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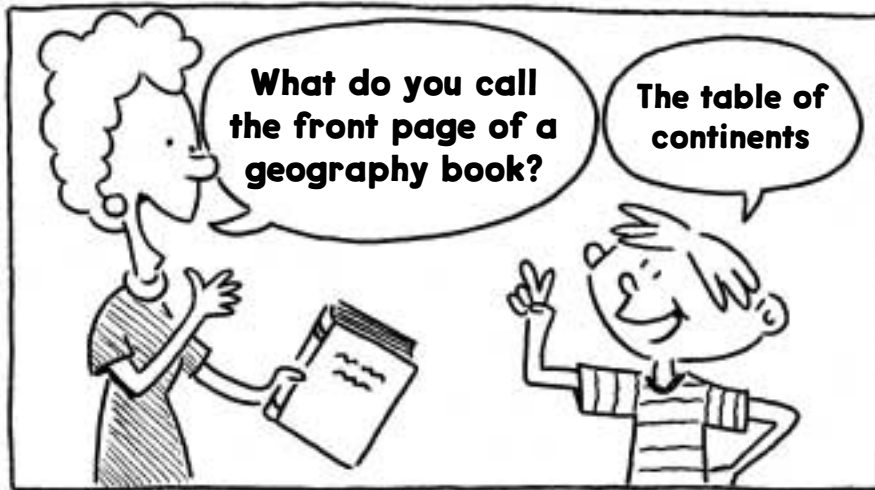
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# How to Use This Book



**T**eaching Students to Read Nonfiction provides 20 easy lessons that can be used during reading time or content area instructional time. The book includes:

- ✧ Easy-to-Use Text Feature Lessons
- ✧ Kid-Friendly Text Structure Lessons
- ✧ High-Interest Content Area Selections
- ✧ Assessment
- ✧ Purposeful Independent Practice
- ✧ Connections to Writing
- ✧ Web Sites and Graphic Organizers

## What's in a Lesson?

There are two types of lessons in this book: Text Feature lessons and Text Structure lessons. **Text Feature lessons** focus on the typographical and visual elements commonly found in nonfiction. Or, to put it another way, how the text looks on the page. Students are guided through the process of using these visual tools with a portion of text. For ease of use, we have provided the text on a color transparency for each Text Feature lesson.



Text Feature lesson, see pages 78–79



Text Structure lesson, see pages 62–64

Students will encounter this same text feature as part of a longer selection in the following lesson, which focuses on text structures. The lessons are organized so that each Text Feature lesson is followed by a Text Structure lesson that includes the text feature of the previous lesson. The selections we have chosen are the type of nonfiction text that is typical of students'

content area reading.

**Text Structure lessons** teach students how to recognize the organization of a piece of writing. The goal of repeated practice is to help students eventually identify text structures so they can use them more effectively to get information from their content area reading.

### *Learning About Text Features*

The lessons covered in Teaching Students to Read Nonfiction help students read:

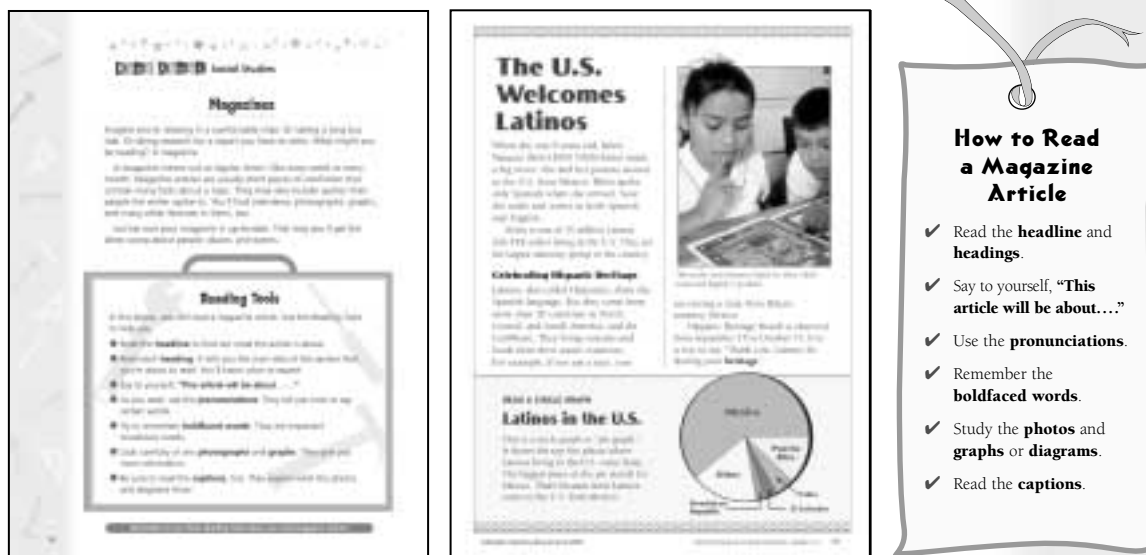
- ▲ Diagrams
- ▲ Maps
- ▲ Flow Charts
- ▲ Time Lines
- ▲ Primary Sources
- ▲ Graphs
- ▲ Social Studies Textbooks
- ▲ Science Textbooks
- ▲ Encyclopedia Articles
- ▲ Online Sources
- ▲ Text with Multiple Features

Let's take a closer look at the organization of a **Text Feature lesson**. It focuses students' attention on how to navigate the text and how to identify and use "tools," such as headings and boldfaced words, that serve as an aid to comprehension. In addition, many students need advance preparation in how to read and interpret the graphic aids they are most likely to meet in nonfiction text—maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, and time lines. Therefore, the lesson also includes one type of graphic aid and teaches students how to read and interpret it. The Model Text for each Text Feature lesson is included on a color transparency. Later, in subsequent lessons, the same feature will be embedded in authentic text just as students would encounter it in their science and social studies textbooks. At this stage, students will practice reading text, stopping to refer to a graphic, and then returning to the text.

### **STUDENT MATERIALS**

For each Text Feature lesson, students will receive a step-by-step guide called **Reading Tools**, on how to read the featured graphic aid. The accompanying **color transparency** of the graphic aid will facilitate group instruction and discussion.

The Reading Tools are summarized on a **Bookmark** for later reference. These are provided on pages 148–150. Students can cut out each bookmark and save it in an envelope labeled **Reading Tool Kit**. Students will find these brief “memory joggers” helpful when they come upon the same graphic aid in their future content area reading.



Reading Tools, Model Text, and Bookmark for a Text Feature lesson

## Learning About Text Structures

Now let's focus on a **Text Structure lesson**. Informational texts have both a content and a structure. The structure is the organizational pattern within the text. (See the chart on page 14 for a list of the five major organizational patterns.) The structure ties the ideas together. Understanding both the content and the structure is essential for comprehension.

Things would be nice and simple if every piece of expository text were written in one identifiable pattern. However, informational text is complex, and an author may not use one text structure exclusively throughout a long piece of writing. More likely, only a section of text will be organized in a single pattern. For example, a science textbook chapter may:

- ✧ first discuss different kinds of weather conditions (*description/listing*),
- ✧ then go on to explain the patterns that result in particular kinds of weather (*cause and effect*),
- ✧ follow up with a discussion of when a snowstorm officially becomes a blizzard or when a rainstorm is classified as a hurricane (*compare and contrast*), and finally
- ✧ close with what to do in the event of severe weather, such as a tornado (*problem and solution*).

## The 5 Most Common Structures of Nonfiction

Just like fiction, which has plot structure that students must learn and recognize, nonfiction follows basic structures, as well. Five kinds of text structures, or patterns of organization, are commonly found in informational texts:

1. **Description or listing** provides information, such as facts, characteristics, and attributes about a subject, event, person, or concept. This organization is the most common pattern found in textbooks (Niles, 1965; Bartlett, 1978). Here is an example:

*Polar bears eat plants, berries, fish, and meat. They can smell food from as far as 15 miles away.*

2. **Sequence or time order** presents a series of events that take place in a time order. The author traces the sequence or the steps in the process. An example is:

*About five weeks later, the gills disappear, and the tadpole grows lungs.*

3. **Compare and contrast** points out the likenesses and/or differences between two or more subjects. For example:

*The first astronauts ate food from tubes. The food was like baby food. Today, astronauts eat all kinds of food.*

4. **Cause and effect** attempts to explain why something happens; how facts or events (causes) lead to other facts or events (effects). A single cause often has several effects. Also, a single event may have several causes. This paragraph describes causes and effects:

*Sound waves traveling through the ground make the bones in the snake's head vibrate. The bones send the signal to the snake's inner ear. That's how a snake hears.*



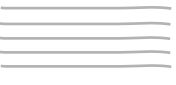
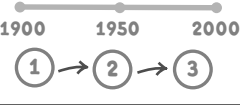

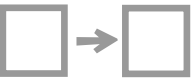
5. **Problem and solution** describes a problem and presents one or more solutions to that problem. The following is an example:

*The Leaning Tower of Pisa was in danger of falling over. Engineers removed soil from one side of the tower to straighten it a little.*

The long-term goal of text structure instruction is to enable students to recognize and use these structures flexibly so that they can make meaning from nonfiction texts.

### SIGNAL WORDS

A good writer connects ideas within the text with words and phrases. These *connectives*, or *ties*, can act as signals to an informed reader who is trying to identify the text structure. The chart below shows some of the connectives that authors use to signal different text structures and the message they transmit to the reader.

Text Structures		
Text Structure	 Signal Words	 Signal to Reader
<b>Description or list</b> 	<i>such as, for example, for instance, most important, in front, beside, near</i>	A list or set of characteristics will follow.
<b>Sequence or time order</b> 	<i>first, second, third, before, on (date), not long after, after that, next, at the same time, finally, then</i>	A sequence of events or steps in a process is being described.
<b>Compare and contrast</b> 	<i>like, unlike, but, in contrast, on the other hand, however, both, also, too, as well as</i>	Likenesses and differences are being presented and/or discussed.
<b>Cause and effect</b> <b>Problem and solution</b> 	<i>therefore, so, this led to, as a result, because, if ... then</i>	Evidence of cause(s) and effect(s) will be given or problems and solutions will be described.

*This chart is Transparency 1*

### TEXT STRUCTURE LESSONS

We can see why readers must be explicitly taught to recognize and use text structures. Text structures are critical for constructing meaning, yet they are often difficult to identify for the developing reader. Therefore, in Text Structure lessons, two things happen:

1. **Students focus their attention on text structure.** They are taught what the text structures are and what clues they can use to identify the organization of a particular piece of writing. Students will get a minimum of two exposures to each of the text structures discussed above, plus many additional opportunities to apply what they have learned in their classroom content area reading. The repetition will give students the multiple exposures they need.
2. **The selection provides students with another opportunity to practice and apply the skills** that they were taught in the first part of the lesson. The same text features and graphic aids are embedded in informational text. A diagram, for example, might be part of a science article just as students would encounter it in their content area reading. Students will practice integrating information from the chart with the information in the text.

### *Using High-Interest Content Area Selections*

As we have pointed out, the Model Texts provide students with an opportunity to apply the text feature that they have just learned about to a new text. These pieces have been carefully selected to match grade-level science and social studies standards. For example, in social studies, third graders will be reading about United States government; second graders will explore the wonders of plants and animals.

Some of the topics covered in this book include:

**Science:** animal life cycles, space, sound, and weather

**Social Studies:** American history, government, and communities

### *Assessment: Comprehension QuickCheck*

Following the reading of each selection, the questions that are provided ask students to apply the skill in some or all of the following ways:

- ✧ identify the text feature
- ✧ use the text feature to get information
- ✧ generate other situations in which the text feature would be appropriate

### *Applying Through Purposeful Independent Practice*

A true measure of students' knowledge is their ability to use a particular skill on their own. Not only do we teach students to use text features, but we also provide opportunities for them to practice getting information from these features in novel situations, and to create graphic features of their own such as



charts, diagrams, and time lines to organize information learned from a text.

A **reproducible** is provided for each Text Structure lesson. The reproducible can be used either in class, in learning centers, or for homework. The purpose of this reproducible is to check students' comprehension of the text they read, using a graphic organizer to record new learning. These graphic aids, such as main idea charts, cause/effect charts, and Venn diagrams, are useful ways for students to organize the information in any text and serve as valuable models.

In addition, some of the **extension activities** at the bottom of the reproducibles ask students to organize new text using the text feature they learned about. For example, if students read about great inventions using a time line, they may be asked to create a time line to represent another time period, such as a year in their lives. Repeated opportunities to read and create these text features will help students organize their thinking when reading and writing independently. These features can be applied to written reports or oral presentations as well.

### *Connecting to Writing*

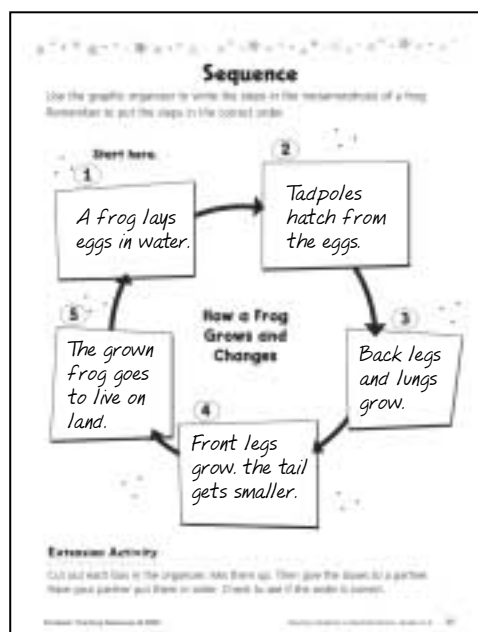
One of the ways to assess students' understanding of nonfiction text is by having them write brief **summaries**. Summarizing is an important reading strategy and critical writing skill. It involves selecting, organizing, and synthesizing the most important elements in a piece of text. By using their own words, students demonstrate what they have learned. Summaries include key ideas and details, are brief, do not contain the student's opinions, and are organized in a logical sequence. Summaries can be oral or written.

Summarizing is a very difficult skill for early readers. Laying the groundwork in the early grades is critical. You can do this by helping students identify main ideas in short texts such as paragraphs and assisting them as they write brief 3–4 sentence summaries of this text. Writing a good summary requires a great deal of modeling and guided practice (Hidi and Anderson, 1986).

In order to write a summary, a reader must be able to:

1. select the most important information in a text, thereby discarding the least important.
2. condense information by combining ideas or using a general term in place of a group of specific terms (i.e., "transportation" instead of "cars, trains, and planes").
3. record the most important ideas on paper in their own words.

Possible answers:



To help students create a summary, follow these steps:

- ✧ Determine the main ideas, such as the main topic of the text. Use headings to help identify these main ideas.
- ✧ Look for information that is repeated. Be sure it is included only once in the summary. In addition, look for ideas that can be grouped.
- ✧ Look for the main idea sentence for each important section of text. It often appears in the heading or at the beginning of a paragraph.
- ✧ If you can't find a main idea sentence, think of one yourself.
- ✧ Write your summary. Be sure to use your own words and be brief (Cooper, 1993).

## Tips for Choosing the Right Lesson

How you use the lessons in this book will depend on your classroom set-up and your preferences. You may follow the sequence presented in the book or, since each lesson can stand alone, you may choose to dip in wherever you see fit. Here are several options that will work:

- ✧ **In the self-contained classroom**, you may wish to approach each lesson as you would any reading skill—on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, following the sequence presented in this book. You can use the lessons to preteach text features and text structures, and later apply those skills to new text in social studies or science textbooks and periodicals. For example, you begin with the Overview Lesson that introduces the many features of nonfiction text using a magazine article as a model. At a later date when your students are reading other pieces of nonfiction such as a chapter in a social studies textbook, you can first review the features of nonfiction, including headings, photos, captions, and boldfaced words. Then students can apply what they learned to the new material in the text they are reading.
- ✧ **As an alternative, you can teach the lessons in this book during your social studies or science block.** Preview the science or social studies textbook lesson for the week and identify the text features and structures your students will encounter. Then preteach those skills using the appropriate lessons in this book. For example, if the science chapter includes a diagram showing the parts of a plant, you can preteach with Lesson 4—the text feature lesson on diagrams.
- ✧ **Another approach is to dip into just one part of a lesson.** You may teach a particular text feature, using the transparency, and leave the text structure lesson for another time. Or you may dip into the text structure part of the lesson, using only the longer selection.