too. Some students may wish to add written messages to their pictures using scribble writing, letters, or words.

Use the Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to help you provide differentiated support to individual students based on your observations.

Invite two or three students to share their drawings and tell the class about the memories they drew. You may wish to provide additional modeling based on your observations during Independent Writing and Conferring.