

Plot the Course: Understanding Text Features in Nonfiction Text

Resources for the Adult Education Practitioner



Webinar Handbook, October 24, 2018

Institute for the Professional Development of Adult Educators

RESOURCES FOR THE ADULT EDUCATION PRACTITIONER

Plot the Course: Understanding Text Features in Nonfiction Text

Rod Duckworth, Chancellor
Career and Adult Education, Department of Education

Carol Bailey, Director
Adult Education

June Rall, Director of IPDAE

Tamara Serrano, Project Support Specialist for IPDAE

Resources Developed and Designed By
Bonnie Goonen, National Consultant for Florida IPDAE



This training event is supported with federal funds as appropriated to the Florida Department of Education, Division of Career and Adult Education for the provision of state leadership professional development activities.

Institute for the Professional Development of Adult Educators
3209 Virginia Avenue - Fort Pierce, FL 34981
Phone 772-462-7409 • E-mail info@floridaipdae.org

Table of Contents

Guiding Questions	1
Types of Nonfiction	2
Features of Informational (Nonfiction) Text.....	3
Introducing Nonfiction Text Features	4
Text Feature Questions for Higher-Order Thinking.....	5
Nonfiction Scavenger Hunt	7
Newspaper Scavenger Hunt.....	8
Teaching Text Structure	9
20 Strategies to Teach Text Structure	10
Websites	12
Nonfiction Text Structures	14

Guiding Questions

Think about the following guiding questions as you participate in today's session. Write down your thoughts and be prepared to share your ideas.

Slide(s)	Guiding Questions	My Thoughts
4	Think about what you want to take-away from this session.	
6-7	What are three types of non-fiction text structures?	
8	Why should text structure be taught?	
10	What does the domain name "craft and structure" imply for reading skills assessed by the TABE 11/12?	
15	Why do students find reading nonfiction text to be difficult?	
17	What's the difference between text features and text structure?	
21-22	Why is it important that readers can recognize and understand text structures?	
38	What is one strategy/activity that you use to teach nonfiction text features? Text structure?	
45	Share one thing that you found most useful from this session.	

Types of Nonfiction

Type or Form	Traits	Author's Purpose
Autobiography or Biography (including journals and diaries)	Written about a person's life or one main event Has a plot Can be read in one sitting or have many chapters Can be public or private	To inform
Encyclopedia (Reference materials)	Information organized by topic Topics organized alphabetically The entries are short Used for research	To inform
Essay	Can be based on research or personal experience Can be read in one sitting Written in paragraph form	To inform To persuade To entertain
Letters	Can be formal or personal Communication between people	To inform To persuade To entertain
Speech	Can be based on research or personal experience	To inform To persuade To entertain
Feature Story (Narrative)	Focuses on one topic or main idea Has a plot	To inform To entertain
Interview	Recorded word for word Can be read in one sitting May be written in bulleted format or like a drama	To inform To entertain
Newspaper Articles (Periodicals)	Short Can be read in one sitting Focuses on one topic or main idea	To inform To entertain
Textbook	Information organized by topic Used for reference Organized chronologically	To inform
Report	Description of the characteristic of something	To inform

Features of Informational (Nonfiction) Text

Print Features		
Font Bold print Colored print Highlighting Bullets	Bullets Titles Headings Subheadings	Italics Labels Captions Guide Words
Graphic Aids		
Diagrams Sketches Graphs Figures	Maps Charts Tables	Cross-sections Timelines overlays
Organizational Aides		
Table of contents Index Footnotes	Glossary Preface Sidebars	Pronunciation guide Appendix
Illustrations		
Colored photographs Colored drawings	Black and white photos Black and white drawings	Labeled drawings/diagrams

Introducing Nonfiction Text Features

After being introduced to nonfiction text features, provide students with time to practice identifying text features within nonfiction text. Once students start deliberately looking for text features, they will be surprised how easy it is to find them in nonfiction text. It is important to provide engaging, thought-provoking activities that direct students as they are looking for text features.

This activity simply requires a nonfiction book for each student or group, and post-it notes.

1. Give each student or group post-it notes and a nonfiction book that has plenty of text features.
2. Have each group use the post-it notes to label text features they found in their nonfiction books.
3. Have students or groups compare the text features they found with other groups.
4. For a higher level of thinking, have students include why the text feature helps the reader on their post-it notes.

This activity is low prep yet engaging, and it provides good practice in identifying text features within a text. It can be repeated multiple times with different books. As students become more familiar with the different text features, you can start asking them higher-level thinking questions about text features.

Text Feature Questions for Higher-Order Thinking

When questioning students about text features, it is important to encourage students to think beyond knowledge and recall questions and into more higher-order thinking questions. Below are some text features questions for each of the levels in Bloom's Taxonomy.

Knowledge

- List all of the text features you found on this page.
- Circle the heading.
- Describe the diagram.
- Draw an example of bold letters.
- Explain where you would find the table of contents of a book.
- Point at the bullet points on the page.

Comprehension

- Explain what a table is in your own words.
- How is a photograph and an illustration different?
- How are captions and labels alike?
- Which text feature best supports the main idea of this paragraph?
- What text feature should you use to figure out the meaning of a word: an index or a glossary?
- Based on the text features in this book, what do you think the book will be about?

Application

- How could you use the title or headings of this book to predict the main idea?
- In what other situations would bold letters be useful?
- What caption would you write for this photograph?
- What text features would you include if you were writing an article on basketball?
- Organize the information in this paragraph into a table or chart.
- Write an appropriate heading for this paragraph.

Analysis

- How do the text features on this page relate to each other?
- If you were asked to divide the text features on this page into 2 groups, how would you categorize them?
- What inference can you make about this book based on its text features?
- How do the text features on this page relate to the text?
- Compare and contrast two of the text features on this page.
- Explain the different parts of the diagram or chart. What text features are included within the diagram or chart?

Evaluation

- Which text feature was most useful in helping you understand the text?
- Which text feature was least helpful to you in understanding the text?
- Where in the text could the author have added a table, chart, or diagram?

- Which text feature is the most important to nonfiction books?
- Why did the author choose to add this text feature?
- Which text feature did the author use most effectively?

Synthesis

- Write a nonfiction article that includes at least 6 different text features.
- Create an additional text feature for this book.
- How would this book have been different if the author hadn't included any photographs or illustrations?
- Choose one of the text features on the page and write your own paragraph to support the text feature.
- What text feature could be added to help you understand the text better?
- How would the book have been different if the author had not included any headings or titles?

<https://teachingmadepractical.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Text-Features-Blooms-Taxonomy-Questions.pdf>

Nonfiction Scavenger Hunt

Use any nonfiction book to answer the text feature questions. If you cannot find a certain text feature, then put an x through that box.

<p>Look through the book. List all of the text features you found below:</p>	<p>Find a caption on a graphic or picture. What page is it on?</p> <p>How does the caption help you understand the graphic better?</p>	<p>Find a map. What page is it on?</p> <p>What does the map show you?</p>
<p>Find a photograph or illustration. What page is it on?</p> <p>Describe the picture.</p>	<p>Find a fact box or side bar. What page is it on?</p> <p>What extra information did the fact box give you?</p>	<p>Find a heading. What page is it on?</p> <p>Write the heading below:</p> <p>What do you think this section will be about?</p>
<p>Find a word or phrase that has been italicized. What page was it on?</p> <p>What is the word that has been italicized?</p> <p>Why do you think this word was italicized?</p>	<p>Find a table, chart, or graph. What page is it on?</p> <p>What extra information did it give you?</p>	<p>If you had been the author, what text feature would you have added to the book?</p> <p>Why?</p>

Newspaper Scavenger Hunt

Task: The newspaper is a great source of information about what is happening in your town and around the world. The newspaper contains all kinds of graphic sources and text features. It is also a great place to have a scavenger hunt. Your job today is to work with your group and create a poster that contains examples of items listed on your scavenger hunt form. Make sure to include a title for your poster and label all of your examples. On your scavenger hunt form, include a few ideas on how these features help you better comprehend what you have read.

Text Feature	How does it help me better comprehend?
Title of Newspaper	
Date of Newspaper	
Caption	
Photograph	
Bold Print	
Name of a Sports' Reporter	
Weather Map	
Title of Article	
Subheading	
Titles of the Sections of the Newspaper	
Quote	
Graph or Chart	
Different Size Font (Print)	

Teaching Text Structure

Introduce the idea that expository texts have a text structure.

- Explain to students that expository texts—such as science or social studies—have different organizational patterns. These organizational patterns are called text structures.

Introduce the following common text structures—description or list, compare/contrast, cause and effect, and order/sequence.

- Explain that text structures can often be identified by certain **signal words**.

Show examples of texts that correspond to each text structure.

- Have student find **signal words** within the paragraphs.

Examine topic sentences that clue the reader to a specific structure.

- Look for the signal words that are associated with each text structure.

Text structures help you when you read and when you write.

- Show examples of paragraphs/texts that have signal words and how you can structure your own writing using signal words to help the reader understand your thoughts.
- Model the writing that uses a specific text structure.

Have students try writing paragraphs on their own that follow a specific text structure.

- Writing paragraphs that follow certain text structures will help students recognize these text structures when they are reading.
- For students who are proficient with paragraph organization, do steps 3–6 with longer chunks of text or entire chapters and articles.

Remember: Identifying patterns of organization is NOT the ultimate goal of text structure teaching. This ability is only beneficial as students internalize knowledge about text structure and subsequently use it to enhance their comprehension. Teach students to use text structures to improve their reading comprehension and writing organization

20 Strategies to Teach Text Structure

Shared by: **Kristi Orcutt**, Reading & Writing Consultant, kristio@essdack.org

1. **Discuss with students that writers use text structures to organize information.** Introduce the concept to them, and reinforce it every time students read and write.
2. **Introduce and work on text structures in this order:** description, sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect, and compare and contrast.
3. **Skim and scan to predict text structure(s).** Make predicting possible text structures a part of every pre-reading activity.
4. **Teach the signal words for each text structure.** Prior to reading, skim and scan passages and make predictions about text structure. During reading, analyze text and revise predictions about structure.
5. **Teach and model the use of graphic organizers to go with each text structure.** Identify text structures in advance and provide appropriate advanced organizers. For example, the teacher models charting the structure of specific paragraphs while reading and also provides practice in using the graphic organizer to write different text types.
6. **Scaffold instruction using the gradual release of responsibility model.** Spend quality instructional time in each phase of the model when teaching text structure strategies. For example, the teacher uses a think-aloud strategy to model for *demonstration*. The teacher then invites students to participate for *shared demonstration*. Then, students practice with teacher support for *guided practice*. Finally, students apply the skills and strategies they have learned for *independent practice*.
7. **Provide explicit instruction.** For example, the teacher shows students specifically how and when to use strategies such as attending to signal words while reading different content areas or using signal words when writing expository text.
8. **Model a think-aloud strategy.** The teacher reads aloud a paragraph, pausing at appropriate points to share her own comprehension strategies and understanding of the text. Next the teacher might move to a shared-reading strategy, encouraged students to talk aloud as they engage in the process with the teacher. For example, the teacher asks students to talk about the clues they use to try to identify the text structure.
9. **Ask focusing questions targeting text structure.** Teachers can use focusing questions as a means of scaffolding the use of strategies or assisting students in the think-aloud process. For example, the teacher asks a student which signal word might be best to show a particular relationship among ideas in a text structure.

10. **Use and create non-linguistic representations.** For example, during reading the teacher models the drawing of a series of pictures to represent a sequence described in the passage.
11. **Create and provide pattern guides and teacher-made organizers that reflect that structure of the original text.** These tools help students focus on the key elements of the reading selection.
12. **Present students with a *completed* graphic organizer as a pre-reading strategy.** Have students write a probable paragraph using a predicted text structure prior to reading. After reading, compare students' probable passages and the original text.
13. **Write using the text structures.** While students watch, the teacher models writing a paragraph using a particular text structure and describes her actions as she is writing. Then students write their own paragraphs using text structure/ paragraph frames as templates.
14. **Make the connection between reading and writing.** When students read an example of a particular text structure, have them write using that same text structure. Writing can be done as a pre-reading or post-reading strategy.
15. **Rewrite a paragraph or passage using a different text structure than the original.** Compare the two and analyze why the author might have chosen the original pattern.
16. **Read and analyze a variety of text, both single-structure passages and multi-structure passages.** Use every opportunity that students read as an opportunity to teach text structure.
17. **Have a text structure treasure hunt** with a newspaper, classroom magazine, nonfiction book, textbook chapter, or students' independent reading material.
18. **Use summary frame questions to guide students' comprehension before, during, and after reading.** Each organizational structure suggests questions which readers should consider *as they are reading* and be able to answer *once they've finished reading* the passage.
19. **Use text coding strategies – highlighters, post-it notes, etc. – targeting text structures.** Remember to model these strategies in advance and be consistent in your procedures (same color each time, etc.).
20. **Use text structure sorts to compare different paragraphs on a single topic.** Begin by analyzing and sorting only one text structure at a time, then add additional structures as students gain skills.

Websites

- AdLit <http://www.adlit.org/strategies/23336/>
- Pure Text Paragraphs. Smekens Education (easy readability) <https://www.smekenseducation.com/Teach-Readers-to-Discern-Text-S.html>
- https://www.smekenseducation.com/188c688460_sites/www.smekenseducation.com/files/PURE_TEXT_Examples_Short_Passages_for_Introduction_PDF.pdf
- E-Reading Worksheets <https://www.ereadingworksheets.com/text-structure/>
- This Reading Mama (from the field) <https://thisreadingmama.com/teaching-text-structure-to-readers/>
- Text Features Chart. Teaching Made Practical (from the field) <https://teachingmadepractical.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/text-features-chart.pdf>

A Few Videos to Get Started

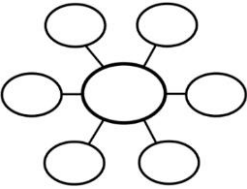
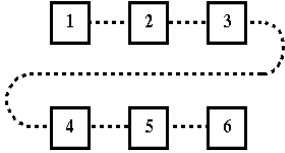
- Nonfiction Text Features. The Bespeckled Librarian <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mAl9QMJJTo>
- The Five Types of Text Structure. Flocabulary/ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kWGQ-ipBY>
- Fun Animation Explaining How to Compare and Contrast Nonfiction Texts <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pRlaKq3L5I>

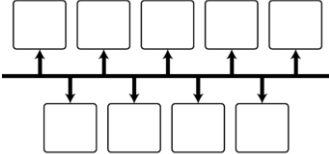
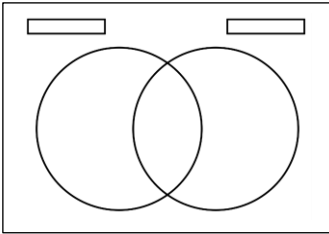
IPDAE Lesson Plans

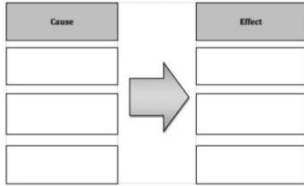
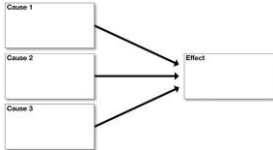
- Informational Text: It Reads Differently http://www.floridaipdae.org/dfiles/resources/lessons/ABE/Reading_Lesson_Plans/Reading_Informational_Text_It_Reads_Differently.pdf
- Understanding Nonfiction Text <http://www.floridaipdae.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=resources.ABE&cagid=3759753C58E539FFCA320E2EED274B5DEA2F17A74B248E13458FF457213BA82C>

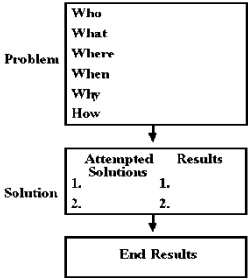
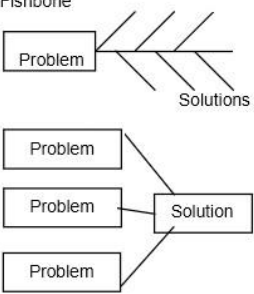


Nonfiction Text Structures

Structure	Definition	Signal Words	Graphic Organizer	Examples of Topics	Summary Questions	Paragraph Frames
Description	<p>The author explains a topic, idea, person, place or thing by listing characteristics, features, and examples.</p> <p>Provides main ideas and supports them with descriptive details</p>	<p>for example, in describing, properties of, for instance, characteristics include, such as, specifically, in addition, in particular, looks like, most important, consists of</p>		<p>Provide a detailed definition of "democracy."</p> <p>What is figurative language?</p> <p>Write a memo that describes a corporate disaster.</p>	<p>What specific person, place, thing, event, or concept is being described?</p> <p>How is the topic described? (How does it work? What does it do? What does it look like?)</p> <p>What are the most important attributes or characteristics?</p> <p>How can the topic be classified? (For example, a robin can be classified as a type of bird.)</p>	<p>A ____ is a type of _____. It is made up of _____ and looks like _____. Some _____ have _____, such as _____. For example: _____.</p> <p>____ has several characteristics. One characteristic is _____. Another characteristic is _____, which is important because _____.</p>
Sequence and Order	<p>The author lists items or events in numerical or chronological order.</p> <p>Describes the order of events</p>	<p>before, in the beginning, to start, first, next, during, after, then, finally, last, in the middle, in the end, prior to, simultaneously,</p>	<p>Bridging Snapshots</p> 	<p>A science lab report</p> <p>An explanation of how to solve a complex, multi-step math problem(s).</p> <p>A business proposal</p>	<p>What sequence of events is being described?</p> <p>What are the major events or incidents that occur?</p>	<p>Here is how a ____ is made. First, _____. Next, _____. Then, _____. Finally _____.</p> <p>On (date) ____ happened. Prior to that ____ was _____. Then,</p>

	<p>or how to do or make something.</p>	<p>following, on (date), at (time), directions</p>		<p>A fitness plan</p>	<p>What are the steps, directions, or procedures to follow? (What must be done first, second, etc..?)</p> <p>What is the beginning event?</p> <p>What other events or steps are included?</p> <p>What is the final outcome, event, or step?</p>	<p>____. After that ____.</p> <p>Simultaneously ____.</p> <p>In the end, ____.</p>												
<p>Compare and Contrast</p>	<p>The author explains how two or more things are alike and/or how they are different.</p> <p>Presents ideas and examines how they are alike/different</p>	<p>similar, alike, same, just like, both, different, unlike, in contrast, on the other hand, whereas, although, differs from, similar to, on the other hand, either, or, not only, but also, yet,</p>	<p>Compare/Contrast Matrix</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="810 867 1150 1026"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Name 1</th> <th>Name 2</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Attribute 1</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attribute 1</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attribute 1</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> 		Name 1	Name 2	Attribute 1			Attribute 1			Attribute 1			<p>Compare-contrast how plants and animals respire.</p> <p>Compare-contrast Oedipus and Creon as leaders.</p> <p>Compare-contrast the major elements in Christianity and Buddhism.</p>	<p>What items are being compared?</p> <p>What is it about them that is being compared?</p> <p>What characteristics of the items form the basis of the comparison?</p> <p>What characteristics</p>	<p>____ and ____ are alike in several ways. Both ____ and ____ have similar ____.</p> <p>Both also ____ as well as ____.</p> <p>On the other hand, one way they differ is ____.</p> <p>Another difference is ____.</p> <p>Although they share ____, only ____ is the __-est.</p>
	Name 1	Name 2																
Attribute 1																		
Attribute 1																		
Attribute 1																		

					do they have in common; how are these items alike?	
					In what way are these items different?	
Cause and Effect	Provides reasons for why or how something happens.	because, so, so that, if... then, consequently, thus, since, for, for this reason, as a result of, therefore, due to, this is how, leads to, nevertheless, and accordingly, reasons why, effects of, caused by, outcome, impact, influenced by, brought about by	<p>Graphic Organizer: Cause and Effect</p>  	How and why do plants grow? How and why do totalitarian governments form?	<p>What happened?</p> <p>Why did it happen? What was the reason for . . . ?</p> <p>What was the effect(s) of the event? What happened as a result of. . . ?</p> <p>What were the results or outcomes caused by the event?</p> <p>In what ways did prior event(s) cause or influence the main event?</p> <p>Will this result always happen from these causes?</p>	<p>The reason why ___ happened was because of ____. If ___ hadn't happened, then _____. Due to _____ occurring ____. This explains why _____.</p> <p>The cause of ___ is not easy to define. Some people think the cause is _____. Others believe the main cause is _____. Understanding the cause of ___ is important because _____.</p> <p>The effects of ___ are significant because _____. One effect of ___ is _____. Another result is _____. Because of these outcomes, it is important that _____.</p>

<p>Problem and Solution</p>	<p>The author states a problem and lists one or more possible solutions to the problem.</p> <p>May also include the pros and cons for the solutions.</p> <p>Identifies a problem and offers solutions</p>	<p>problem, trouble, struggle, dilemma, puzzle is, solution, issue, cause, since, consequently, therefore, as a result, because of, leads to, due to, solve, so, bright spot, answer, then, because, one challenge is . . . , one possible solution is . . . , if . . . then, thus</p>	<p>Problem/Solution Outline</p>  <p>Fishbone</p> 	<p>What should be done about global warming?</p> <p>How can the Federal Reserve help keep economic crises from spinning out of control?</p>	<p>What is the problem(s)?</p> <p>Who had the problem?</p> <p>What is causing the problem?</p> <p>Why is this a problem?</p> <p>What is wrong and how can the problem be solved?</p> <p>What solutions are recommended or attempted?</p> <p>What can be improved, changed, fixed, or remedied?</p> <p>What are the pros and cons of the solutions offered?</p>	<p>___ had/is a problem because ____. One possible solution is ____. This answer is good because ____. Therefore, ____. As a result, ____.</p> <p>The problem of ___ really boils down to the issue of ____. In the past, the common solution was to ____. However, this was only effective in terms of ____. There are now other solutions that might work. One option would be to ____.</p>
-----------------------------	---	--	---	---	--	---

Adapted from charts by R. Lynette, K. Hess, C. Simoneau, K. Orcutt, T. Conrade