

Ralph Tells a Story

Stage	Component	Teaching Actions
Understand	1 Observe and plan	Standard/Essential Element: Determining What to Write About Materials: <i>Ralph Tells a Story</i> by Abby Hanlon, chart paper, marker, student writing notebooks or story paper, student pencils
Prepare	2 Engage and relate	"Sometimes when it is time to write, we don't know what to write about. We sit and think and think but just cannot come up with something to write a story about. Authors call this writer's block, meaning they feel stuck, or blocked, when trying to figure out what to write about. The problem with not having something to write about during writing time is that it takes time away from our writing and we don't get as much done. So, what can we do about it?"
	3 Identify teaching point and purpose	"Today I am going to read a story to you about a boy named Ralph who faced this same problem almost every day. When it was time to write in school, all of his friends would start writing and he would stare at the paper and not know what to write about. Let's see what happens and what we can learn from Ralph. After we read this story, we will make a list of what we can do to help ourselves when we can't think of what to write."
	4 Explain success criteria	"We will know we are successful when we are able to put the ideas into practice and write about a story we have to tell."
Teach	5 Teach Explicitly explain Think aloud Model Guide/prompt Offer advice Give Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read <i>Ralph Tells a Story</i> by Abby Hanlon. Discuss what happens in the story and how Ralph overcomes his problem. Pay special attention to the questions his classmates ask him about his inchworm: "Did your mom let you keep it? Did you touch it? Was it a baby? Was it a girl? Did it tickle? Did you name it? Did you take it home?" Tell students you want to write a story and need their help. Give them a general idea and ask what questions they have that you might be able to answer in your story. Example ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "This weekend I went to a football game." (They might ask, "What game? Who won? What was the score? Who did you go with? Who did you cheer for?") "On Saturday morning my car wouldn't start." (They might ask, "Where were you going? What was wrong with it? Where were you when it broke down? Is it fixed yet? How did you get it fixed?") "I went for a walk this morning." (They might ask, "Did anyone go with you? Did you walk a pet? Where did you walk to? What was the weather like?") "It was hot outside this weekend." (They might ask, "Did you go outside? What did you do? How hot was it? Do you like hot weather?") Do an interactive writing on chart paper with students. Start with your general sentence and add more to your story, using the questions they asked to help generate what you have to say.
	6 Practice and monitor	"Now you are going to get a chance to practice and write your own story, like Ralph. Normally you will write in your writing journal, but today I have a paper I am going to share that says ' _____ tells a story' at the top. You will write your name in the blank and then write your story. If you have time, you can draw a picture to go with it."
Instructional Pivot—Think: Did my instruction work? Yes/No		
Support	7 Review and next steps	YES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask if any students would like to share their story. Have a few volunteers read their story to the class. If several students volunteer, have them turn to an elbow partner to listen and talk. You may wish to compile the stories and create a class book or make revisions and take them to final copy to display in the room or hallway.
		NO <p>Plan next lesson—shift instruction as needed by adjusting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting (whole group, small group, one-on-one) Materials (fiction, nonfiction, genre) Instructional practice (explicitly explain, think aloud, model, guide/prompt, offer advice, give feedback)
	8 Encourage and give feedback	"Today we read <i>Ralph Tells a Story</i> by Abby Hanlon. We learned how it is possible to take small events in life and turn them into a story to share, and then we all had a chance to write a story of our own and share it. Next time you go to work on writing and are faced with a blank page to write on, it might help to remember how Ralph found his story. Think about things you have done and what questions could be asked about those things. Then, get comfortable and start writing. This week as we continue to work on writing, we will have time to share our stories at the end of our literacy time. I can't wait to see what you write about!"