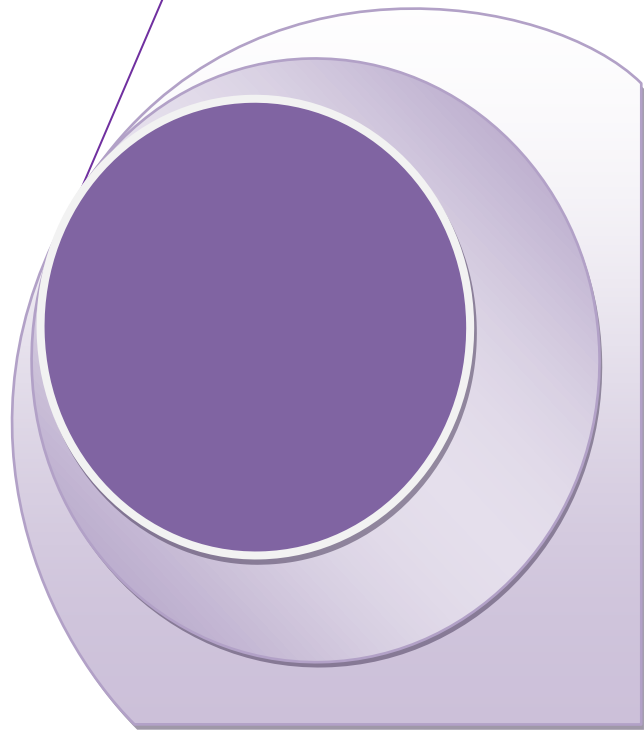


Comprehension Strategies for Non- Fiction Texts



Reading and comprehending non-fiction requires some different strategies to reading fiction texts. Reading fiction is often more linear, beginning at the beginning and reading until the end. Non-fiction texts, including on-line texts, tend to be read in a non-linear fashion. Knowing the structure and features of non-fiction texts helps readers to make meaning of the text and to focus their attention on the relevant aspects.

- Firstly readers need to decide on the purpose for reading a particular text. This enables readers to **determine the importance** of the material. Knowing the purpose helps readers decide what information and ideas are the most important to remember and learn.
- **Activating prior knowledge** about the topic enables the brain to connect new information to pre-existing information.
- Previewing the text through **skimming and scanning** pictures, graphs, bold font, heading, captions, etc prepares the brain for specific types of information.
- During reading, breaking the text into **small chunks, slowing down and re-reading** are helpful strategies, re-read.

Survey the headings

- In the assigned text selection, read each heading and subheading.
- For each heading and subheading, try to answer the following questions:
 - What do I already know about this topic?
 - What information might the writer present?

Connect

- Ask yourself, how do the headings relate to one another?
- Write down the key words from the headings that might provide connections between them.

Read the text

- As you read, look for words and phrases that express important information about the headings.
- Mark the text to point out important ideas and details.
- Stop to make sure that you understand the major ideas and supporting details.
- If you do not understand, reread.

Outline

- Using indentions to reflect structure, outline the major ideas and supporting details in the heading segment.
- Write the heading and then try to outline each heading segment without looking back at the text.

Look back

- Now, look back at the text and check the accuracy of the major ideas and details you wrote.
- Correct any inaccurate information in your outline.
- If you marked the text as you read, use this information to help you verify the accuracy of your outline.

All of the comprehension strategies are relevant for non-fiction texts:

- Making Connections
- Questioning
- Inferring
- Visualising
- Determining Importance
- Summarising
- Synthesising

Booklets about these strategies have previously been written and are available on the Northern Adelaide website. However, it is the intention of this document, to expand upon the strategies that are particularly relevant for non-fiction texts.

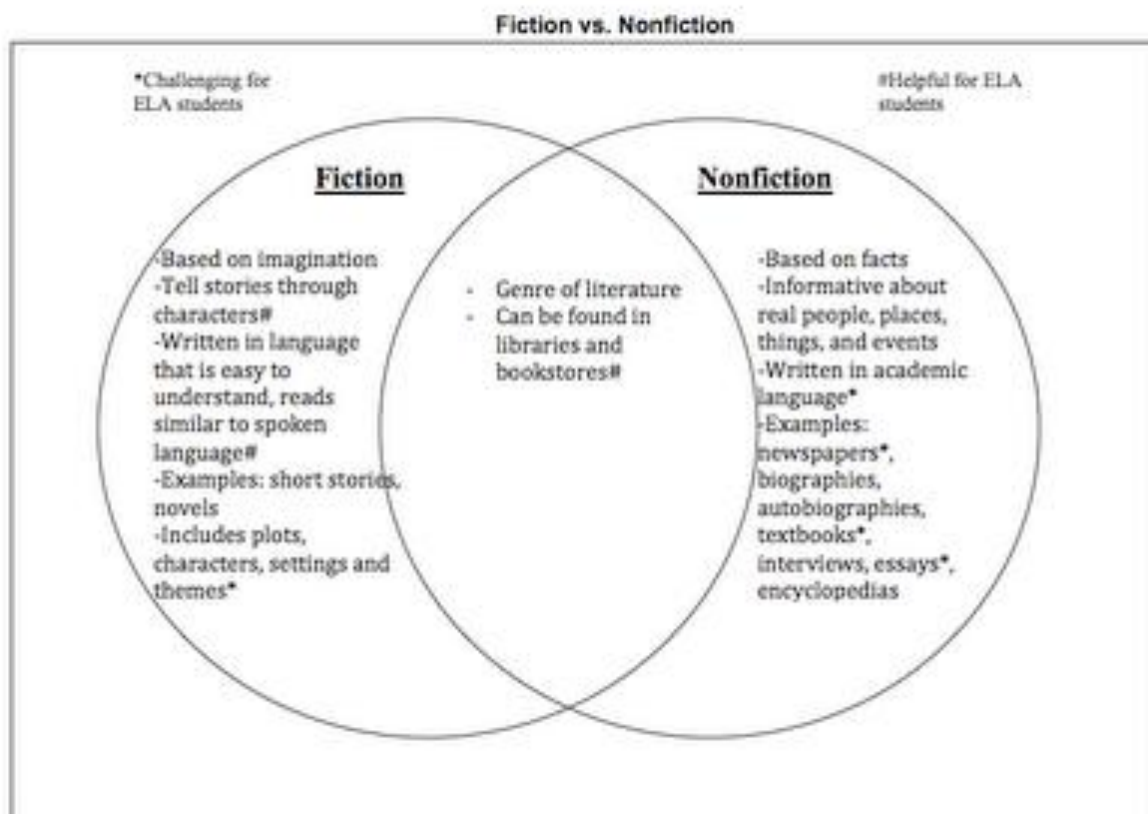
Aspects of non-fiction such as:

- Non-fiction text **types** (e.g. persuasive text, report, procedure etc)
- Non-fiction text **features** (e.g. captions, headings, photographs etc.)
- Non-fiction text **structures** (e.g. compare & contrast, sequence, cause & effect etc)
- **Content**
- **Vocabulary**

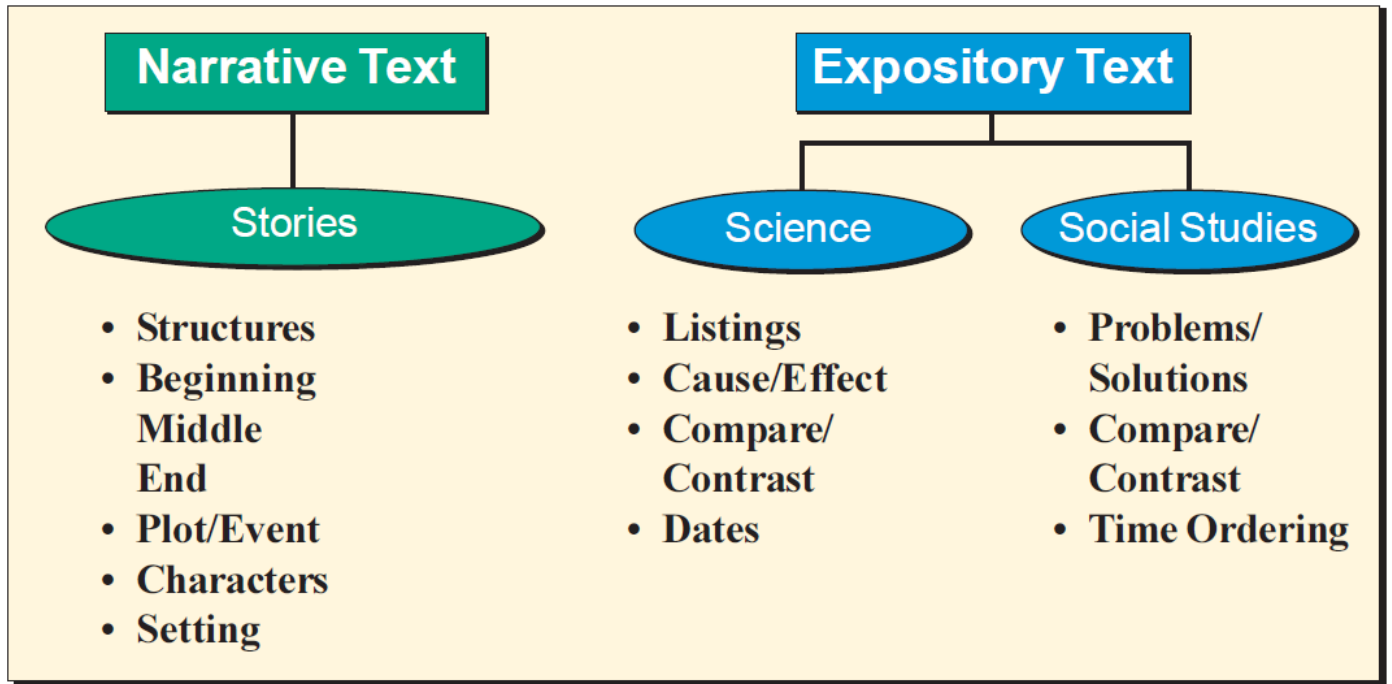
are all relevant for comprehension of non-fiction texts.

Fiction and Non-Fiction Texts

In general, fiction and non-fiction texts can be identified based upon a number of features. It is useful to provide students with the opportunity to compare examples of fiction and non-fiction texts on the same topic. For example, students could read and compare “The Three Bears” with a factual text about bears.



Understanding the Difference



Features of Non-Fiction texts

The following is a list of common features and their purposes. Your class context will determine the number and order in which you will teach them.

- **Labels** help the reader understand the small parts of a picture.
- **Photographs** help the reader see what the real topic looks like.
- **Captions** help the reader understand what they are looking at in a picture.
- **Comparisons** help the reader compare the item to something they are already familiar with.
- **Cross Sections** help the reader see what something looks like from the inside.
- **Maps** help the reader know where something is located in the world.
- **Types of Print** help the reader know that the word or words are important.
- **Close-Ups** help the reader see what something looks like from up close.
- **Tables of Contents** help the reader know how the book is organized.
- **Indexes** help the reader find specific information in a book.
- **Glossaries** help the reader understand the definitions of important words in the book.

The following page can be photocopied and made into a sorting activity where students match the non-fiction feature with its definition. This could be followed or preceded by activities where students are supported to identify features in a range of texts.

caption	text describing the contents of a picture, graph or chart
glossary	alphabetical list of key terms related to a subject
index	alphabetical list of topics included in the book and their corresponding page numbers; found in the very back
table of contents	a list of the parts of a book or document; placed at the front of the book, it's organised in the order in which the parts appear
heading	announces the topics that will be covered, a line of text serving to indicate what the passage below it is about
subheading	a heading given to a smaller subsection within a larger piece of writing
boldface type	dark letters indicating important information; reader must slow down and pay attention to these
italicised type	slanted letters indicating important information; reader must slow down and pay attention to these
preface	a statement at the front of the book by the book's author or editor, explaining its purpose and expressing appreciation for help received from others
sidebar	In informational text, boxed sections off to the side containing interesting, related information that can stand on its own.

Nonfiction Text Features

Fonts and Special Effects

- Titles
- Headings
- Boldface print
- Color print
- Italics
- Bullets
- Captions
- Labels

Textual Clues (words that signal)

- **Cause and effect:** since, because, etc.
- **Comparison and contrast:** likewise, however, etc.
- **Problem and solution:** one reason for that
- **Question and answer:** how, when
- **Sequence:** before, next, etc.

Illustrations and photographs

Graphics

- **Diagrams**
- **Cross-sections**
- **Maps**
- **Word bubbles**
- **Tables**
- **Charts**
- **Graphs**
- **Framed text**

Text Organizers


- **Page numbers**
- **Index**
- **Preface**
- **Table of contents**
- **Glossary**
- **Appendix**

Anchor Charts for the various non-fiction text features are useful for reference. Student-made charts are encouraged.

What is the purpose of the photo?

What is it? What is its purpose?

Training for the Journey



Caption's purpose?
Caption in the simulator

Introductory paragraph

The astronauts thought some of the training was interesting. They travelled to different places and met the people who made their spacecraft. They spent hundreds of hours in a *simulator*, that was like a *small video game*, where they could "crash" their spacecraft without getting hurt.

Italics

Sometimes they did not enjoy the training. One reason was they were often away from their families. Another reason was some of the training was very uncomfortable. For example, they

Labels


disliked being spun around in a huge machine like the gravitron at an amusement park. They nicknamed this machine "the wheel".

Bullet points

Some things the astronauts had to learn to do:

- control their spacecraft;
- get into a spacesuit and move around without tearing it;
- eat, drink, sleep, and even go to the toilet in space;
- find their way in space by looking at the stars;
- use special television equipment and cameras;
- collect rock and soil samples.

Diagram



An Apollo 11 spacesuit

What is the purpose of the labels and bullet points? Why has the writer made these choices?

http://www.ite.org.uk/ite_topics/writing_at_KS2-3/005.html

Non-Fiction Text Features

THIS IS AN INDEX


Index

Abjection, 34; identity and, 56
Abramovic, Marina, 41, 56
Abril, Victoria, 19
absence, 2
acedia, 43

An index is a page that shows you which page to find what word you want. It's at the back of the book.


THIS IS A SUBHEADING!

Stark signals arrival of twin grandsons



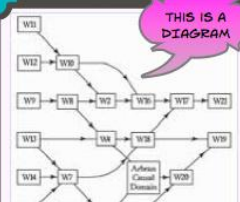
A subheading is a heading to show which subject the article beneath is about.

THIS IS A CAPTION!



Captions are writing underneath a photograph which helps you to know what the picture is. Like if you were reading about types of dolphins then the picture is two dolphins in the bottom says what it is.

THIS IS A DIAGRAM




A diagram is normally a drawing showing what something is and you need to read every caption to know what the diagram is about.

HAILING

<http://blogs.saschina.org/hailing01px2019/2011/03/17/non-fiction-text-features/>


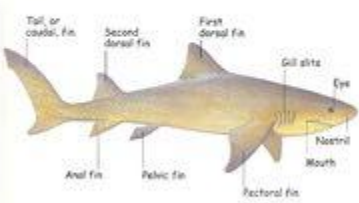

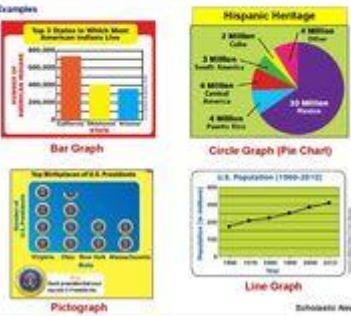

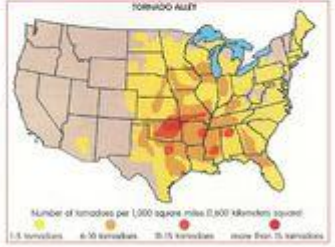
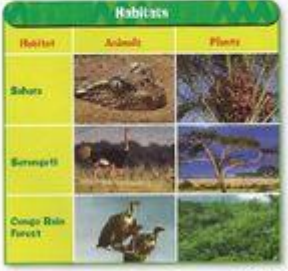

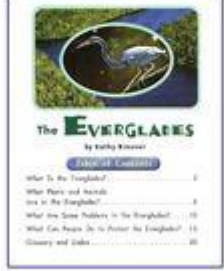


Light travels very quickly. The farther away from the car you are, the lighter the headlights appear. Notice how



There is a **border** around each state.

1

<p>Feature</p> <p>Caption</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>A caption is the words next to or underneath a picture that explain what it is or is about.</p> <p>Example</p>  <p>▲ This picture shows the Everglades today. You can see many buildings and canals.</p> <p><i>The Everglades</i> Kathy Kimmel</p>	<p>Feature</p> <p>Diagram</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>A diagram is a drawing that shows the parts of something.</p> <p>Example</p>  <p><i>The Bear Book of Sharks</i> Clare Lindelof</p>	<p>Feature</p> <p>Glossary</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>A glossary alphabetically lists new or important words and shows or tells what they mean.</p> <p>Example</p>  <p><i>Habitats of Africa</i> Bernice Rappoport</p>
<p>Feature</p> <p>Graph</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>A graph shows information in a visual way so that it is more easily understood by readers.</p> <p>Examples</p>  <p><i>Scholastic News</i></p>	<p>Feature</p> <p>Heading</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>A heading tells the reader what the section is about.</p> <p>Example</p>  <p><i>Extraordinary Animals</i> Arline Carter</p>	<p>Feature</p> <p>Map</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>A map is a picture that shows the location of things or places.</p> <p>Example</p>  <p><i>Remember, Have Eyes But Can't See</i> Marian and Gilda Berger</p>
<p>Feature</p> <p>Table</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>A table is a chart of information presented in a visual way. It is often used to compare things.</p> <p>Example</p>  <p><i>Habitats of Africa</i> Bernice Rappoport</p>	<p>Feature</p> <p>Photograph</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>A photograph is a picture made with a camera that shows how things look in real life.</p> <p>Example</p>  <p><i>Fighting Fire</i> Sasha Kukulski</p>	<p>Feature</p> <p>Table of Contents</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>A table of contents gives the heading and beginning page number of each section in a book.</p> <p>Example</p>  <p><i>The Everglades</i> Kathy Kimmel</p>

Full size A4 versions of these posters are available from

http://blogs.scholastic.com/top_teaching/2011/03/my-march-top-ten-list-nonfiction-reading-resources.html

Text Feature Scavenger Hunt

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bibliography | <input type="checkbox"/> Italic Print |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bold Print | <input type="checkbox"/> Map |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bullets | <input type="checkbox"/> Parentheses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caption | <input type="checkbox"/> Photograph |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colored Print | <input type="checkbox"/> Pronunciation Guide |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diagram | <input type="checkbox"/> Sidebar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fact Box | <input type="checkbox"/> Subheading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Glossary | <input type="checkbox"/> Table |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graph | <input type="checkbox"/> Table Contents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heading | <input type="checkbox"/> Timeline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illustration | <input type="checkbox"/> Title |

Name: _____

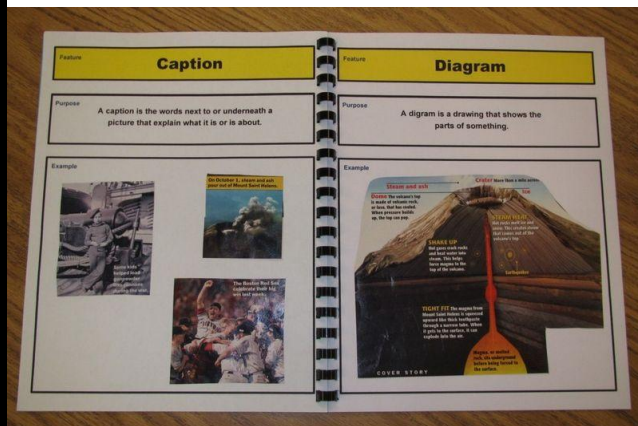
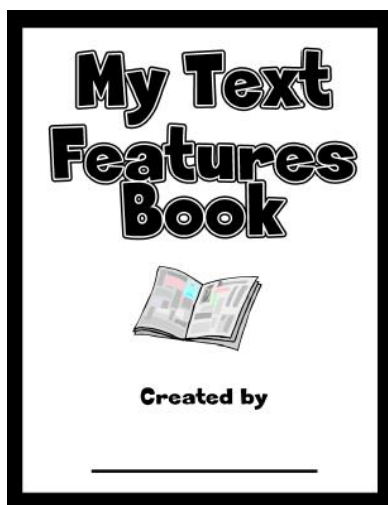
Using Text Features



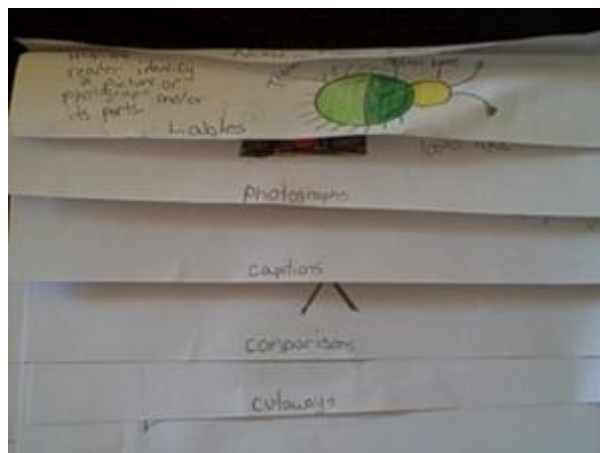
Text Feature	Title of Book	How Does the Text Feature Help You as a Reader?

Students can make their own booklets—a template can be downloaded from

http://blogs.scholastic.com/top_teaching/2011/03/my-march-top-ten-list-nonfiction-reading-resources.html



or a flip book similar to this one



Common Text Structures

- **Compare-Contrast Structure**

This type of text examines the similarities and differences between two or more people, events, concepts, ideas, etc.

- **Cause-Effect Structure**

This structure presents the causal relationship between an specific event, idea, or concept and the events, ideas, or concept that follow.

- **Sequence Structure**

This text structure gives readers a chronological of events or a list of steps in a procedure.

- **Problem-Solution Structure**

This type of structure sets up a problem or problems, explains the solution, and then discusses the effects of the solution.

- **Descriptive Structure**

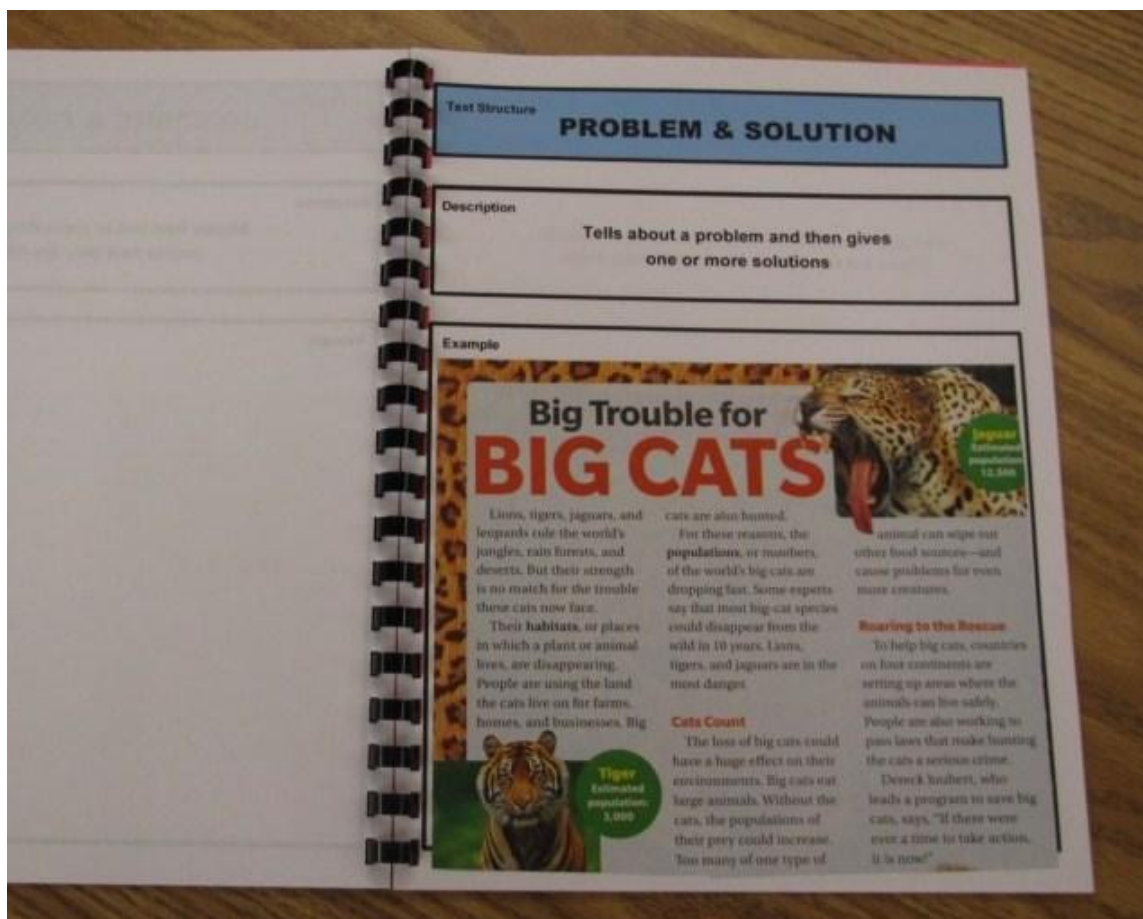
This type of text structure features a detailed description of something to give the reader a mental picture.

- **Question-Answer Structure**

This text starts by posing a question then goes on to answer that question.

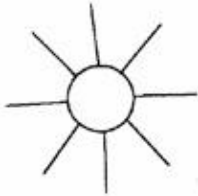
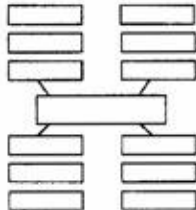
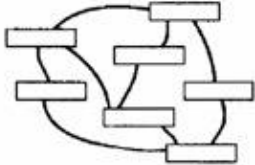
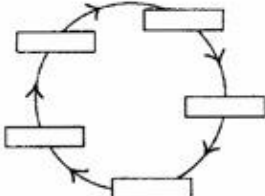
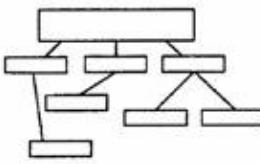


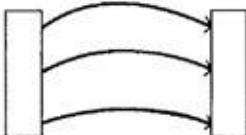
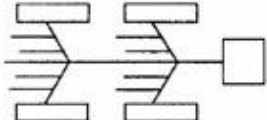
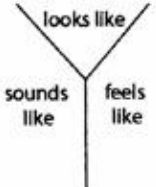
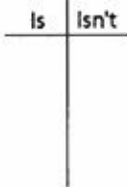
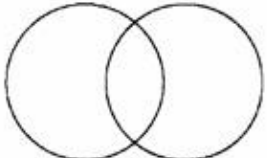
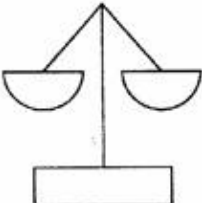
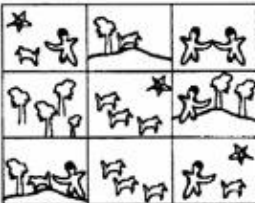

- **Cyclical Structure**

This structure starts with an event then progresses through a series until it is back to the beginning event.



Text Structures are often recognisable through signal words and can be summarised using a range of graphic organisers.

Making Thinking Visual with Graphic Organisers

KEY PURPOSE OF THE ORGANISER	SAMPLE GRAPHIC ORGANISERS		
Recalling, grouping, classifying, summarising ideas	 Spider diagram	 Affinity/cluster web	 Concept map
Sequencing events, ordering ideas	 Cycle circle	 Flow chart	 Twister
Showing causal links (cause and effect)	 Futures wheel	 Bridge	 Fishbone
Deeper analysis—dissecting an idea into specific components and exploring different attributes	 Y chart	 T chart	 Venn diagram
Planning and decision making or reviewing	 Scales	 Comic strip	 ECG graph

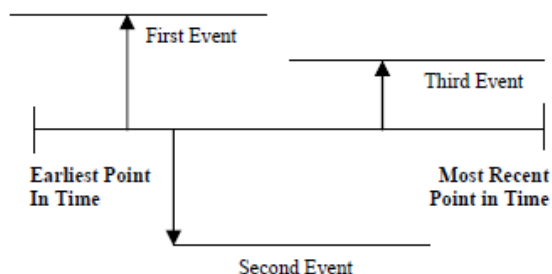
© K Murdoch & J Wilson 2004, *Learning Links*, Curriculum Corporation.

Students can practise finding the main text structure using short passages and summarising the information using graphic organisers.

Which passage is **chronological**?

Put information from the passage onto the graphic organizer.

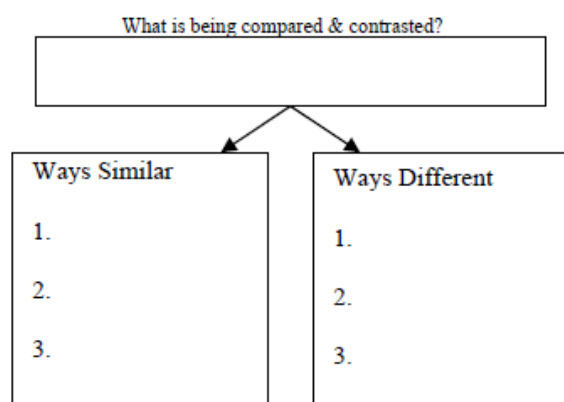
Passage Name: _____



Which passage is **compare and contrast**?

Put information from the passage onto the graphic organizer.

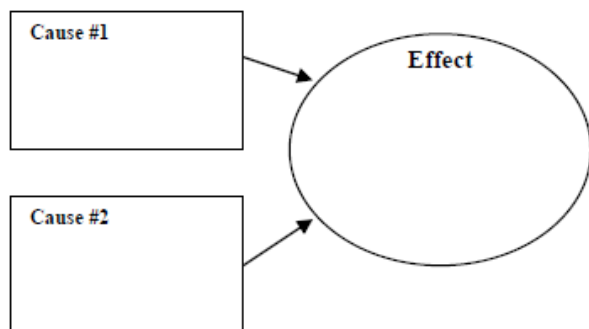
Passage Name: _____



Which passage is **cause and effect**?

Put information from the passage onto the graphic organizer.

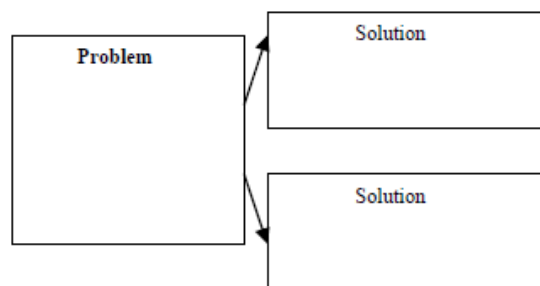
Passage Name: _____



Which passage is **problem and solution**?

Put information from the passage onto the graphic organizer.

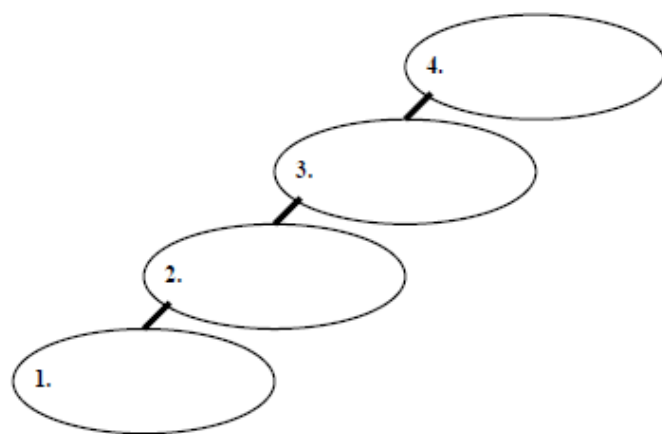
Passage Name: _____



Which passage is **sequence**?

Put information from the passage onto the graphic organizer.

Passage Name: _____



Text Structure

Description

A topic, idea, person, place, or thing is described by listing its features, characteristics, or examples.

Signal Words

for example, for instance, specifically, in particular, in addition

Sequential

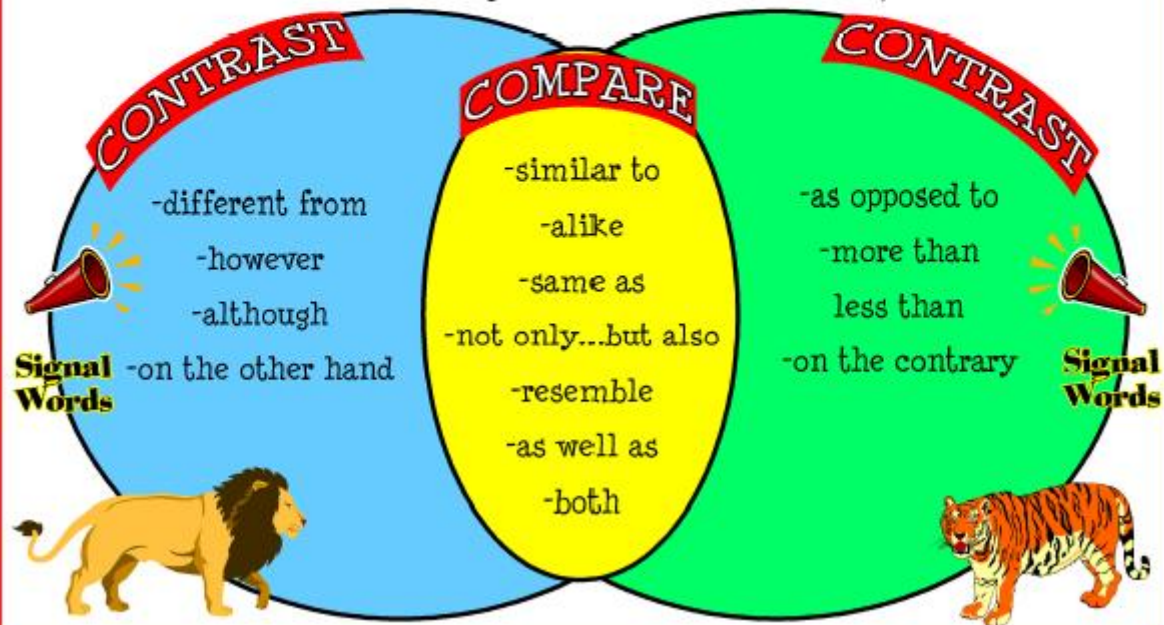
Describes events in order or explains the steps one must follow to do something or make something

Signal Words

first, second, next, last,
another, then, finally,
after that, before

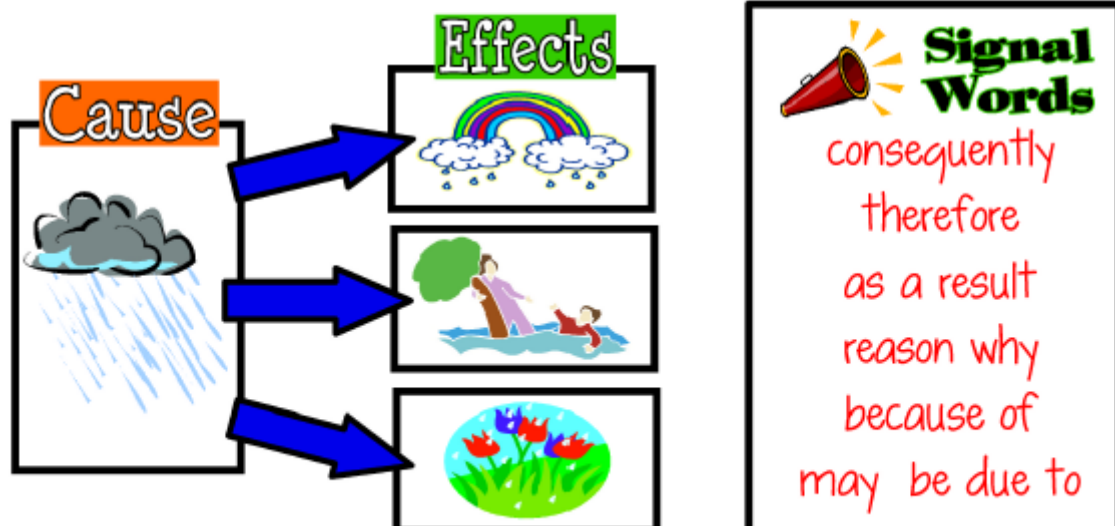
Text Structure Compare and Contrast

Shows how two or more things are alike and/or how they are different



Text Structure Cause and Effect

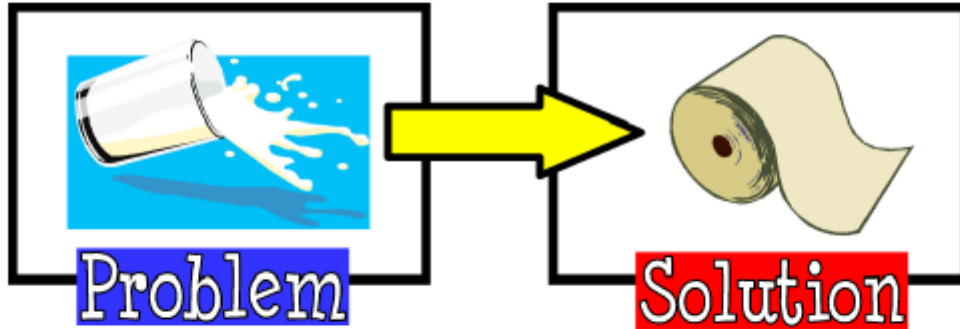
Shows relationship between **cause** (event) and **effect** (what happened because of the event)



Text Structure

Problem and Solution

Tells about a problem and then gives one or more solutions



Signal Words



consequently, therefore, as a result,
thereby, leads to, because of

Classroom Strategies

Explicit strategy instruction is at the core of good comprehension instruction. **"Before"** strategies activate students' prior knowledge and set a purpose for reading. **"During"** strategies help students make connections, monitor their understanding, generate questions, and stay focused. **"After"** strategies provide students an opportunity to summarize, question, reflect, discuss, and respond to text.

Teachers should help students to understand why a strategy is useful, how it is used, and when it is appropriate. Teacher demonstration and modelling are critical factors for success, and student discussion following strategy instruction is also helpful. The most frequently researched strategies can be applied across content areas.

Before Reading

- Anticipation Guide
- Collaborative-Strategic-Reading Learning Logs
- Concept Sorts
- First Lines
- Frayer Model
- List-Group-Label
- Listen-Read-Discuss
- Mnemonics
- Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS)
- Possible Sentences
- Think Alouds
- Think-Pair-Share

During Reading

- Concept Maps
- Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)
- Double-Entry Journals
- Inferential Reading
- Inquiry Chart
- Jigsaw
- Monitoring/Clarifying
- Paired Reading
- Paragraph Shrinking
- Partner Reading
- Power Notes
- Prediction Relay
- Reading Guides
- Reciprocal Teaching
- Seed Discussions
- Selective Highlighting
- Semantic Feature Analysis
- Story Maps
- Structured Notetaking
- SQ3R
- Text Structure
- Word Hunts

After Reading

- Exit Slips
- Frame Routine
- Question the Author
- Question-Answer Relationship
- RAFT Writing
- Summarizing

These activities are available from

http://www.adlit.org/strategy_library





Name _____

Topic _____

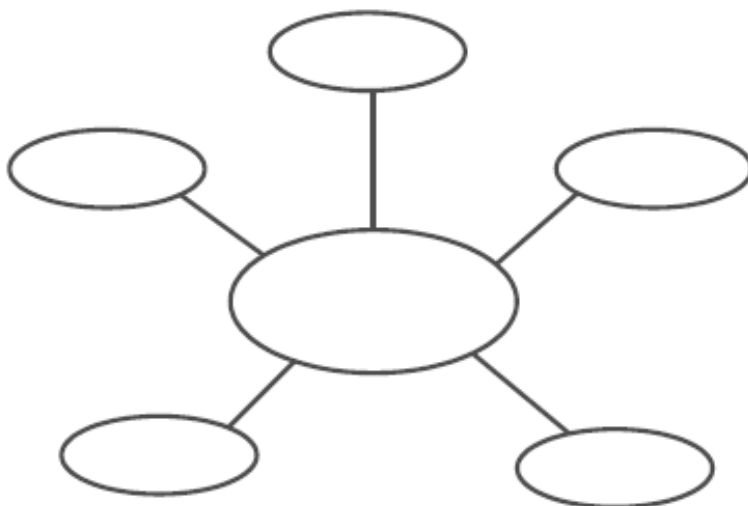
Read each statement below. Respond in the left column whether you agree (A) or disagree (D) with each statement. Think about why you agree or disagree, and be prepared to share.

Before Reading Agree/Disagree	Statement/Question	After Reading Agree/Disagree
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	
	6.	
	7.	
	8.	
	9.	
	10.	



Name _____

Use this map to organize your thoughts and make connections to your topic. Write the main idea in the center, and add supporting ideas or related topics in each surrounding oval. Continue to expand on your thoughts by adding more spokes to the map.





Name _____

Topic _____

Before Reading	Brainstorm	Predict
During Reading	What's the Gist?	
After Reading	Questions about main ideas	What I learned



Name _____

Topic _____

As you read the text, select a few phrases that you find meaningful or interesting. Write each phrase in the first column below, then write your reaction (a comment, question, connection made, or analysis) each quote in the second column.

Page in text	From the text	My thoughts



Exit Slips

Write one thing you learned today.

Name _____

Rate your understanding of today's topic on a scale of 1-10. What can you do to improve your understanding?

Name _____



First Lines

Name _____

Title _____

First line

Prediction

Explanation

Revision



Frame Routine

Name _____

Key Topic

is about...

Main Idea

Main Idea

Main Idea

Essential Details

Essential Details

Essential Details

Big Idea

Used with permission from the Stupski Foundation

Jigsaw Activity

Name _____

Topic _____

As you read and discuss with your group, write down important facts about your topic. After you have become an expert on your own topic, you will share your findings with a group of classmates, and learn about their topics as well.

Important Ideas

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Summary

Other Facts

**Inquiry Chart (I-Chart)**

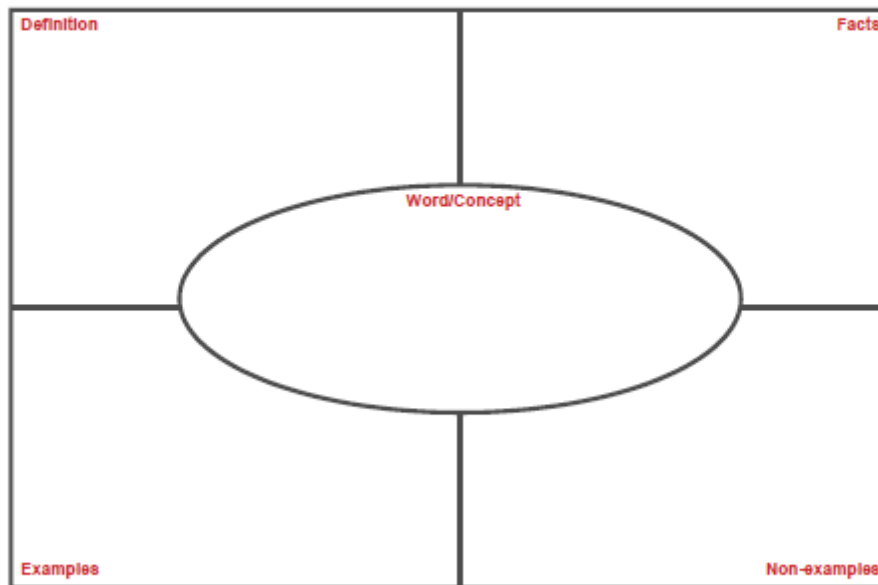
Name _____

Topic _____


	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Other Interesting Facts	New Questions
What We Know						
Source 1						
Source 2						
Source 3						
Summaries						

**Fruyer Model**

Name _____



READING REMINDERS



BEFORE I READ

Preview the Text (Look at all the text features—pictures, captions, charts, graphs, bold print, text boxes, etc.)

Make Predictions (What do you think you will learn after reading the text?)

Set the Purpose (Why did the author write the text?)

WHILE I READ

Make Connections (As you read think of how it relates to what you already know about the topic.)

Create Stopping Points (Divide the text into 3 to 4 sections—stop reading at the end of each section and summarize what you have read.)


Reread (If you do not understand what you are reading then stop go back to the text and reread it.)

AFTER I READ

Check Yourself (Retell or write down what you remember from the text.)

Be a Critic (Did you like or dislike the text? Why?)

Use It (Use the information to teach someone else.)



1.	
2.	
3.	

1.	
2.	

1.	
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Name:	
Date:	

Directions for Teacher:
 Give each student an exit slip and tell them to think of 3 things they learned today that were new to them; 2 things they still don't understand; and 1 thing that they enjoyed or found interesting about the lesson.

New Information I Learned (Include pg. #)	Questions I Had Along the Way (Include pg. #)
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.