

Standard Five: Text Structure in Informational Text

Teammate #1

Three Shifts In Comprehension and Vocabulary

- **Shift One:** Building knowledge through **content-rich nonfiction**
 - Because informational text is emphasized so prominently in the standards, it is important to make the distinction between different types of texts and text structure. The Standards divide text into two main text types: literature and informational text.

Here are a few important clarifications.

- First, informational text is a broad category that includes the subgenres of exposition, argument, and functional text. Informational text comes in many different forms, including books, magazines, handouts, brochures, CD-ROMs, journal articles, technical texts (directions, forms, and information displayed in graphs, charts, or maps), and Internet resources, and it focuses on many different topics, including those related to history, social studies, science, arts, and technical subjects.
- Second, the standards include literary nonfiction as a type of informational text and include autobiographies, biographies, memoirs, personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art or literature, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts (including digital sources) written for a broad audience. It is distinguished by literary techniques and artistic vision.
- Third, it is important to note that while much of literary nonfiction follows a narrative text structure, at grades 6-12 the Standards emphasize arguments (such as those in the Founding Documents) and other literary nonfiction that is built on informational text structures rather than narrative literary nonfiction that are structured as stories (such as memoirs or biographies).

Teammate #2

The five most common informational text structures that students encounter in their reading are description, sequence or chronology, problem-solution, compare and contrast, and cause and effect.

There are additional text structures that can be introduced and studied in the upper grade levels once students master and consistently use knowledge of the basic structures to improve their comprehension. These would include proposition-support, judgment/critique, and inductive/deductive.



Multiple studies have also confirmed findings that are important to keep in mind as we think about the role of text structure instruction in improving comprehension:

- spending time on text structure instruction does not negatively impact the amount of content learned; and
- direct instruction in one type of text structure does not improve a student’s ability to use other text structure types in comprehending text.

Teammate #3

This increased focus on reading informational text will need teachers in all content areas to provide explicit, direct instruction in how to read the informational text required in their disciplines. Teaching students strategies for using text structure knowledge to organize, remember, and understand information will be key in helping students meet the literacy demands of college- and career-level texts.

Teachers face two common roadblocks in teaching text structure. Teachers can collaborate to compile examples, develop lessons based on current curricula, and even practice text structure instruction. A school-wide or district-wide collaborative approach to providing text structure instruction can improve students’ comprehension of grade-level informational text within and across disciplines.

- finding time to identify informational texts they can use for reviewing and practicing the various text structures
- planning lessons that help students apply text structure knowledge to their content area reading for each structure during or after reading; and
- using graphic organizers to help find, organize, and remember the content.

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