

Lesson 14: A Nonfiction Writing “Itinerary”

Supplies Needed:

- 3 or 4 examples of nonfiction books that contain a Table of Contents and headings within the book that match the Table of Contents
- A copy of “Author’s Writing Plan for Nonfiction” page to work on in front of the class
- Copies of the Nonfiction Plan page for each student
- The “Topics” anchor chart the class created in an earlier lesson

Procedure:

- Ask the students if any of them have ever heard the word “itinerary” before. Read the definition – “a planned route or journey; a travel document with a schedule, timetable, agenda, program or tour listed”. Discuss the definition and then ask them why they feel making a plan or itinerary for a journey might be a good idea. Lead them to the idea that knowing where and when they are going places helps to make sure they get to see and do everything that they want to on a trip. Tell them that writing a piece of nonfiction to teach or tell about a topic also needs an “itinerary” or a plan to make sure that you teach the things that you know and don’t forget anything.
- Next, begin reading one of the nonfiction books you chose. Discuss the topic and author. Stop at the Table of Contents and discuss the headings that are listed. Ask the students what they think a few of these sections might contain (pertaining to the topic of the book).
- After the discussion, flip to the pages listed in the Table of Contents and ask the students what they notice about the title or heading on the page. (It matches what was listed in the Table of Contents.)
- Explain to students that one way to make a plan for an informational piece of writing is to think about the topic and brainstorm the different things one could teach about that topic.

- Refer to the Topics anchor chart that the class brainstormed in an earlier lesson and select a topic that you feel many students would know something about. (Steer away from topics that students shared for which they held personal knowledge and were “experts” on.)
- Using the Nonfiction Plan page, practice coming up with a Table of Contents that might fit the topic you selected. Be sure to let them know that they may not fill all the spaces on this planning page.
- Explain to students that each item listed on the Nonfiction Plan will become a heading in the nonfiction book and provide a plan for their nonfiction writing.
- Pass out a Nonfiction Plan page to each student and send them to their writing spots with the task of choosing a topic and creating an initial plan for a piece of nonfiction writing. They need to know that they may or may not choose to draft that piece of writing right now, but that you would like for them to practice making the plan. They will keep this page in the prewriting section of their binder/folder.
Conference with students during their writing and perhaps help a few get started with their Nonfiction Plan.
- Gather students after writing time and have a few share the plans they have started for a piece of nonfiction writing. Emphasize that they need to keep these plans even if they aren’t currently working on a piece of nonfiction because they may want to use them at a later time.

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