The difficulties students have with school reading assignments are caused by a variety of skill-related issues. Many students have trouble understanding an author’s ideas because they haven’t learned how to mentally organize these ideas while reading. They may not have had much experience with the topic and don’t know how to make meaningful and personal connections to new ideas while reading. Many students label an assignment as “too hard” or “boring” because they lack the effective reading and self-discipline skills needed to persevere and succeed.

There are many aspects to consider when teaching reading in the content areas. The following strategies to help students become better readers of dense, expository text, like that found in most of our content area textbooks, will be addressed in this packet and are suitable strategies for teachers in all content areas at any level of instruction:

- **Pre-reading strategies**
  - Anticipation/Reaction Guides
  - Prediction Guides

- **During-reading strategies**
  - Question-Answer Relationships
  - Reciprocal Teaching

- **Post-reading strategies**
  - Informational Text Frames
  - Structured Note-Taking

- **Integrated reading strategies**
  - K-W-L Chart
  - SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review)

- **Vocabulary strategies**
  - CODE Approach to Vocabulary Acquisition
  - Frayer Model

- **Recognizing Text Structures:** Narrative, Definition, Description/List/Enumeration, Sequence, Comparison-Contrast, Cause-Effect, Problem-Solution, Question-&-Answer

- **Bibliography**
Pre-Reading Strategies

The purpose of the pre-reading phase of instruction is to activate, increase, and appraise students’ prior knowledge before reading to increase the quantity and quality of their comprehension. Teachers can help students to activate and build their prior knowledge in a variety of ways. Two strategies teachers can use are the Anticipation/Reaction Guide and the Prediction Guide.

Anticipation/Reaction Guide

The Anticipation (or Reaction) Guide consists of a set of opinion statements based upon the concepts, themes, and conflicts students will encounter in a text. Students indicate whether they agree or disagree with each statement; they must also justify their opinions. The statements themselves should incite controversy and should not have a right or wrong answer. Once students have responded to the Anticipation Guide, hold a pre-reading discussion on the statements, allowing students to share their beliefs and provide rationale for their opinions. After reading, turn the same set of statements into a Reaction Guide. This way, students compare their viewpoints before and after reading. They discuss whether their reading has reinforced their reasoning or has led them to change their responses.

Examples:

Health: Calories make you fat.

Physics: Light behaves more like a wave than a particle.

History: (Great Depression): It is a government’s obligation to provide for the basic needs of the unemployed.

Template for: Anticipation/Reaction Guide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text to be Read (Title &amp; Page #s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directions: Look over the following opinion statements related to the topic that you will be reading next. Mark whether you agree or disagree with the statement and then explain your reasons for thinking this way. Remember, these are opinion statements, so there is no right or wrong answer. After you have finished reading, evaluate the statements again, &amp; record your new thinking, especially differences from what you originally thought.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement #1:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before Reading □ Agree □ Disagree After Reading □ Agree □ Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for your thinking:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before Reading:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Reading:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement #2:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before Reading □ Agree □ Disagree After Reading □ Agree □ Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for your thinking:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before Reading:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Reading:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prediction Guide

Prediction Guides are similar to Anticipation/Reaction Guides, except that they focus on facts rather than concepts, so, the statements are facts instead of opinions. In a Prediction Guide, students are given a set of statements based upon facts they will encounter in the text. Students then decide whether these statements are true or false. The prediction guide can be used as a gauge of students’ prior knowledge and can help the teacher plan and link new material with what students already know.

Example
Before reading the pages on slope, re-read the following statements and mark whether you believe they are true or false. Then write down a reason why you think this way.

1. The steepness of a hill can be expressed as a number. □ True □ False
2. It’s harder to rollerblade up a street with a slope of –1 than up one with a slope of +1. □ True □ False

Template for: Prediction Guide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text to be Read:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directions: Before reading, read the following statements and mark whether you believe they are true or false. Then write down the reasons why you think this way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement #1:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ True □ False</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for your thinking:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement #2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ True □ False</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for your thinking:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During-Reading Strategies
During reading, in order to find information, students should be applying the steps of the reading process (the thinking) that the teacher has modeled aloud. The goal during reading is to take students from a literal to a deeper level of textual comprehension. Two strategies teachers can use are Question-Answer Relationships and Reciprocal Teaching.

Question-Answer Relationships (QAR)
The QAR Strategy develops students’ skill of recognizing the relationships between questions and answers. Ultimately, students should be able to generate and answer their own questions that address multiple levels of understanding. Below are the four Question-Answer Relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN THE BOOK:</th>
<th>IN YOUR HEAD:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Right There:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Think and Search:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The answer is explicitly stated in the text. The question asks for details that are right there.</td>
<td>The answer will require integrating information from different areas in the text. The reader must think and search for related information in more than one sentence or paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ex:</strong> What did the third little pig use to build his house?</td>
<td><strong>Ex:</strong> What are some of the materials the 3 pig brothers used to build their homes?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Author and You:</strong></th>
<th><strong>On Your Own:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The answer is a combination of information that the reader already knows and what the author states in the text. The question asks for information from the author and you.</td>
<td>The answer will come from the reader’s own personal knowledge and experience. The question asks for an opinion or information from the reader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ex:</strong> Who does the third pig remind you of and why?</td>
<td><strong>Ex:</strong> What’s a tough decision you’ve had to make?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Steps to QARs:
1. Explain the two broad categories of questions (and the four subcategories) to students as an introduction to the QAR strategy.
2. Provide a reading selection and a set of questions about its content. Model the placement of the questions in the framework of the QAR model.
3. Next, divide the class into small groups and provide each with a reading selection and a set of questions. Have the groups place the questions in the QAR framework.
4. Finally, provide the groups with a new reading selection and ask them to develop questions from its content. Have the students evaluate their own questions in light of the QAR framework.

Template for Question-Answer Relationships

**In the Book QARs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Right There</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer in the text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Think &amp; Search</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Put it together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In My Head QARs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Author &amp; You</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer NOT in the text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>On My Own</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t even have to read the story</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reciprocal teaching is most useful for students who are able to read a text accurately but have limited understanding of what they read. Students are instructed about 4 strategies proficient readers use & given practice with them until they are well established. A significant part of this strategy is having students explain how they use the strategies. In effect, they assume the teacher’s role of generating questions, predicting, summarizing, and clarifying—hence, the term reciprocal teaching. It allows students to learn while doing, practicing the procedures while actually reading new text; it scaffolds or supports students as they develop reading strategies; and it allows students to provide support for each other.

Reciprocal Teaching Strategies:
1. **Generating questions** about what the reader does not know, needs to know, or would like to know. When questioning, a learner is exploring the meaning of the text in depth. It gives the learner an opportunity to 1) identify the kind of information that makes an appropriate question; 2) frame questions before, during and after reading; 3) offer possible solutions; 4) find relevant information to answer; 5) monitor their own comprehension; and 6) help other learners answer questions they have. Learners become much more involved in the reading activity when they are posing and answering questions themselves, rather than merely responding to pre-set questions. It is a means of self-checking.

2. **Predicting** where the text is going by combining information in the text with prior knowledge. The learner is anticipating what will come next in the text, based on appropriate prior knowledge and on the structure and content of the text. Predicting sets a purpose for reading (learners read to confirm or reject their hypotheses.). Predicting encourages learners to actively think ahead.

3. **Summarizing** means condensing the most important point(s) of the text. When summarizing, a learner is identifying and integrating important information presented in the text. In summarizing, the learner needs to 1) initially identify the most important content of the reading section; and 2) integrate and own the information for understanding.

4. **Clarifying** means clearing up a lack of understanding that poses a roadblock to comprehension. When clarifying, learners are dealing with difficulties in the text by being alert to unfamiliar vocabulary, text which is structured or set out in an unfamiliar way, new or difficult concepts, or when they lose track of the meaning. After recognizing the problem, learners can employ a "fix up strategy" to restore meaning, such as: re-reading, using the context of the passage, using their knowledge of written language (vocabulary, structure, grammar), or using a dictionary, thesaurus or other reference material to check facts or meaning.

Steps to Reciprocal Teaching:
1. Introduce the group to the approach (may take up to 5 sessions). Select a passage for which 3-4 members of your reciprocal teaching group have shown a partial understanding but have not exhibited mastery. Do not be concerned with reading level as much as the content of the passage. (However, for this strategy to really work, you need to find a passage that is authentic to you and your group.) Distribute copies of the selection to the class.

2. Explain the four reading skills that you will demonstrate: generating questioning, predicting; summarizing, and clarifying.

3. **Model each of these skills aloud** as you analyze the first paragraph of the document.

4. Divide the class into small groups. Assign each student in the groups one of the remaining paragraphs. Have the student "teach" (model aloud) the same four reading skills to the group, using their assigned paragraph.

5. Encourage discussion within the groups both during and after the student presentations. Ask students to identify the skills that they most and least effectively used.

**NOTE:** Follow with reciprocal teaching practice for at least twelve consecutive sessions. Research indicates that many sessions are needed. Gradually transfer the role of the teacher to the learners.
Post-Reading Strategies

Post-reading strategies help students reflect on what they have read to synthesize and apply their new understandings. Two strategies teachers can use are Informational Text Frames and Structured Note-taking.

Informational Text Sentence/Paragraph Frames

Expository sentence & paragraph frames are tools students can use to practice summarizing. They can also be used to review and reinforce specific content and to help students see different ways authors organize material in order to inform. They are based upon the five most common expository text structures: sequence, time-order, comparison-contrast, problem-solution, & cause-effect. Each text type comes with its own signal words and can be summarized with the use of a fill-in-the-blank paragraph that mimics the overall text organization. Students learn to use key transition elements that reflect appropriate text organizational structures.

How to Use It:
1. Create a sentence or paragraph frame that corresponds to the organization of details in the content passage to be read; make it as sophisticated as the text and students’ abilities dictate. Underline key portions in the text that signal the organization, such as the topic sentence, text frame language, transitions, and summary or conclusion. This step helps make the text frame template explicit for students.
2. Assign the reading selection and ask students to retell what they read.
3. Present the paragraph frame to students and ask them to fill in the missing information. Encourage students to discuss information not mentioned in the frame. The frame should also be adapted and tailored as needed to fit the current topic.
4. Have them work in groups to develop a template frame for a question they will be answering.

One – Sentence Summary Frames for Informational Text:

Description:
1. A _____ is a kind of _____ that _____.

Compare/Contrast:
2. x and y are similar in that they are both _____, but x, while y__________________.

Sequence:
3. _____ begins with _____, continues with _____, and ends with _____.

Problem/Solution:
4. _____ wanted _____, but _____, so _____.

Cause/Effect:
5. _____ happens because _____.
Sample Paragraph Frames for Informational Text:

**Description Frame:**
________________________________ could really best be described by the word _______________. One time s/he showed this was when _____________________________________________________________.

Another time s/he showed this was when _____________________________________________________________.

A quote from the text that proves that this person/character was very _______________ is as follows:
_______________________________________________________________________________________.

**Compare/Contrast Frame:**
The person/place/thing (Name the topic) ____________________________ was both similar to and different from ____________________________. It was similar to ____________________________ because
_______________________________________________________________________________________.

and also when _______________________________________________. In the text you can see this when
_______________________________________________________________________________________. The text
_______________________________ was different from ____________________________ because
_______________________________________________________________________________________. In the text
you can see this when _______________________________________________.

Overall, the two (Name the topic) people/places/things are more (Circle one) alike/different than they are (Circle one) alike/different.

**Time Order/Sequence Frame:**
In the text ____________________________, a number of important events/things happen in order to __________________. First, ___________________________________________________________________________.

Second, ___________________________________________________________________________. Next, ___________________________________________________________________________. After that, ___________________________________________________________________________.

Then, ___________________________________________________________________________.

**Problem/Solution Frame:**
______________________________________ is a problem because ________________________ and ____________________________________. As a result, ___________________________________________________________________________.

A possible solution to the problem of ____________________________ would be ____________________________ and ____________________________. While the opposition might say, ____________________________, this would be faulty reasoning because ____________________________ and ____________________________. Finally, (give BEST argument LAST), this solution would solve the problem because ___________________________________________________________________________. Please (end with a CALL TO ACTION – telling your audience what action you believe they need to take; or a prediction about the likely outcome of your proposed solution) ___________________________________________________________________________.

**Cause-Effect Frame:**
Because of ____________________________, ___________________________________________________________________________.

Finally, due to _____________________________, then ___________________________________________________________________________.

Had it not been for _____________________________, then ___________________________________________________________________________. This explains why ___________________________________________________________________________.

**Cause-Effect Frame:**
Because of ____________________________, ___________________________________________________________________________.

Finally, due to _____________________________, then ___________________________________________________________________________.

Had it not been for _____________________________, then ___________________________________________________________________________. This explains why ___________________________________________________________________________.


Post-Reading Strategies, cont.

**Structured Note-taking** is a note-taking strategy that offers students a visual framework that allows the mind to "see" relationships and patterns and can help them determine which information to include as they take notes. Initially, the teacher provides students with a graphic organizer that mimics the organizational pattern in the text to be read. (You may want to fill in parts of the organizer such as headings to provide more guidance in the beginning.) Students can share their work with a partner, explaining why they included or excluded certain information and justifying its location on the organizer. Eventually, students learn to devise their own organizers.

**How to Use It:**

1. **Instruct students in the various organizational patterns authors use.** Understanding these patterns improves understanding of text and also provides a structure for taking notes on the material. [See Text Structures.]

2. **Model structured note-taking aloud.** Give students a short passage for which you have already created a custom graphic organizer and model aloud how you would use it for note-taking.

3. **Next, assign a passage from the text, telling students to take notes.** Give each student a copy of a custom graphic organizer you have constructed just for that passage. (You may initially want to include major headings, so that students can be successful at ordering subordinate ideas on the graphic). After students have finished reading and note taking, encourage them to review their responses and make any needed revisions. Then have them share their work with a partner, explaining why they included certain information and justifying its position on the graphic.

4. **Once the exercise is complete, discuss the process** behind building the custom organizers. Engage students in a point-by-point discussion of responses to the organizer's prompts. Focus the discussion on any divergent analyses or interpretations.

5. **Point out that while subject matter may vary widely, text documents tend to fall into a limited number of easily recognized organizational schemas (e.g., chronological order, list and explain, define and give examples, compare and contrast, etc.).** Encourage students to recognize these organizational patterns in documents they read.

6. **Continue to scaffold student learning over time,** constructing graphics for students, but eventually leaving all of the boxes or circles empty for them to fill in. Then, **show students how to preview text** as the basis for constructing an accurate visual representation of the material.

7. **As students develop confidence with structured note-taking,** they will begin to develop their own visual frameworks.

**Examples of Structured Note-taking:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structured Note Taking for Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shivering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white spots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pain when warming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numbness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unconsciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of Structured Note-taking, cont.:

**Main Idea for Social Studies**

**TOPIC:**
Seven Years War

**MAIN IDEA:**
Soldiers faced many difficulties

**QUESTION:** What difficulties did the soldiers face during the Seven Years War?

**DETAILS**
1. Much spoiled food so many became sick.
2. Poor food supplies
3. Camps overcrowded and diseases, like typhoid fever, spread quickly.
4. Most soldiers had little military experience so they didn't know how to fight well.

**SUMMARY:** Soldiers faced many difficulties fighting in the Seven Years War.

---

**Native Americans**

**What problems did they face?**
- less land to live on

**What changes caused these problems?**
- increased number of settlers moving West

**What did they do to solve the problem?**
- agreed to treaties
Post-Reading Strategies, *cont.*

Structured Note-taking Graphic Organizers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graphic Organizers by Text Structure &amp; Writing Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAPHIC ORGANIZER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
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<td>[ ]</td>
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<td>[ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Integrated Strategies**

*Integrated strategies* provide a comprehensive framework for moving students through all atages of reading: pre-, during-, and post-reading. Two strategies teachers can use are: **KWL** (What I Know-Want to Learn-Learned) and **SQ3R** (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review).

**KWL**

KWL helps students predict and connect new information with prior knowledge. KWL can be used in class to brainstorm prior knowledge, to preview vocabulary and concepts, and to help students to recall what they have read. The strategy also focuses students on assigned text and allows the teacher to model what effective readers do with reading assignments in the content areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What Do I Already Know?</td>
<td>What Do I Think I Will Learn?</td>
<td>What Have I Learned?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>What Do I Want To Know?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SQ3R**

**SQ3R** is a versatile study strategy because it engages students during each phase of the reading process. Students preview the text material to develop predictions and to set a purpose for reading by generating questions about the topic. They read actively, searching for answer to those questions. They monitor their comprehension as they summarize, and they evaluate their comprehension through review activities.

**How to Use It:**

1. Provide students with a copy of the steps [See: SQ3R].
2. Model how you would respond to each step of the process.
3. Assign a text passage to be read and have students practice the strategy in pairs or small groups.
4. When they understand each step of the strategy, assign additional passages to read, having students work on these individually.
SQ3R (SURVEY, QUESTION, READ, RECITE, REVIEW)

1. SURVEY what you are about to read.
   - Think about the title. What do I know about this subject? What do I want to know?
   - Glance over headings and/or skim the first sentences of paragraphs.
   - Look at illustrations and graphic aids.
   - Read the last paragraph or summary.

2. QUESTION.
   - Turn the title into a question. This becomes a major purpose for your reading.
   - Write down any questions that come to mind during the survey.
   - Turn headings into questions.
   - Turn subheadings, illustrations, and graphic aids into questions.
   - Write down unfamiliar vocabulary and determine the meaning.

3. READ actively.
   - Read to search for answers to questions.
   - Respond to questions and use context clues for unfamiliar words.
   - React to unclear passages, confusing terms, and questionable statements by generating additional questions.

4. RECITE what you have learned.
   - Look away from the answers and the book to recall what was read.
   - Recite answers to questions aloud or in writing.
   - Reread text for unanswered questions.

5. REVIEW.
   - Answer the major purpose questions.
   - Look over answers and all parts of the chapter to organize information.
   - Summarize the information learned by creating a graphic organizer that depicts the main ideas, by drawing a flow chart, by writing a summary, by participating in a group discussion, or by writing an explanation of how this material has changed your perceptions or applies to your life.
Vocabulary Strategies

CODE Strategy

The CODE Strategy is an acronym for a series of four essential interactions that must occur to move the words new vocabulary words into the brain’s long-term memory.

First we need to **connect** with the new word by searching our memories and examining the context in which the word appears. The brain wants to establish a connection—either based on what it already knows or what it observes—to the new word in order to get a handle on it.

Second, we need to **organize** new words into meaningful categories and frameworks. As students are learning increasingly complex content, the categories into which new terms fit aren’t always clear; students will need help with this step.

Third, we need to **deep process** new words, interacting with a new word in more than a superficial, fill-in-the-blank kind of way. This can mean visualizing it, making a concept map out of it, restating its definition in our own words, creating a metaphor for it, or even acting it out or explaining our emotional response to it. Deep processing is where true understanding begins, and it greatly increases retention and recall by allowing our brains to make multiple connections with new words.

Finally, we need to **exercise** our new knowledge by practicing and revisiting what we have learned over time. If we don’t exercise our brain’s new knowledge, we will lose it. Review of our learning promotes higher levels of retention over time.

**How to Use It:**
There are different strategies that can be used with each step of the CODE approach to vocabulary acquisition.

1. **Connect**: Words Walls; Unit Word Walls; Thinking Word Walls; Writer’s Word Walls – All involve students recording & defining unknown words, generating synonyms for them, & using them in their writing.
2. **Organize**: Group & Label; Prediction Organizer–Both involve classifying & categorizing the words
3. **Deep Process**: Concept Attainment – This strategy involves determining the critical attributes of the words
4. **Exercise** – Peer Coaching – During this activity, one student completes vocabulary exercises while partner acts as coach; then they reverse roles.

Frayer Model

The Frayer Model is a graphical organizer used for word analysis and vocabulary building. This four-square model prompts students to think about and describe the meaning of a word or concept by: 1) defining the term, 2) describing its essential characteristics, 3) providing examples of the idea, and 4) offering non-examples of the idea. This strategy stresses understanding words within the larger context of a reading selection by requiring students, first, to analyze the items (definition and characteristics) and, second, to synthesize/apply this information by thinking of examples and non-examples.

**How to Use It:**

1. Explain the Frayer model graphic organizer to the class. Use a common word to demonstrate the various components of the form. Model the type and quality of desired answers when giving this example.
2. Select a list of key concepts from a reading selection. Write this list on the chalkboard and review it with the class before students read the selection.
3. Divide the class into student pairs. Assign each pair one of the key concepts and have them read the selection carefully to define this concept. Have these groups complete the four-square organizer for this concept.
4. Ask the student pairs to share their conclusions with the entire class. Use these presentations to review the entire list of key concepts.
Vocabulary Strategies, *cont.*

Frayer Model Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Use your own words.</em></td>
<td><em>Define its essential characteristics.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Non-Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Text Structures

Recognizing Text Structures

One way that a reader can read like a writer is for him/her to pay attention to the author's style for organizing and explaining information. Stories (narratives) include a setting, plot, character, problem, and resolution, expository text is framed around different structures. These structures occur in both textbooks and trade books, although no one structure is used by itself. Students can get a "feel" for the prominent structure used, but should also be explicitly taught that authors will not only use one structure by itself. The reader who is attentive to the author's organizational patterns will usually find it easier to comprehend the information being explained.

Most expository texts are structured to facilitate the study process. They contain many structural elements that help guide students through their reading. Authors of expository texts utilize these structures to arrange and connect ideas. Students who understand the idea of "text structure" and how to analyze it are likely to learn more than students who lack this understanding. Reading comprehension in students improves when they acquire skills in structural development and use them properly.

Expository text is written by authors to inform, to explain, to describe, to present information or to persuade. Expository text is subject-oriented and contains facts and information using little dialogue. The organization of the structure of expository text is dependent upon the form or genre (letter, journal entry, newspaper article, editorial, brochure, map, etc). There are however, seven basic structures of expository text and researchers recommend that teachers begin to teach expository text structure at the paragraph level.

Further, text features can help the reader locate and organize information in the text. For example, headings help introduce students to specific "bits" of information. Presenting information in this manner helps students hold each bit of information in short term memory. Students then can process it or connect it to background knowledge and store it in long term memory. Without headings, information would be overwhelming, making it difficult to process effectively.

Structural elements in expository texts vary; therefore, it is important to introduce students to the components of various texts throughout the school year. It is also important to teach and model the use of these components properly at the beginning of the school year. Educators need to share the structure of trade books, reference materials, and articles. The recognition and use of text organization are essential processes underlying comprehension and retention.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Pattern</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Signal Words</th>
<th>Questions to Ask:</th>
<th>Graphic Organizers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Narrative</strong></td>
<td>Paragraphs in this pattern tell a series of events that change over time. Narrative texts have the following elements: <strong>setting</strong> (time, place and character introduction); <strong>plot</strong> (problem is identified); <strong>reaction of protagonist &amp; attempts to solve the problem; and a resolution.</strong> Understanding the main character &amp; his/her actions is integral to understanding a story's plot and theme.</td>
<td>first, after that, later, a hundred years passed, etc.</td>
<td>Questions to ask for this structure are: Who wanted what and why? How, where, &amp; when did it take place? How was it resolved?</td>
<td>Story Map/Plot Line Character Map Timeline</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>This structure is the form of writing that authors use when they want to define a topic or subject. Definitions are an important part of any type of writing and are especially important for expository text.</td>
<td>when, also, too, then, to begin with, for instance, for example, in fact, one, two, first, second, third, to begin, next, finally, most important, etc.</td>
<td>A question for the definition structure is: What is being defined? What are its unique characteristics?</td>
<td>Flow Chart Analogy Map Semantic Web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description, List, or Enumeration</strong></td>
<td>This structure is used to describe the attributes and features of facts, ideas, steps, characteristics, people, places, or items. Paragraphs in this pattern qualify the list by criteria such as size or importance. Usually, the main topic is introduced &amp; then attributes follow. The focus may include the senses. Enumeration is the most common textbook organization.</td>
<td>one, two, first, second, third, to begin, next, finally, most important, when, also, too, then, to begin with, for instance, for example, in fact, etc.</td>
<td>Questions for the descriptive structure are: What is being described? What are its unique (sensory) attributes?</td>
<td>Semantic Web Circle Map Circle-to-circle Map Platform Map Wedge Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Pattern</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Classification</strong></td>
<td>This structure is an organizational strategy whereby authors arrange groups of persons, places, things, or abstract ideas according to a common. Students can learn to classify objects, persons, places, or events by sorting by size, color, likes, dislikes, etc.</td>
<td>one, two, first, second, third, to begin, next, finally, most important, when, also, too, then, to begin with, for instance, for example, in fact, etc.</td>
<td>Questions that can be asked about classification text structure might include the following: What categories does the author use to classify these items into categories? How can these items be put into categories?</td>
<td>Platform Map Semantic Web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Order or Sequence</strong></td>
<td>This involves putting facts, events, or concepts in order of occurrence. Learning how to use the key process words and transition words is very helpful. However, there are exceptions when authors do not use the key words. When this happens, students need to analyze the reading to determine the beginning and the end of an event and decide which things happened in the middle and in which order.</td>
<td>on (date), not long after, now, as, before, after, when, first, second, then, finally, during, finally, until, etc.</td>
<td>Questions that can be asked for time order or collection could include the following: What happened first, second, and third? How were items in this paragraph organized: by age, time, etc?</td>
<td>Timeline Flow Chart Multi-Flow Chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparison-Contrast</strong></td>
<td>This structure shows how two or more facts, concepts, people, places, or things are alike or different. Authors use descriptions of items being compared to illustrate their similarities or differences. Figurative language &amp; key comparison words can help you understand this structure.</td>
<td>however, but, as well as, on the other hand, not only...but also, either...or, while, although, similarly, yet, unless, meanwhile, nevertheless, otherwise, compared to, despite, etc.</td>
<td>Questions that can be asked about Comparison Text might be: How are these items alike? How are these items different?</td>
<td>T-Charts Venn Diagrams Multi-Flow Charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cause-Effect</strong></td>
<td>This structure shows how facts, events, or concepts (effects) happen or come into being because of other facts, events, or concepts (causes). The author explains one or more causes of a phenomenon or specific event along with the resulting effects. <strong>Key words</strong> are often used to clue in the reader that an effect is nearby in the text.</td>
<td>because, since, therefore, consequently, as so that, a result, cause, this led to, so, nevertheless, accordingly, if...then, thus, etc.</td>
<td><strong>Questions that can be used for cause and effect are:</strong> <em>What happened? What were the effects of (TOPIC)?</em></td>
<td>Flow Chart Multi-Flow Chart Platform Map Wedge Map Semantic Web</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Problem and Solution</strong></td>
<td>This structure shows the development of a problem and the solution(s) to the problem. This is a special case of the cause and effect pattern in which the writer states a problem, clarifies or explains the problem and suggests one or more solutions to the problem. Usually, the author would like the reader to accept his or her solution to the problem. In this case, the author writes persuasively. If the author wants the reader to make up his or her mind about the best solution, he or she poses several solutions and does not advocate for any one in particular.</td>
<td>because, cause, since, therefore, consequently, as a result, this led to, so, so that, nevertheless, accordingly, if...then, thus, etc.</td>
<td><strong>Questions that can be used for Problem/Solution include the following:</strong> <em>What were the reasons for this? What caused this to happen? Is there a solution to the problem?</em></td>
<td>Circle Map Flow Chart Multi-Flow Chart Platform Map Wedge Map Semantic Web</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Baltas, Joyce Graham & Denise Nessel. **Easy Lessons & Strategies that Build Content Area Reading Skills (Grades 4-8)**. Scholastic, ISBN # 0439040922, paperback, $12.95


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Additional titles by this author available through cognitivecoaching.com: *Strategies to Engage the Mind of the Learner* and *Strategic Reading in the Content Areas*.

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NOTE: Videos for this Study Guide are available in the JPPSS Instructional Resource Center.


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