

Novel Ideas Only

List 6 reasons why you think students struggle with reading comprehension.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Providing Support for Struggling Readers



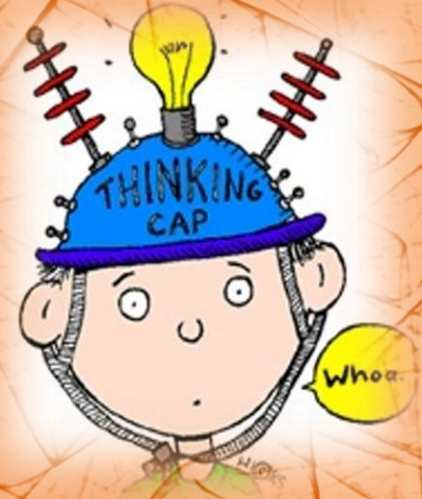
Expository texts have their own unique structures that are different from those of narrative text, and most students, regardless of their reading ability, struggle at times with expository text (Vacca, 1998). There are many reasons why. Expository text contains **vocabulary that is both challenging and new, words are often outside students' everyday knowledge (e.g., condensation, velocity), **topics** are ones students have **never experienced personally** (e.g., volcanoes, outer space, Amazon rainforest), and unlike narrative text that has one structure, **exposition has many structures** (e.g., cause-effect, compare-contrast).**

In order for students to be successful with expository text, it is necessary to provide them with support that will assist them in being successful.

In this training, we will learn how to use 5 comprehension strategies that will make for an effective support system.



There are between five and nine comprehension strategies that good readers use (NICHD, 2000; Pressley, 2000, 2002, 2006), but the authors of this research advocate teaching only five, as it is better to keep it simple, to take advantage of the fact that since the adult mind can only hold up to seven (plus or minus two) pieces of information at one time (Miller, 1956), hence, for students, five is more than enough.





The five key comprehension strategies that published studies support are:

- 1. Activating background knowledge** (Brown, 2002; Calfee & Patrick, 1995; Pressley, 2002)
- 2. Questioning** (Block & Pressley, 2007; NICHD, 2000),
- 3. Visualizing/creating mental images** (Pearson & Duke, 2002; Pressley 2002, 2006)
- 4. Summarizing** (NICHD, 2000; Pressley & Block, 2002)
- 5. Analyzing text structure** (Block & Pressley, 2002; Calfee & Patrick, 1995; Dymock & Nicholson, 2007)

Graffiti Wall: Activating Prior Knowledge

Directions:

- **Read the article on activating prior knowledge and discuss with your group**
- **Each group member selects a marker**
- **As a group, stand by one of the charts along the wall**
- **When told to do so, answer the question on the chart paper**
- **On cue, you will rotate to the next question and each member will write a response**
- **Each group will stand by the last question they answered**
- **Each group will select the best 4 answers on their last question and report to the class**

Jigsaw: Questioning

- **Students will begin with their base group and count off to 4**
- **Each group of students with the same number will move to the designated area**
- **Each new group will become an expert on the selected text for their group**
- **After reading and discussing their text, the experts will return to their base groups**
- **Students will take turns sharing their new information with their base groups**
- **Base group will summarize a selected piece of the text to share with the class**

Jigsaw: Questioning

1's will read,

“What is it?”

“Why is it important?”

2's will read,

“How can you make it happen?”

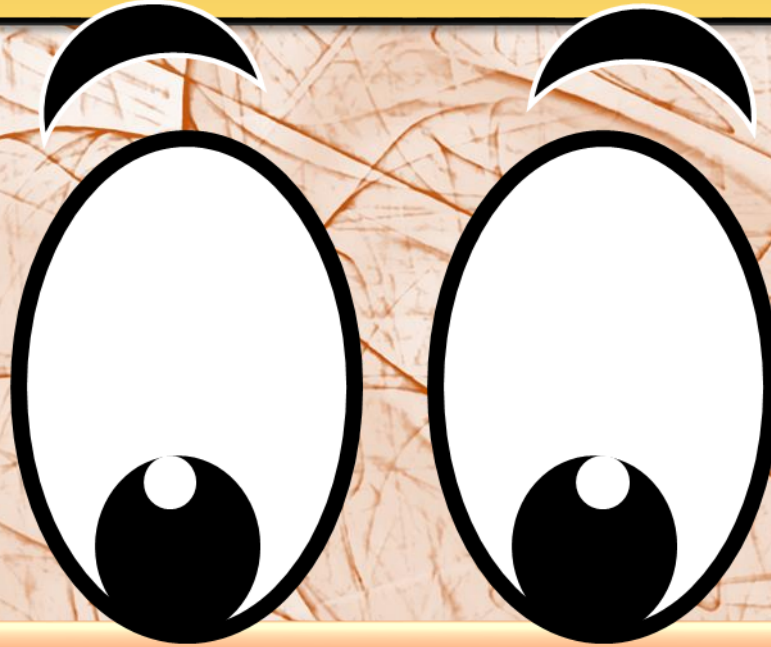
3's will read,

“How can you stretch your students' thinking”

4's will read,

“How can you use it?”

Collaborative Poster: Visualizing



- **Group will read the text on visualizing and reach a consensus on one (or more) image, quote and original phrase to craft their collaborative poster.**
- **Each student in the team uses a single marker of a different color from any of the other team members, for his or her work on the poster, as well as for signing the poster when the group agrees that it is complete.**
- **Groups share their work with the class**

1, 3, 6: Summary

Students read the text individually and decide on key points to write down.

Then the individual shares with two other members to compare notes. The three then share with the other half of the group and as a whole, decide on a final group summary.



Text Structure

Text Structure vs. Text Features

So why teach expository text structures?

In other words:

- **Students' comprehension is improved when they understand the text features (the physical presentation of the text) and the text structure (the way authors structure or organize their writing (Dickson, Simmons, and Kame'ennui, 1995).**
- **When readers can anticipate where information is located in the text, they are able to make predictions about the content and will better understand what the author is trying to explain (Dymock, 2007; Meyer & Poon, 2001; Duke & Pearson, 2002).**

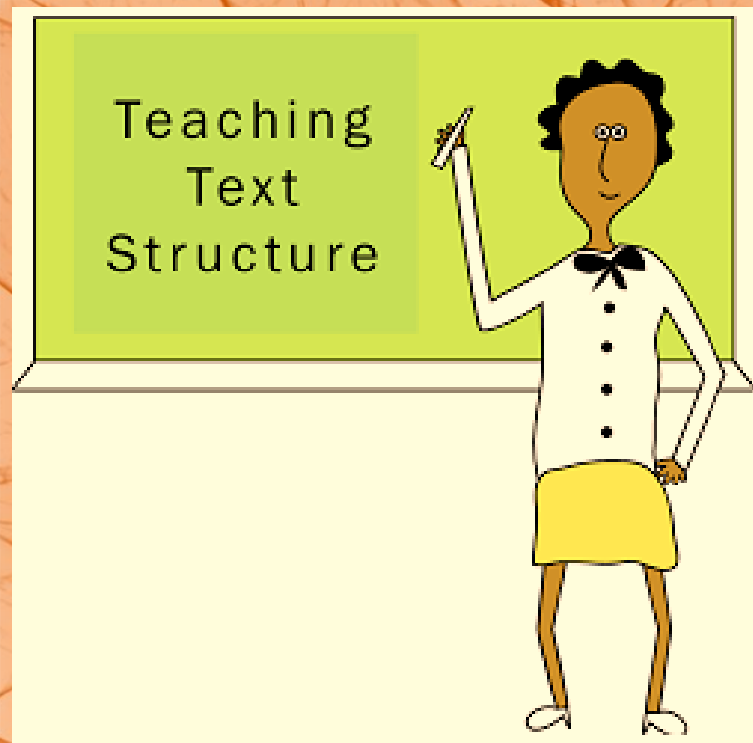
So why teach expository text structures?

- **If readers become confused by what they are reading, they can use what they know about text structure as a strategy to help them figure out the meaning and clear up their confusion (Tovani, 2000).**
- **Students who are knowledgeable about and/or follow the author's structure in their attempts to recall a text remember more than those who do not. In addition, more good than poor readers follow the author's structure in their attempts to recall a text (Pearson and Fielding, 1991.)**

So why teach expository text structures?

Once students understand that text structures exist and what the major ones are, they can use strategies, such as graphic organizers and signal words, to help them identify the structure the text and even apply it to their own writing

Because structural elements in expository text vary, it is important to introduce students to the components of various texts throughout the school year. The recognition and use of text organization are essential processes underlying comprehension and retention.



As early as the third grade, students are expected to recognize expository text structures. Meyer (1985) classified these text structures as follows:

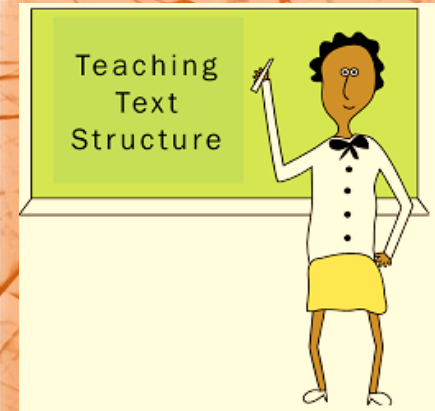
- **Description—The author describes a topic.**
- **Sequence—The author uses numerical or chronological order to list items or events.**
- **Compare/contrast—The author compares and contrasts two or more similar events, topics, or objects.**
- **Cause/effect—The author delineates one or more causes and then describes the ensuing effects.**
- **Problem/solution—The author poses a problem or question and then gives the answer.**

How to Teach Expository Text Structure

Tompkins (1998) suggested the following three steps to teach expository text structures:

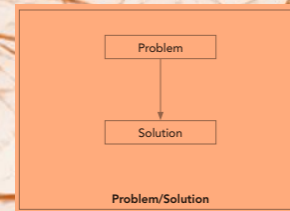
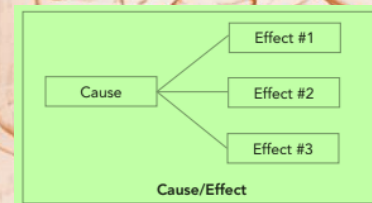
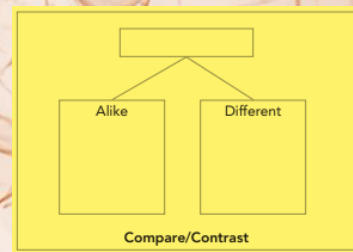
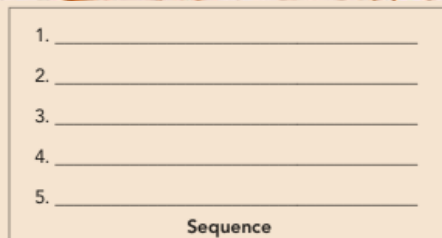
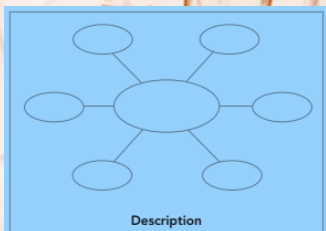
- 1. Introduce an organizational pattern—The teacher introduces the *signal words and phrases* that identify each text structure and gives students a graphic organizer for each pattern.**
- 2. Give students opportunities to work on the text—The teacher provides the students with chances to analyze the text structures in informational books, *not stories*. At this stage, students learn the signal words and phrases in the text that identify each text pattern. They also may use graphic organizers to illustrate these patterns.**
- 3. Invite students to write paragraphs using each text structure pattern—The students' first writing activity should be a whole-class activity, followed by small-group, partner, and independent writing activities. This involves selecting a topic and using a graphic organizer to plan the paragraphs. Finally, the students write a rough draft using signal words and phrases for the text structure, revise, and edit the paragraph to produce the final product... Teacher then repeats same steps for each structure.**

Some Practical Aspects of Teaching Text Structure in Your Classroom



The first and most important thing for you as a teacher is to be well informed about:

- **Different text structures for expository texts**
- **Signal words and phrases for each text structure**
- **Appropriate graphic organizer specific to each text structure**



Before you prepare any instructional plan to start training students and embark on reading activities, you must model all the procedures.

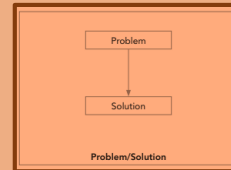
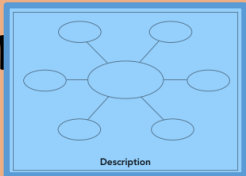
Meanwhile, the students watch you focusing on the steps you have mentioned, from recognizing the signal words and phrases to applying the graphic organizers to each text.

I do.
We do.
You do.



After you have practiced for the first few sessions and students have collected enough **background on what they are going to do, it is time to use the following recommended procedure:**

- 1. Introduce the text structures in order, starting with description and finishing with problem/solution.**



- 2. Introduce and work on a single text structure in each lesson. *Do not combine them.* Work on one text structure for three or four sessions, then proceed to the next one.**

- 3. Prepare short passages (about six to eight lines) for the text structure you are going to work on in that session. As the texts are short, you can work on at least four texts according to the time allocated for each session.**
- 4. Try to highlight and emphasize the signal words and phrases in each text and elaborate on a series of signal words for each text structure. Tell students that authors of informational texts use specific signal words and phrases for each rhetorical structure.**

Description: for example, characteristics, for instance, such as, is like, including, to illustrate

Sequence: first, second, third, later, next, before, then, finally, after, when, later, since, now, previously

5. After students are familiar with signal words and phrases, ask them to find these clues in the text. Ask them to recognize the rhetorical structure of each text through signal words and phrases. Then, invite them to write some short paragraphs and use some of the signal words and phrases appropriate to each text structure.



6. Working with graphic organizers is the next step after teaching signal words and phrases.

For the first few sessions of working with graphic organizers, prepare for your students a completed graphic organizer *before* they start working on the text. This will help them create a better image of the hierarchy of ideas and their interrelationships discussed in the passage.

Having a graphic representation of the text's ideas helps readers comprehend and retain the content.

- 7. Once students are comfortable with different kinds of graphic organizers, you can give them an incomplete graphic organizer after they have finished reading the passage. Let them complete it on their own.**
- 8. At this stage, the students would be able to work on a blank graphic organizer independently, elicit the ideas from the text, and demonstrate the hierarchy of the ideas in a graphic organizer.**



These activities may vary from partially blank graphic organizers to totally blank schematic representations. Variables like the text length and text difficulty will determine how much of the text may appear in this schematic diagram.



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