Curriculum Guide
Resources
American Immigration Law Foundation
Immigration Curriculum Center Lesson Plan

The Memory Coat Journey
A Board Game

Grade Level: 2nd-6th grade

Goal: The game is a teaching tool to be used as a follow-up activity to enrich the storybook.

Objectives: Students will:

- Comprehend the story's content
- Use recall, integrate new vocabulary and make connections.
- Practice role-play
- Understand the circumstances that drove Russian Jews to emigrate.

Materials:

The Memory Coat by Elvira Woodruff

Book Summary: An immigrant boy's tattered woolen coat helps secure his entrance to America in this thoughtful picture book. Grisha, whose parents have died, now lives with his cousin Rachel's boisterous family in a Russian shtetl. Gisha misses his parents terribly, though he finds comfort in playing storytelling games with Rachel ("they were the best of friends) and in wearing the now-ragged coat sewn by his mother. After the Cossacks terrorize the Jews of the shtetl, Rachel's family flees to America. At Ellis Island an inspector notes a scratch on Grisha's eye and marks his coat, indicating that he is rejected. Luckily quick thinking Rachel turns Grisha's coat inside out, allowing him to pass with the rest of the family. Endnotes supply facts about the plight of Russian Jews in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the mechanics of immigration and the role of Ellis Island.

Dice, poster board, or sturdy foam-core, game pieces-different colors, markers, construction paper, The Memory Coat by Elvira Woodruff, Scholastic Press, 1999.
Procedure:

Suggested Use of the Book: This book and game can be used as part of a unit on Immigration, US History, Russian History, My Family and Community, All About Me, or Feelings and Personal Values.

Lesson One: Teacher will take a picture walk and read aloud, followed by study of immigration and the history of Ellis Island.

Lesson Two: Students practice their understanding of the book and history of Ellis Island by playing the game of The Memory Coat Journey.

Lesson Three: Students create coats about their cultural background by decorating grocery paper bags.

Directions:

1. To begin the game, each player will roll the die. Whoever has the highest number will go first.

2. The player rolls the die and moves the appropriate number of spaces forward. If the player lands on a square with a coat, draw a card from the coat pile. If the player lands on a square with an "E" and a piece of chalk, draw a card from the matching pile. If there is a question on the card, the player tries to answer it. If the answer is correct, he/she stays. If the answer is not correct, he/she goes back to their previous spot. In the case of the "E" cards, the player follows directions on the card. The answers to the questions could be found on the separate instruction sheet.

3. The first player to land on the Statue of Liberty wins the game.

Questions for Coat Cards

1. What is a shtetl? A small town in Russia where Jews lived.

2. Name one occupation in the town shtetl. Cobbler, blacksmith, tailor, shopkeeper.

3. What does "Kibbud av v'em mean? "Be quiet"

4. What did Rachel and Grish enjoy doing together for fun? Rachel loved to tell stories and Grisha loved to draw pictures.

5. How did Grisha lose his parents? They died in an epidemic. They were ill.


7. Why were Rachel's mother and grandmother worried about Grisha being outdoors in the cold? His coat was threadbare.
8. How did he feel when they offered him a new coat? He was angry.

9. What is a synagogue? A Jewish temple, a place where Jews go to worship.

10. Who were the Cossacks? They were Russians who were looking to kill anyone who was Jewish.

11. What was the Cossacks' intent? To kill Jewish people.

12. Why did Rachel's family leave Russia? Russia was not a safe place to live for Jewish people.

13. What were some of Rachel's family's fears about the journey? The long hard ocean voyage, the dangers along the way, illness.

14. What were some of the fears that they anticipated would happen at Ellis Island? They would be turned away, they would be questioned about their money, be inspected to make sure they were healthy, whether they would be able to take care of themselves, they would be separated.

15. What does "Bubba" mean? Grandmother

16. Why did Bubba want to make a new coat for Grisha? It was tattered and torn and they wanted to make a good impression.

17. Why was Grisha's coat so important to him? The inside of the coat is lined with wool of his mother's coat and it a way for him to still feel his mother's touch.

18. Name three means of transportation they used to get to America? Wagon, train, ship

19. What did Rachel and Grisha do to pass their time on the ship? They played their story telling game.

20. How did Grisha scratch his eye when they were waiting in line at Ellis Island? Rachel fell over him when she was pretending to be a bird.

21. What did the doctor use to examine Grisha's eye? A buttonhook.

22. What did the doctor do after examining Grisha's eye? He wrote a large letter E in chalk on the back of his coat.

23. What language other than Russian did the family speak? Yiddish

24. What was Rachel's idea to solve the situation of the mark on Grisha's coat? Rachel turned the coat inside out.

25. How did the second doctor treat Grisha? The doctor was nice and he spoke Yiddish.
26. What was the difference between the two doctors that Rachel's family met at Ellis Island? *The second doctor was patient, kind and spoke Yiddish. The first one was not patient, not nice and does not speak Yiddish.*

27. Did Grisha pass the second exam? *Yes.*

28. What happened to Grisha's coat? *The coat was passed down to his children and grandchildren.*
FOLLOW YOUR Inner Conversation

Text Matters
When introducing the inner conversation, we choose gripping material that kids can sink their teeth into. They are more apt to pay attention to their inner conversation when they are reading a compelling text. *How Many Days to America? A Thanksgiving Story* tells the tale of a Caribbean island family that is forced to leave their home to escape war. The family makes the harrowing journey to America on an overcrowded fishing boat. Kids are quickly drawn into this moving narrative. I purposely chose a relevant text that is short enough to read and respond to in a reasonable amount of time.

Listen to the voice in your head and leave tracks of your thinking

why&what
Active, proficient readers think about and respond to the text when they read. They hear a voice in their head speaking to them—a voice that reacts by questioning, connecting, noticing new information, inferring, and synthesizing. This inner conversation reflects the evolving thinking that is central to reading comprehension. When readers pay attention to their thinking, they are more apt to learn, understand, and remember what they read. Following the inner conversation and leaving tracks of thinking helps readers monitor their comprehension and become aware of their thinking and learning as they read. We model our own inner conversation so that developing readers are able to see how to maintain an active inner conversation when they read independently.

when&how
CONNECT & ENGAGE
- Engage the kids and build background knowledge.
- Define reading comprehension and explain the inner conversation.
- Explain why and how readers leave tracks of their thinking.

MODEL
- Model your inner conversation as you read aloud and leave tracks of your thinking on Post-its.
- Review your Post-its and label what you’re thinking and doing as you read.

GUIDE
- Invite the students to listen to and talk about their own inner conversation and jot down their thinking on Post-its.
- Continue to read slowly while jotting down thinking, and then encourage students to write down their thoughts and talk to each other.
- Invite a few kids to share out after they have talked with a partner.

COLLABORATE
- Give directions for small group discussions.
- Confer with small groups to support them as they discuss the story.

SHARE THE LEARNING
- Record student thinking on a class Anchor Chart to make their thinking visible and to stimulate further discussion and study.
- Wrap up the lesson and synthesize the purpose.

resources&materials
LESSON TEXT

CLASSROOM SUPPLIES
- A map of the Caribbean region
- Anchor Chart entitled Big Ideas and Lingering Questions
- Marker

STUDENT SUPPLIES
- Clipboard with six 3x3 Post-its on paper or a 6-up Post-it form [See Strategy Cluster 1 page 41 or the CD-ROM.]
- Pencil
Connect & Engage

I’m glad that you are all gathered around me here because I am going to read you a very moving story called *How Many Days to America? A Thanksgiving Story*. Written by Eve Bunting, one of my favorite writers, this is a story about a family that is forced to flee their home because soldiers are driving them out of their country. Many families around the world experience the tragedy of war and have to leave their homes and emigrate to other countries. I can’t imagine how hard it would be to just pick up and leave my friends, possessions, and even some family members behind.

The map I have here gives a general idea of where this story takes place. But this could happen anywhere. I’m wondering if any of you have had a similar experience—had to leave your homeland or have known someone who has? Turn to each other and talk. *[I give the kids a minute or two to talk to each other about this issue. When we conduct whole group instruction, we need to provide time for kids to turn and talk at regular intervals so that everyone, not just the most vocal child, has an opportunity to construct meaning. I listen in and ask one or two of them to share before moving on.]*

Look, nothing is more important than the reader’s thinking during reading. Many of you have heard the term *reading comprehension*. Reading comprehension is about understanding what we read. It’s really important to consider how we comprehend text. In order to comprehend, readers pay attention and think about the words and ideas as they read. They carry on an inner conversation with the text. It happens to me. I have a voice in my head that speaks to me as I read. It’s a quiet inner voice, not a speaking out loud voice. Have you ever noticed a voice in your head speaking to you while you read?

I can tell by the looks I see that some of you have heard that inner voice and others may not know what I’m talking about. The voice in my head says different things as I read. For instance, when I meet new information, I might hear something like “Wow, I never knew that before” or when I’m confused I might hear “Huh—I don’t get this part.” Or when I reread and suddenly understand, I often hear “Oh, now I get it!” As I read this story to you now, I am going to share my inner conversation with you. I will read, stop for a moment and think out loud about the voice in my head. I’ll even jot down some of that thinking on Post-its.

Have you ever seen fresh animal tracks in the snow or on the beach? Active readers leave tracks of their thinking just like that. They jot down quick notes to hold and remember their thoughts. And these thinking tracks show us that the reader has been there even after the reading is over, in the same way that we can tell by the fresh tracks which critter has darted across the snow even after it has disappeared into the forest. When we really pay attention to the inner conversation and leave tracks of our thinking, we understand and learn much more from our reading. And we really get hooked on the book. Turn to each other and talk about the inner conversation. Have you ever heard a voice in your head while you read? *[Kids talk to each other and then share out their experiences]*.
MODEL

Let me read a little. I’m going to think out loud, showing you my inner conversation. I want you to notice the thinking I am doing. [I read the first sentence on the first page of the book, showing the picture after I read.]

It was nice in our village. Till the night in October when the soldiers came.

Whoa, these two sentences are such a contrast. One minute everything was peaceful and then the next minute soldiers came. Already, the voice in my head is speaking to me. First, I’m wondering why the soldiers came. I’m also wondering if this is some sort of war. Sometimes, my inner voice asks a question about what I’m reading. I also think these soldiers must have been really terrifying. So I’m just going to write both of those thoughts on this Post-it.

I’m going to read on to find out more.

My mother hid my little sister and me under the bed. When I peered out I could see my mother’s feet in their black slippers and the great, muddy boots of the soldiers.

Look, the mom knew those soldiers were dangerous. That’s why she hid the children. This is a really brave mom. I’m going to jot down some more of what I am thinking.

Let’s read the next page.

When they were gone my father said: “We must leave right now.”

“Why?” I asked.

“Because we do not think the way they think, my son. Hurry!”

Now I have a lot going on in my inner conversation. First of all, I know that throughout history people have been forced to leave their homes because they have thought differently from the people in power. This is a big idea in the story so far. The Pilgrims are a good example. They left their homes for America, because they were not free to practice their religion. Sadly, this has happened to a lot of families throughout history. I will jot down that it reminds me of the Pilgrims.

He would not let us take anything but a change of clothes.

My mother cried. “Leave all my things? My chair, where I sat to nurse our children? The bedcover that my mother made, every stitch by hand?”

“Nothing,” my father said. “Just money to buy our way to America.”

This reminds me of when my grandmother came to this country from Ireland. She had almost nothing when she got here, because they needed all the money they could get to buy tickets for the voyage. Sometimes when we listen to the voice in our heads we have a connection to our own life. I’ll jot that connection on a Post-it and mark it with an “R” for “Remind.” Personal connections like these keep me engaged in the story and make me want to read on.

I’m also understanding that the only thing that matters to them now is money, so they can leave.

OK, let’s look back at the tracks of my thinking to notice the kinds of things I wrote down. Notice that I didn’t write everything I was thinking—if I did, I’d never get through the book! I just wrote down some thoughts that really mattered to me. I often have questions so I write those down. I also record ideas.

Model your inner conversation as you read aloud and leave tracks of your thinking on Post-its.

Why did the soldiers come?

Terrifying.

Is this about war?

The mom knew soldiers were dangerous. Hid children to protect them.

Brave mom!

The dad worried about life under these soldiers.

Reminds me of the Pilgrims.

Had to leave for thinking differently.

Reminds me of my grandmother and her hard life.

Review your Post-its and label what you’re thinking and doing as you read.

Lesson 1: Follow Your Inner Conversation IN ACTION
I have as I read, like the mother wanting to protect her children and that people sometimes have to leave over differences. And I see connections—to what I know about good mothers, to the Pilgrims, and to my grandmother leaving Ireland. Those are the kinds of things I think about in my inner conversation—my connections, questions, and big ideas—and it is that thinking that takes me deeper into my reading and helps me better understand.

GUIDE

Turn to each other and talk about what we have read so far. What do you wonder? How would you feel in this situation? Does this remind you of anything? [As the kids engage in guided practice, I share my thinking less than during the model but still chime in occasionally. As the kids talk to each other, I bend down beside them and listen in on their conversations. After a minute or two I encourage several to share their thinking.]

Gilberto: Who are these soldiers? Why are they breaking into houses?

Sara: This reminds me of the war in Iraq, soldiers everywhere.

Did you hear what Gilberto and Sara just said? So important. Gilberto had some questions and Sara had a connection. Our inner conversation is full of connections and questions when we read. Great thinking, you two!

Okay now, if you have some thoughts that you want to remember, it’s time to leave tracks of your thinking. Go ahead and jot down some thoughts on a Post-it. Take your time, I’ll wait. [The kids jot down some of their thoughts on the Post-its on their clipboards as I wait, taking my cue from them as they finish up their writing. I invite several to share what they have written. Since we’ve read so little of the story, questions flourish in these early Post-its. Connections occur frequently as well.]

OK. I’m going to continue reading How Many Days to America? slowly, listening to the voice in my head, and stopping to leave written tracks of my thinking. You can do the same, jotting down your inner conversation as you listen to me read. I will read slowly and make sure to stop at the end of each page, so you have enough time to write down your thinking on a Post-it. You don’t need to write much, just some notes to hold thinking.

Why am I asking you to write down your thinking? Jana?

Jana: So we can remember what we learned when we read a certain part.

Exactly. If we don’t write our thinking down, we may forget it. This is known as an Interactive Read Aloud. I do the reading while you guys jot down your thinking and talk to each other. By doing this, you are more likely to understand the big ideas and underlying issues in the story. Let’s try it. [I read the next two pages, in which the father collects the family’s possessions, even the mother’s wedding ring, in order to sell them for money to get to America. Then I stop reading.]}

OK. Now listen to your inner conversation and jot down some thoughts you have—any questions, connections, big ideas, etc. When you finish, turn to a
partner and share what you’ve written down or any other thoughts you might have. They could be similar or completely different. [The kids write down their thoughts and then begin to talk to one another. As they talk, I crouch down and listen in on several of them. Then I bring them back together to share out a few of their thoughts.]

OK. Coming back together now. Who would like to share? What are you thinking, Erin?

Erin: I know they need money, but to sell a wedding ring seems really unfair. A wedding ring is so important.

Interesting observation. What do the rest of you think about that?

Rudolfo: They’ve got to get to America. Her children are more important than some ring.

Selina: Yes. I agree with Rudolfo. They have to make a sacrifice like my parents when we came from Mexico. It is hard here, though, because at first you don’t speak English and everything is different. So I know how that family is feeling.

Such great thinking! You don’t always have to agree with each other when you are talking about the story. Erin is right to suggest that a wedding ring is very important. But Rudolfo has a good point, too. And Selina’s personal connection helps me to understand better what these characters are going through. When we connect our own experience to our reading, like Selina did, we understand more completely. Thanks for sharing, you guys. [I continue to read slowly, jotting down my thinking and encouraging them to do the same. Every few pages or so, I have them turn to each other and talk about their thinking, taking their inner conversation public.]

COLLABORATE

Now that we’ve finished reading the section, take a look at your Post-its. Read them over and think about any lingering questions or big ideas that you may have. If you have any more thoughts to jot down, do that now. We are going to get into small groups of four people to talk about the story. The writing on your Post-its can help you get your discussion started. You might want to star some of your most important or interesting thoughts so you don’t forget to talk about those. While you are meeting with your small groups, I will be coming around to confer with you. OK, off you go. [The kids spread out in the room and get into groups of four to discuss the book. Their Post-its serve as a scaffold around which they can talk about the story. I move around the room listening in on conversations, sometimes checking in to guide their discussion to follow a line of thinking.]

Robert: I wrote this question on a Post-it and I still wonder about it. "Why does the title say A Thanksgiving Story?"

Suzanna: The day they got to America was Thanksgiving Day. It said so in the story.

Robert: I know that. But they hardly ever talked about Thanksgiving.

Alonzo: Maybe they were thankful to have made it safely away from the soldiers.

Suzanna: The Pilgrims came on a boat to America and so did these people.

Interesting connection, Suzanna.

Suzanna: I’m thinking that they are probably thankful to be out of their own dangerous country just like the Pilgrims were happy to be out of England where they weren’t free. But life was hard for the Pilgrims after they got to America.

Invite a few kids to share out after they have talked with a partner.

When facilitating a guided discussion, we welcome the widest range of interpretations and opinions. If a more reserved student chooses not to share, we honor that but request permission to share on their behalf so everyone can hear their thinking.

Give directions for small group discussions.

If I have enough individual copies of the book, I hand them out to the groups, although most kids can easily discuss the story without the text if necessary.

Confer with small groups to support them as they discuss the story.
 Hmm, interesting. What about that? Do you think life will be hard for the people in this story?

Robert: Probably sort of hard, since they don’t know America and don’t speak English, but still easier than it was in their own country with the soldiers.

Such a great discussion. Sometimes when we have a question like Robert’s, talking to each other is the best way to come up with some answers. And notice how you began to connect these people to the Pilgrims. They probably did face similar experiences to the people in this story as they started life in a new land. Perhaps Eve Bunting had the Pilgrims in mind, although we couldn’t know that for sure. Talking to each other and making that connection helped you to take your thinking further. Let’s add that thinking to the class Anchor Chart when we come back together to share. You guys are so thoughtful! [After about fifteen minutes in which the kids discuss the book, I ask them to jot down some of the big ideas and lingering questions that they came up with in their discussion. I give them about five minutes to do this and then I invite them to the sharing area.]

SHARE THE LEARNING

[Once I pull them together, I ask the kids to share any big ideas or lingering questions they have from the story. I record their thoughts and questions on an Anchor Chart, a constructed chart of their thinking about the text.] Great work today! This chart is an important record of your thinking. It shows some of the bigger ideas and lingering questions in the story, How Many Days to America? A Thanksgiving Story. These ideas got started with your inner conversations and then you expanded on them in your conversations with each other. When we share our inner conversation, we all learn and understand more. When Selina talked about why her family came here, we learned why many families come here.

Reading, writing, and talking spur us to learn more than we could ever learn by just reading silently and going on. As you read, remember to listen to your inner voice and follow your inner conversation. Leave tracks of your thinking by jotting down thoughts you want to remember. And don’t forget that nothing is more important than your thinking when you read. Thanks so much for doing such thoughtful work.
To assess the reader's comprehension, as we listen to and confer with small groups, we jot down what we notice about the kids’ questions and their discussions. We read their Post-its to determine if they are understanding the story and taking their thinking further. We look to see if there is some evidence in the text for their thoughts. We also read their responses and listen to their conversation to see if they are getting at the bigger ideas in the story.

This process is ongoing throughout the year. Kids have an opportunity to do this frequently in language arts, social studies, science, etc. The Interactive Read Aloud encourages readers to think when they read, notice their own inner voice, write down their thoughts and leave tracks of their thinking, share their thinking with others, and listen to the ideas of others. Interactive reading aloud also encourages readers to ask more questions, ponder information, think more deeply, and to engage in the world of issues and ideas.

It is important to remember, however, that this is a comprehension lesson. For readers to improve fluency, they must be reading books at their level and of interest to them. Our goal is for them to take what they learn during this Interactive Read Aloud on the Inner conversation and apply it in their independent reading.

**RESPONSES THAT DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING**

1. This Post-it shows an insight gained from merging background knowledge and going beyond the text.

2. This response shows how the reader asked and then answered a question.

3. This Post-it shows how the reader based her connection on text evidence.

4. This response shows how the reader took a phrase from the text and understood it metaphorically. She also connected the information to her background knowledge of Harriet Tubman.

5. This series of Post-its demonstrates a powerful example of using a personal connection to gain deeper understanding and develop a line of thinking.

**RESPONSES THAT NEED INTERVENTION AND CLARIFICATION**

6. This Post-it shows reader monitoring for understanding and asking about an unfamiliar vocabulary word. I can meet with her to respond.

7. Here we have a misconception. The soldiers were definitely not American. So I will confer with this student to explore and straighten out the confusion.
Lesson 1 Guide

FOLLOW YOUR Inner Conversation

Listen to the voice in your head and leave tracks of your thinking

TEACHING MOVES

Engage the kids and build background knowledge.

Define reading comprehension and explain the inner conversation.

Explain why and how readers leave tracks of their thinking.

TEACHING LANGUAGE

CONNECT & ENGAGE

- I am going to read you a text called...written by... It's about....
- Have any of you had a similar experience or know someone who has? Turn and talk about that.

- You know the term reading comprehension and that it means understanding what we read, right? Nothing is more important than your thinking when you read.
- Readers pay attention and think about words and ideas in order to understand what they read. They carry on an inner conversation with the text.
- I have a voice in my head that speaks to me as I read. It says different things depending on what I'm reading. My thinking when I read new information is different than when I reread something or read something that confuses me.
- Have you ever noticed a voice in your head that talks about what you are reading? Turn and talk about your inner conversation.

- Active readers leave tracks of their thinking on Post-its just like animals leave tracks in the snow or sand. They jot down quick notes to hold and remember their thoughts.
- When we pay attention to the inner voice and leave tracks of our thinking, we understand and learn much more from our reading.

MODEL

- Let me read a little and as I read I want you to notice the thinking I am doing. I'm going to think out loud, showing you my inner conversation.
- First, I'm wondering... I also think... Now I am going to write my thoughts on a Post-it and read on to find out more.
- Sometimes I have a question in my inner conversation and I wonder....
- Sometimes I have a connection and it reminds me of... and I code it with an "R" for "Remind."

- Notice that I don't write everything down or I'd never get through the text! I just write some questions and ideas that mattered to me.
- Following my inner conversation takes me deeper into my reading.

Review your Post-its and label what you're thinking and doing as you read.
The Teaching Moves outline your instructional sequence and the Teaching Language gives you an idea about what to say to your students.

TEACHING LANGUAGE

GUIDE

- Turn to each other and talk about what we have read so far. What do you wonder? Does this remind you of anything?

- I will continue to read slowly so that you have time to leave tracks of your thinking on Post-its.

- When I do the reading and you do the thinking and writing, it’s called an interactive read aloud. This way, you are more likely to understand the big ideas and issues in the story.

- After you have written some thoughts down on Post-its, turn to a partner and talk about them.

- Who would like to share? What are you thinking? Interesting observation. What do the rest of you think about that?

- Talking to each other and sharing our thoughts really helps us understand better.

COLLABORATE

- Now we are going to get into groups of three or four and talk about the story.

- You might want to start the ideas on your Post-its that interest you the most so you don’t forget to talk about them.

- As you meet in your groups, I will be coming around to confer with you.

- Such great discussions. Talking to each other is a good way to come up with answers to your questions and to take your thinking further.

SHARE THE LEARNING

- Let’s share some of the big ideas or questions that came up in your discussions and we’ll record them on the class Anchor Chart. It is a very important record of your thinking.

- All of these ideas came from you, from your inner conversations with the text. Then you expanded on them when you talked in small groups.

- When we share our inner conversation with each other, we all learn and understand more.

TEACHING MOVES

- Invite the students to listen to and talk about their own inner conversation and jot down their thinking on Post-its.

- Continue to read slowly while jotting down thinking, and then encourage students to write down their thoughts and talk to each other.

- Invite a few kids to share out after they have talked to a partner.

- Give directions for small group discussions.

- Confer with small groups to support them as they discuss the story.

- Record student thinking on a class Anchor Chart to make their thinking visible and to stimulate further discussion and study.

- Wrap up the lesson and synthesize the purpose.

reflection & assessment

- Did your students develop an awareness of the inner conversation readers have as they read?

- Did your students monitor their comprehension by listening to their inner conversation and paying attention to their thinking as they read?

- Did your students leave tracks of their thinking by jotting down notes to hold thinking and expand understanding as they read and talk?
Presidential Oath of Office

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."
## Text Structures Resource Page

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<td><strong>Problem and Solution</strong></td>
<td>problem, attempted</td>
<td>• so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solutions, and results</td>
<td>• for this reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• in order to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The four text types describe four general types of writing. Identifying the text type of a passage helps the reader set the purpose for reading and alerts the reader to the organization of the piece.

**Narrative**
- Entertains
- Tells a story
- Character(s), setting, problem, resolution

**Expository**
- Facts/information
- Text features (headings, bold words, charts, graphs, captions)

**Technical**
- Information to perform a task
- Steps

**Persuasive**
- Author tries to convince reader to take a certain opinion or perform a certain action

Text structures are organizational patterns found within the text types. An author often chooses one main text structure for a piece but may incorporate several of the text structures throughout the piece.

**Sequence**
- Steps
- Specific order

**Problem and Solution**
- Problem, which is solved
  - Problem
  - Event
  - Event
  - Event
  - Solution

**Compare and Contrast**
- Comparing how things are the same/different

**Description**
- Details

**Cause and Effect**
- Something causes something else to happen
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Structures — Definitions, Signal Words, Graphic Organizers — Team Set</th>
<th>Text Structures — Definitions, Signal Words, Graphic Organizers — Team Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which text structure is arranged in a series or in steps?</td>
<td>Which text structure tells facts and details about something?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which text structure points out similarities and differences?</td>
<td>Which text structure tells reasons why something happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which text structure tells about a problem and the solution or solutions?</td>
<td>Which text structure uses words such as first, second, and third?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which text structure uses words such as for instance, in fact, in addition, or for example?

Which text structure uses words such as because of, therefore, or since?

Which text structure uses words such as have solved this problem by . . . ?

Which text structure compares things that are the same and things that are different?

Which text structure uses words such as now, next, or finally?

Which text structure uses words such as before, during, or after?
Text Structures—Definitions, Signal Words, Graphic Organizers
Showdown (Team Set)

Instructions: Copy one set of cards for each team. Cut apart.

Which text structure might use a graphic organizer such as:

- Problem
- Event
- Event
- Event
- Solution

Which text structure might use a graphic organizer such as:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Which text structure might use a graphic organizer such as:

- Problem

Which text structure might use a graphic organizer such as:

- Solution
Text Structures—Definitions, Signal Words, Graphic Organizers
Showdown (Team Set)

Instructions: Copy one set of cards for each team. Cut apart.

Which text structure might use a graphic organizer such as:

Effect

Which text structure might use a graphic organizer such as:

Topic

Which text structure might use a graphic organizer such as:

If...  Then...  Because...

Which text structure might use a graphic organizer such as:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Text Structures—Definitions, Signal Words, Graphic Organizers
Showdown (Student Set)

Instructions: Copy one set of cards for each student. Cut apart.

Cause and Effect

Description

Compare and Contrast

Problem and Solution

Sequence
Text Structures and Paragraphs
Showdown (Team Set)

Instructions: Copy one set of cards for each team. Cut apart.

Text Structures and Paragraphs—Team Set

When ranchers in the Wild West wanted to keep their cattle from wandering away, they could not find enough timber or wood to make fences. They had a problem, and it was solved by L. B. Smith from Ohio in 1867. He invented barbed wire, which was made of sharp barbs on wood that were strung along a wire strand. Ranchers used this wire to make fences to keep their cattle on the ranches.

Text Structures and Paragraphs—Team Set

Because trees were scarce in the Wild West, ranchers did not have enough wood to make fences. Therefore, the cattle kept wandering away. In 1867, L.B. Smith invented barbed wire. Ranchers used this wire to make fences that would keep cattle on their ranches.

Text Structures and Paragraphs—Team Set

Barbed wire was a marvelous invention developed by L.B. Smith over 100 years ago. Small blocks of wood were spaced evenly on a long strand of steel wire. Sharp, pointy metal barbs stuck out of the blocks of wood.
Text Structures and Paragraphs
Showdown (Team Set)

Instructions: Copy one set of cards for each team. Cut apart.

Text Structures and Paragraphs—Team Set
It was difficult for ranchers to keep track of their cattle before the invention of barbed wire. But in 1867, when word spread about barbed wire, ranchers knew this was what they needed. First, the ranchers pounded 5-foot stakes into the ground around their property. Next, they wrapped the barbed wire around the first stake and the strung it to the next stake. Then, the wire was pulled tight before wrapping and securing it around the stake. They continued to do this around their property. After they finished with the wire, they made a gate for the opening. Finally, the ranchers could round up their cattle and corral them back onto their property. Safe at last!

Text Structures and Paragraphs—Team Set
Wooden fences and barbed wire have both been used to keep cattle on property. However, there are differences between wooden fences and barbed wire fences. Wooden fences were not always able to keep cattle from wandering away because trees were scarce and ranchers could not make the number of wooden fences they needed. On the other hand, when barbed wire fences were invented, ranchers from areas where wood was scarce used it to keep cattle from getting out.
Text Structures and Paragraphs
Showdown (Student Set)

Instructions: Copy one set of cards for each student. Cut apart.

Problem and Solution

Cause and Effect

Description

Sequence

Compare and Contrast
Problem and Solution
When ranchers in the Wild West wanted to keep their cattle from wandering away, they could not find enough timber or wood to make fences. They had a problem, which was solved by L. B. Smith from Ohio in 1867. He invented barbed wire, which was made of sharp barbs on wood that were strung along a wire strand. Ranchers used this wire to make fences to keep their cattle on the ranches.

Description
Barbed wire was a marvelous invention developed by L.B. Smith over 100 years ago. Small blocks of wood were spaced evenly on a long strand of steel wire. Sharp, pointy metal barbs stuck out of the blocks of wood.

Cause and Effect
Because trees were scarce in the Wild West, ranchers did not have enough wood to make fences. Therefore, the cattle kept wandering away. In 1867, L.B. Smith invented barbed wire. Ranchers used this wire to make fences that would keep cattle on their ranches.

Sequence
It was difficult for ranchers to keep track of their cattle before the invention of barbed wire. But in 1867, when word spread about barbed wire, ranchers knew this was what they needed. First, the ranchers pounded 5-foot stakes into the ground around their property. Next, they wrapped the barbed wire around the first stake and the strung it to the next stake. Then, the wire was pulled tight before wrapping and securing it around the stake. They continued to do this around their property. After they finished with the wire, they made a gate for the opening. Finally, the ranchers could round up their cattle and corral them back onto their property. Safe at last!

Compare and Contrast
Wooden fences and barbed wire have both been used to keep cattle on property. However, there are differences between wooden fences and barbed wire fences. Wooden fences were not always able to keep cattle from wandering away because trees were scarce and ranchers could not make the number of wooden fences they needed. On the other hand, when barbed wire fences were invented, ranchers from areas where wood was scarce used it to keep cattle from getting out.
### Text Structures—Definitions & Graphic Organizers
#### Quiz-Quiz-Trade

**Instructions:** Copy enough cards so each student has one card. Cut on dotted lines and fold in half.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Structures—Definitions &amp; Graphic Organizers</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question</strong></td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What text structure has steps?</td>
<td><strong>Sequence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What text structure has a problem that is solved?</td>
<td><strong>Problem and Solution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What text structure explains how things are the same or different?</td>
<td><strong>Compare and Contrast</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What text structure has details?</td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What text structure tells how something makes something else happen?</td>
<td><strong>Cause and Effect</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Text Structures—Definitions and Graphic Organizers
Quiz-Quiz-Trade

Instructions: Copy enough cards so each student has one card. Cut on dotted lines and fold in half.

Question
What text structure is written in a specific time order?

Answer
Sequence

Question
What text structure has events that lead to figuring out the problem at the end?

Answer
Problem and Solution

Question
What text structure compares similarities and differences?

Answer
Compare and Contrast

Question
What text structure tells more about someone, something, or someplace?

Answer
Description

Question
What text structure explains how something occurred because of something else?

Answer
Cause and Effect
## Text Structures—Definitions & Graphic Organizers

### Quiz-Quiz-Trade

**Instructions:** Copy enough cards so each student has one card. Cut on dotted lines and fold in half.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Structures—Definitions &amp; Graphic Organizers</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question</strong></td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What text structure would use this graphic organizer?</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
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<td>Problem</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What text structure would use this graphic organizer?</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solution</td>
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<td>Cause and Effect</td>
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<td>What text structure would use this graphic organizer?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Text Structures—Definitions and Graphic Organizers
Quiz-Quiz-Trade

Instructions: Copy enough cards so each student has one card. Cut on dotted lines and fold in half.

Question
What text structure would use this graphic organizer?

Answer
Sequence

Question
What text structure would use this graphic organizer?

Answer
Sequence

Question
What text structure would use this graphic organizer?

Answer
Compare and Contrast

Question
What text structure would use this graphic organizer?

Answer
Cause and Effect

Question
What text structure would use this graphic organizer?

Answer
Problem and Solution
### Text Structure Passages

#### Question: What text structure is this passage?

**Sequence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First we packed our suitcases. Then we piled into our little car. Before long we were on the way to grandma's house.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Problem and Solution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We didn't know how to get our cat down from the tree after the neighbor's dog chased her. The fire department came to the rescue.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Compare and Contrast**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tigers and lions are both cats. However, tigers have stripes and lions do not. Both have very good nighttime vision. Unlike lions, tigers like water and are good swimmers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Description**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Butterflies are flying insects with two pairs of large, colorful, scaly wings. The wing scales overlap in rows. The color of the wings gradually fades.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Cause and Effect**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We discovered that the batteries in our flashlight were dead when we tried to use it during the storm. Therefore, we were not able to see until the electricity came on.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Text Structure Passages

#### Quiz-Quiz-Trade

**Instructions:** Copy enough cards so each student has one card. Cut on dotted lines and fold in half.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: What text structure is this passage?</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before putting the model car together, we gathered our supplies. Then we were able to read and follow the directions. Before long our car was completed.</td>
<td><strong>Sequence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain climbers get tired when climbing for many days. They need to sleep, but it is dangerous. Since they might roll off the edge, they sleep on ledges with ropes keeping them from falling off the mountain.</td>
<td><strong>Problem and Solution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your lungs are like two balloons. When you take a breath, air rushes in, like when you blow up a balloon. When you breathe out, the air goes out and your lungs get smaller just like a balloon.</td>
<td><strong>Compare and Contrast</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cats are graceful. They have rounded faces, sandpaper tongue, and needle-like teeth. Cats are many different sizes. They have a variety of colors, fur length, eye colors, and voices.</td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sun keeps Earth warm. If the sun did not shine on Earth, it would be so cold that no plants, animals, or people could survive. As a result of the sun, there is life on Earth.</td>
<td><strong>Cause and Effect</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure Passages</td>
<td>Text Structure Passages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text structure is this passage?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue lost her first tooth when she was five years old. Later, when she was six, she lost another tooth. Not long after, Sue lost two teeth in one day.</td>
<td><strong>Sequence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text structure is this passage?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When an enemy tries to attack an armadillo, the armadillo has to plan. If the enemy gets too close, the armadillo rolls up into a hard ball. The hard, bony plates covering its body protect the armadillo.</td>
<td><strong>Problem and Solution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text structure is this passage?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hippos, walruses, and woodchucks all have large teeth. Hippos use their teeth to scare away enemies. Walruses use their teeth to pull themselves out of the water. Woodchucks use their teeth to chomp through tough plants.</td>
<td><strong>Compare and Contrast</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text structure is this passage?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiders force a liquid out through the spinnerets at the rear end of their bodies. The fluid hardens when it hits the air. The fluid makes silk. This silk may be thick or thin. It may also be sticky or dry. In addition, it may be smooth or bumpy.</td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text structure is this passage?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very tall trees grow in a tropical rain forest. Because the trees grow so close together, the leaves form a roof high above the ground, called a canopy, which blocks out the sky and the sun.</td>
<td><strong>Cause and Effect</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Text Structure Passages

### Quiz-Quiz-Trade

**Instructions:** Copy enough cards so each student has one card. Cut on dotted lines and fold in half.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: What text structure is this passage?</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before you begin to bake chocolate chip cookies, remember to gather all of the ingredients. Next, turn on the oven to preheat it. Then, you are ready to begin measuring and mixing the dough.</td>
<td><strong>Sequence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is dark as night in the deepest parts of the ocean. Most fish would find it very difficult or impossible to see, but the lantern fish has solved this problem. It carries its own flashlight.</td>
<td><strong>Problem and Solution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eels are long and thin like snakes. Trying to hold onto an eel is like trying to hold onto a snake.</td>
<td><strong>Compare and Contrast</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobsters are reddish-green and blue in color. They have two claws that can pinch. They also have eight legs. In addition, they have two antennae that help them feel to find out where they are.</td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol forgot to add yeast to the dough when she was baking. Therefore, her wheat bread did not rise, and she was not able to eat it.</td>
<td><strong>Cause and Effect</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure Passages</td>
<td>Text Structure Passages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text structure is this passage?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First, sharks use their keen sense of smell to track down an animal for lunch. Then they race toward the prey while steering with their tails. Finally, they open their mouths and bite hard!</td>
<td><strong>Sequence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text structure is this passage?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a starfish loses one of its arms in a fight, another one will soon grow in its place.</td>
<td><strong>Problem and Solution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text structure is this passage?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult and baby langurs are quite different from each other in appearance. Adults have dark fur while babies are bright orange in color when they are born.</td>
<td><strong>Compare and Contrast</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text structure is this passage?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The shrill train whistle shrieked through the cold, icy night.</td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text structure is this passage?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because a plate of grapes were out in the hot sun, they turned into raisins within several days.</td>
<td><strong>Cause and Effect</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Text Structures in Action

Locate examples of each type of text structure in your daily reading. Record book titles in the chart below, and make a note of the evidence you find that supports how you identified the structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequence</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compare &amp; Contrast</th>
<th>Cause &amp; Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem &amp; Solution</th>
<th>Which text structure did you find most often in your reading?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why do you think this structure is used most often?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>______________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>______________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>______________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pick A Card, Any Card

Using a Fan-N-Pick Mat and question cards, students play Fan-N-Pick to identify text features, answer story elements questions, and preview nonfiction.

**Activity Steps**

1. Each team receives the Fan-N-Pick Mat, an identical text for each student on the team, and a set of cards.
2. The Fan-N-Pick Mat is placed in the center of the team table, with each corner pointing to a student.
3. Student #1 (Fan) holds question cards in a fan and says, “Pick a card, any card!”
4. Student #2 (Pick and Read) picks a card, reads the question aloud, and allows think time.
5. Student #3 (Answer) responds orally and/or shows the answer.
6. Student #4 (Check and Praise) responds to the answer by tutoring or praising.
7. The Fan-N-Pick Mat is rotated one person clockwise for each new round, indicating each student’s new role.

**Blacklines**

- Fan-N-Pick Mat (used for all activities) ................................................................. 118
- Text Features ........................................................................................................ 119–121
- Story Elements (Fiction) .................................................................................. 122–123
- Previewing Before Reading (Nonfiction) .......................................................... 124–125
Fan-N-Pick Mat

Instructions: Cut out this mat and place it in the center of the team. Each corner points to a student, indicating his/her role for that round of Fan-N-Pick. For each new round, rotate the mat clockwise one position, indicating each student's new role for that round.
Text Features

Fan-N-Pick

Instructions: Copy one set of cards for each team. Cut apart. Use with Fan-N-Pick Mat.

Text Features
Find or locate a:

Bullet

Bold Word

Map

Timeline

Boxed Item

Chart
Text Features
Fan-N-Pick

Instructions: Copy one set of cards for each team. Cut apart. Use with Fan-N-Pick Mat.
## Text Features

### Fan-N-Pick

Instructions: Copy one set of cards for each team. Cut apart. Use with Fan-N-Pick Mat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Features</th>
<th>Text Features</th>
<th>Text Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find or locate a:</td>
<td>Find or locate a:</td>
<td>Find or locate a:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph</td>
<td>Colored Word</td>
<td>Stylized Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find or locate a:</td>
<td>Find or locate a:</td>
<td>Find or locate a:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>Heading</td>
<td>Glossary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Text Features

Quiz-Quiz-Trade

Instructions: Copy enough cards so each student has one card. Cut on dotted lines and fold in half.

**Text Features**

**Question:** What text feature is this example?

- Little Dipper
- Big Dipper
- Orion, the Hunter
- Taurus

**Answer**

**Bullets**

**Text Features**

**Question:** What text feature is this example?

Comets have orbits.

**Answer**

**Bolded Word**

**Text Features**

**Question:** What text feature is this example?

**Answer**

**Map**

**Text Features**

**Question:** What text feature is this example?

**Answer**

**Timeline**

**Text Features**

**Question:** What text feature is this example?

Meteors that fall to Earth are called meteorites.

**Answer**

**Boxed Item**
# Text Features

## Quiz-Quiz-Trade

Instructions: Copy enough cards so each student has one card. Cut on dotted lines and fold in half.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Features</th>
<th>Question: What text feature is this example?</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Students at School</strong></td>
<td>1st Grade</td>
<td>2nd Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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## Text Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: What text feature is this example?</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Map]</td>
<td><strong>Chart</strong></td>
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## Text Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: What text feature is this example?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Animals] with labels (soft fur, ears, eyes, whiskers, claws)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagram</strong></td>
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</table>

## Text Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: What text feature is this example?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![List of items] (arachnid: 8, eggs: 2, 17, 23, fly: 12, moth: 25, wasp: 4, 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Index</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Text Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: What text feature is this example?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colorful insects are usually poisonous or bad-tasting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caption</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text feature is this example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polar bears dig their <em>dens</em> in snow or ice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text feature is this example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun Fact: Polar bears have large, flat paws, which help them walk on the snow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text feature is this example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text feature is this example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The silk <em>dragline</em> will help save a spider from a serious fall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What text feature is this example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptians used beetle designs, called <em>scarabs</em>, in jewelry and paintings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Instructions: Copy enough cards so each student has one card. Cut on dotted lines and fold in half.*
Text Features
Quiz-Quiz-Trade

Instructions: Copy enough cards so each student has one card. Cut on dotted lines and fold in half.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Features</th>
<th>Question: What text feature is this example?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bullfrog...........................................2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tree Frog..........................................6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poison Dart Frog....................................8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horned Frog.........................................10</td>
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<tr>
<th>Text Features</th>
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<td>Table of Contents</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Look Out Below!</td>
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<th>Text Features</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Heading</td>
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<tr>
<th>Text Features</th>
<th>Question: What text feature is this example?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adobe—Sun-dried brick of clay and straw</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bedouins—Nomadic tribes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desert—A very dry land region</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irrigation—Watering the land</td>
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<tr>
<th>Text Features</th>
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<td>Glossary</td>
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<td>Bee</td>
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<td>Label</td>
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<th>Text Features</th>
<th>Question: What text feature is this example?</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Polar Bears ←</td>
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<tr>
<th>Text Features</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title</td>
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by John Carter
Session VII

Lucy Calkins "All About Books"

Getting Ready

Before this session, you may want to have a small celebration (see the CD-ROM).

- The Pumpkin Book by Gail Gibbons. Ideally, make transparencies of selected pages, each page addressing a different subtopic.
- Overhead projector
- A collection of published All-About books that you can distribute, one for every partnership. Ideally, select books that have an All-About title, a table of contents, and chapters. It isn't crucial that your children be able to read these books.
- Chart paper and marker
- A book your children know well that has chapters (perhaps Poppleton or My Father's Dragon)
- All-About topic paper
- See CD-ROM for resources

This mini-lesson marks the beginning of Part 2 of this unit and will launch your children on a study of informational (or "All-About," or "teaching") writing. This mini-lesson, then, functions rather like the first mini-lesson in a new unit. Your goal is to give children an overall impression of what they'll write, kindle their enthusiasm for the work they'll undertake, and help them choose a topic that they'll write about for the next few weeks. You don't want them to begin writing their own All-About books today. Instead, today's writing workshop gives the children time to study published All-About books. You'll remind them that it's always wise to learn from the pros. When my son wants to learn a skateboarding trick, he goes to the local skate park and watches kids who are almost professional. Then he tries to do what they do. Similarly, we tell young writers, "We need to study how the pros write teaching books."

Your children will have already studied one page of The Pumpkin Book, the page that gives directions for carving a pumpkin. In this mini-lesson, your children will study the whole text of The Pumpkin Book to glimpse the overall structure of informational writing.
Connection

Remind children that they've learned to write texts that teach readers how to do something. Now they'll learn to write books that teach readers all about a subject.

"Writers, we have all written books that teach readers how to do something. We learned from Gail Gibbons, who, you remember, wrote a page about how to carve a pumpkin."

"Today I want to tell you that writers can also teach readers 'all about' a subject. For the next few weeks, we'll learn how to write All-About books."

Teach

Remind the children that when they want to do a new kind of writing, it helps to study texts similar to those they want to write.

"My son, Evan, wants to learn skateboarding tricks, so yesterday he went to the skate park and studied what the older kids do. Then he came home and tried to do the tricks he'd seen the pros doing. Writers, like skateboarders, often learn by seeing what the pros do. And so if you and I want to write All-About books, one of the first things we need to do is to study All-About books written by the pros. We'll do that today."

"Let's start by studying The Pumpkin Book. One page is a How-To page, but the whole book could be called All About Pumpkins. Let's notice how this kind of book goes and list what we notice across our fingers."

Let children hear your thinking as you begin.

"Okay. First, the title, The Pumpkin Book. I'm noticing that the title of the book gives the reader a clue that this will be an All-About book. It doesn't say, The Story of a Boy and His Pumpkin, or How to Pick a Pumpkin, or Kinds of Pumpkins. Instead it says, The Pumpkin Book, which gives me the idea this book is on the big topic of pumpkins."

Ideally, our teaching scaffolds children so they are carried from easier to more complex work, as in this instance.

The injunction to collect parallel entities (in this case, observations about All-About books) and to list them across one's fingers sets children up for some of the mental work—identifying parallel points and elaborating on each—that is fundamental to most non-narrative writing.

I could have asked, “What do you notice?”, but I have a few features in mind to spotlight. I try not to ask questions if I already know the answer I want. By showing what the title doesn't say, I help highlight what I notice about the title.
Holding one finger, I reiterated, “So the first thing I notice in All-About writing is that the title gives readers a cue that this will be an All-About book and, at least in this instance, that it will be all about a big topic.” With my hands I showed that this is what in an earlier unit we referred to as a “watermelon topic,” but I don’t use the words lest some of the children get confused about pumpkins turning into watermelons!

Notice aloud that All-About books are divided into parts.

I turned the page. “Now I notice the book has different sections. Look at this! This section is about the different kinds of pumpkins.” I flipped past that page, surveying the next page I flipped to. “This section is about the plants on which pumpkins grow. And here is a section on the history of the pumpkin. And this section of the book is about pumpkins and Halloween. We already know that there is the ‘How to Carve a Pumpkin’ page in this book, but here is another How-To page, ‘How to Dry Your Pumpkin Seeds.’”

“So I notice that this book has different sections, like different chapters. All the sections, or chapters, fit under the big topic of pumpkins, but each section is about something different.”

List the features you’ve noticed in an All-About book.

I flipped up the page on my pad of chart paper to reveal a clean page and began to list the features we’d mentioned that occur in All-About books.

We want children to realize that our teaching on any one day is always meant to influence tomorrow and next month. So it is important that our teaching be cumulative. That is, in March, we’ll refer back to phrases (“watermelon topic”) that were key in September, October, and November. In this instance, I use a gesture rather than a term to recall an earlier lesson.

This observation is an absolutely crucial one. One of the biggest challenges children will encounter when writing in this genre is that they need to categorize their information. Here, I suggest they sort information into pages which are ear-marked for different sub-topics.

I wish Gibbons’ books had chapters and a table of contents, but they don’t. But since they are perfect examples in every way but this, I stretch things a bit and describe her books as having “sections” (which I am sort of equating with chapters).

Don’t notice and list too many features. Lists are more helpful when they aren’t overly long.
Active Engagement

Give each partnership an All-About book and ask them to check if their book has these features. What other features do they notice?

“I’m going to give you and your partner another All-About book; will you investigate and see if your All-About book has these same features? Check whether,” I referred to the list, “your book has a big All-About title that signals to readers that this book will teach them all about a big topic.”

“An All-About book is more like a whole hand than a single finger. It’s big, and it has parts that go into it. See if you can see the big title,” I touched the palm of my hand, “and see if you can see smaller sections or chapters,” I touched my fingers, “How are the sections divided up,” I spread my fingers apart, “so they don’t all glob together? Turn and talk with your partner.”

Convene your children and gather their observations about All-About books.

I pointed to the chart. “Thumbs up if your book had a big All-About title?” Most thumbs went up. “And thumbs up if you found your book had different sections or chapters?” Thumbs went up. “Did anyone else find something that we can add to our chart about All-About books?”

Elicit from one child the observation that All-About books have headings.

Emily’s hand shot up. “My book has titles on a lot of pages. Some pages even have a bunch.”

“Can you show me what you mean?” I wanted to see the exact feature she was identifying. Emily pointed to bold headings in her book. “Oh! Yes. Emily’s author has written with headings. Notice the little titles at the start of the sections in her book.”

Emily nodded. “This page has one . . . two . . . titles.” She progressed slowly down the page.

“Thumbs up if your book, like Emily’s, has headings that name its different sections or chapters. The titles you find in the middle of pages are called headings. Authors write headings to tell readers the name of that section or that part. That way, readers know what they’ll learn about in the next part.”

“Let’s follow Emily’s advice and add headings to our list of what we notice in All-About books,” I said, and added “Headings” to the chart.

Don’t underestimate the power of the hand/finger metaphor in explaining the structure of All-About books.

This is the same active involvement we used two weeks ago when children were examining How-To books. It helps to be consistent as often as possible.

Notice this efficient way to gather and combine your children’s observations. You may end up using this ritual often.

Often young children will not be able to read all the words that are on the pages. They can still notice features in these parts.

Obviously your children will probably notice something entirely different and so your minilesson will diverge from this one.

Be sure that children’s ideas and words (as well as yours) get a place on the chart.
Have a child explain that All-About books often have a table of contents.

“Aiesha, will you explain what you told me you noticed about your book?”

“The first page is just like the first page in Poppleton, see, on this page it says ‘Contents.’ Then it has titles on one side and numbers on the other side. That’s just like Poppleton.”

I held up the copy of Poppleton. “So what you are saying is that when I read Poppleton aloud to the class, I told you that the first page was the contents page. And I showed you the list of chapter titles. Each title listed the page where it started.” I put down Poppleton and picked up Aiesha’s All-About book. “On this side are the titles of the different chapters, and on the other side are the page numbers.”

Tell children how the table of contents helps the reader.

“The job of the table of contents is to tell the reader the titles of the sections or the chapters in the book. Let’s now add a table of contents to our list as well,” I said, writing it on the chart.

You need to be sure your class has recently read a book with a table of contents that lists chapters. Draw attention to this structure when you read aloud. In this minilesson, when you send partnerships off to pore over books, join one partnership. Look at their book as if you are seeing it for the first time. Point out the table of contents: “Well, I’ll be! Look at this. What do you suppose this is for?” Your children will quickly share your excitement. You will have set up the children to know that close study of texts pays off.

Although there are more features that can be found, don’t try to list every one. Leave some to be discovered in the ensuing days. As your children continue to read more All-About books, they will discover new features of this genre and will love becoming famous for their discoveries.

Link

Retell what your children have done and invite children to continue doing it.

“So far today we have looked over examples of the kind of writing we wanted to do. I know you will want to look more closely at All-About books. Keep the book I just passed out to you and continue to study it today. Today, let’s spend most of writing workshop looking over All-About books.”

Ask children to also make a list of possible topics.

“After you’ve studied what the pros do, get some paper from this tray and list possible topics you could write about.”
During today's writing workshop, children will look over published books, noticing decisions the authors of those books made. They may not be able to read the books, but they'll still be able to notice captions, labels, indexes, and the like. Instead of normal conferring, be prepared to gather clusters of children together and:

- Help these children see that a book has a big topic (aircraft) and then smaller topics (planes, spaceships, blimps) and that, in this example, the blimp page only contains blimp information and the plane page only has plane information. This can be an enthralling realization to a child.
- Help the children understand the system behind the page numbers that are listed alongside the chapter titles in the table of contents.
- Help children see that there are pictures that match the information in the words.

Once a few children have seen these things in one book, encourage them to look at more books so they come to understand these features are somewhat consistent across many of the books. See conference cited at right.

You'll also want to help children imagine possible topics they could write about. Help partnerships support each other in generating lists of possible topics.
Earlier I suggested that one of the challenges children confront when they write non-narrative texts is that they can no longer rely on the sequence of time to structure their writing. It's easy, therefore, for them to end up with writing pieces that are 'piles' of assorted stuff. So for this unit, we will use the table of contents as a way to teach children that writers divide topics into subtopics and then confine themselves to addressing one subtopic at a time.

It is important to remember that children won't learn from what we do as much as from what they do. As teachers, then, we help enormously when we set up children so that they end up doing better work than they would have done without our scaffolding. Often the most efficient and effective time to intervene is early on, before children actually embark on pieces of writing.

When children write information texts in which they teach others what they know about a topic, the most important help we can give involves setting children up to write a lot about one and then another subtopic, addressing each subtopic on a separate page or in a separate section. This mini-lesson asks each child to anticipate the chapters he or she might write on a topic and to draft a table of contents. You will teach children to divide their topic into subtopics, to consider whether they have a few chunks of information related to each anticipated subtopic, and to address each subtopic on a separate sheet of paper.
Connection

Ask the children to let you know if they have an idea for a topic.

"Thumbs up if you have an idea for what your topic will be for your All-About book. Great!"

Create an image of a bandleader at a concert. Have children announce their topic when called on.

"Let's pretend this is a concert, and I am what you call the conductor. In a concert, the conductor stands at the front of all the instruments, at the front of the orchestra, and points to whichever instrument should play. So I'm going to conduct this orchestra. When I point to you, say your topic in a loud, clear voice. Okay. I'll give you a moment to get your topic in your mind. Do you have it? All right, here goes." Whenever I pointed to a child, the child announced his or her chosen topic.

"Baseball."

"Music."

"The beach."

"Snails."

Tell the children that today you will teach them how to "try on" their topics.

"You have all chosen fascinating topics. I can tell I'm going to learn a lot! Today I am going to teach you how to 'try on' your topic so you know if your topic is a good topic for you."

Teach

Liken trying on a topic to trying on a sweater. Ask the children to watch as you "try on" several topics by imagining what you could say about each.

"Writers 'try on' topics before we say, 'This is the one for me.' We try on topics just like we try on a sweater at the store before we buy it. Have you ever done that? Before I say, 'This is the one,' I sometimes put the sweater on, or I hold it up and think, 'Will this fit me? Will this work for me?' Writers do the same..."
thing. I have a list of topics, and I'll show you how I try them on to see if they will work for me. You be researchers, watching what I do, so you learn how to try on a writing topic before you choose it. My list of possible topics goes like this:

Possible Topics

- The flute
- Dogs
- Training a dog

"First I'll try on the topic of the flute." I gestured with my hands to show I was trying that topic on for size like I might try on a sweater. "I had a flute when I was little, but I didn't play it for long. Okay, I'm thinking, 'What do I know about the flute?' Umm, well—I remember it is an instrument and you blow into it and you push the keys and it sounds like a whistle, and... um... uh... well. That's sort of all I remember." I spoke with little energy, and then shrugged, making it very obvious that I neither knew nor cared about the topic.

"Let me try to think what my chapters would be if I wrote a book about the flute." By now the children had all forecast that this topic wouldn't work for me. "Chapter one could be what a flute looks like. It would be a short chapter, because I don't remember any details but I know it's shaped like a stick. Chapter two would be, um... be... um. Gosh, I'm realizing I'm not the best person to write about flutes. I tried on that topic and it didn't fit, so I'm crossing it out."

"Let me try on 'dogs.'" I hold the imaginary topic up against my torso.

"That's easy. I could have these chapters:"

Dogs

- Kinds of dogs
- Dog shows (I watch them on TV)
- Feeding your dog (because I have two, so I know)
- Training your dog (I could write a whole book on that!)

I could now summarize the gist of the process of weighing different topics by saying, "After I listed these topics, I thought, 'Which would work for me?' and I realized I didn't know a lot about the flute and so I chose training a dog." But if my goal is to mentor children in the actions of mulling over and narrowing in on a topic, it is vastly more effective to reenact the process by "opening the top of my head" and saying aloud the thoughts as I have them. Notice that I think aloud in a step-by-step fashion, weighing one topic and then the next. I set up the children to beat me to my conclusions.

If I decide to use the metaphor of "trying on" and say that we try on a topic as we might try on a sweater, I'll repeat the same phrase often. I don't try to be creative by changing the words I use, alternating between trying on, testing, checking it out, previewing, and so on, or my minilesson will not have the coherence I want.

One could "try on" topics in lots of ways. I decide to do so by generating a list of subtopics because I'm steering the children to do this soon.
“So the topic of dogs fits me! Now let me try on the topic of ‘training your dog’ because I think I could write a whole book just about that one chapter. Let’s see, I could write:”

**Training Your Dog**
- How to teach your dog to heel
- How to teach your dog to come when you call
- Different treats you could give your dog
- Questions and answers for what to do if your dog is hard to train
- Different books you can read to learn about training your dog

“So I have two topics that fit me, and I just need to decide which will make the better book.”

**Active Engagement**

Find a child whose topic is familiar to all. Tell the class to identify some chapters that the child could possibly write on this topic.

“Earlier we heard that Christine might write about recess. Will you pretend that recess is on your list and practice trying on that topic? Work with your partner, and see if you can list across your fingers the chapters you might put in a book about recess. Think about whether you’d have a lot of interesting things to say in each of your chapters. See if this is one of the topics that could fit you.” The room erupted with talk.

“I heard you guys say lots of things. You are right that in her book about recess, Christine could have a chapter on playing Red Rover and another chapter on walking up the slide. And she could have a chapter on different things you can do if it’s a rainy-day recess.”

**Things to Do at Recess**
- Playing Red Rover
- Walking up the slide
- Different kinds of things to do during a rainy-day recess

In Session X you’ll show how you deliberate on the genre of each of your subtopics. It’ll help if the first subtopic or two are How-To subtopics because your children will know a lot about that genre. It’ll also help if a second or third subtopic addresses “different kinds of something” so that, after you remind children of what they know about the genre of How-To writing, you can teach this next genre. Don’t select a subtopic that suggests a third genre unless your kids are strong writers and it is a clear and useful genre for which you have specially formatted paper. You won’t use the “different kinds of something” paper or mention the genre implicit in any of these subtopics until Session X.

It’s not an accident that Christine’s topic is one the whole class can address—I wouldn’t ask kids to imagine what they’d write about Christine’s uncle.

Christine and her recess book won’t be in your class. The topic you mention and the sub-topics will be incorporated into Session X’s minilesson, so read ahead and overhear subtopics that will allow you to make the points you want to make. You can listen furiously, with extra intensity, or you can pretend (if you don’t mind white lies). Say “I heard some of you suggest . . .” and then complete the sentence with whatever you wish you’d heard!
Link

Tell children that today they need to try each of their topics and then start writing.

"So today, try on each of your topics. Talk about the different topic choices with your partner. If you have a topic that feels like it will work, then you can get a blank piece of table of contents paper," I held a piece up [Fig.VIII-1], "and start to write your table of contents."

"You don’t have to finish the table of contents before you start writing chapter one. If you are ready to start writing, come and see me so I can help you decide on the paper you’ll need. And remember, for the rest of your life, that before you write an All-About piece, it’s good to try out your topic."

Throughout these minilessons, we provide children with scaffolds. One is the table of contents paper; set up to remind children that they'll list chapters (their subtopics) and provide page numbers for each. Another scaffold is the frequent request to "list across your fingers." Yet another is the special paper they’ll soon use within each chapter. Each page will be tailored to support the genre of that chapter.

### Table of Contents

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Fig. VIII-1 Table of Contents paper

Don’t wait too long before you make this intervention.

The concept that a writer can elaborate on an idea by talking about the different parts or kinds of a topic is rich. Think, for example, about minilessons. What are the different kinds of minilessons? What are the different parts of this structure? How about the different kinds of conferences and the different parts of them?

Remind children to make covers for their books.

"Get back to work. After you list three or four topics, try to choose one. If you’ve made your choice, use cover paper and make yourself a cover."
It's early in your students' work with All-About writing, so your conferring will still be closely aligned to your minilessons. Your goals aren't particularly fancy:

- You want every child to have in mind a topic that you believe can sustain the child's interest for two weeks—one that the child knows something about. You may want to nudge your more experienced writers to select a focused topic. That is, a child could write a book on either a broad topic such as birds or a focused topic such as birds' feathers—the latter would be more challenging.
- A few children will have trouble imagining what might go in a table of contents. See "What Will You Write in Your Table of Contents?" from The Conferring Handbook.
- You want each child to begin imagining what he or she will write. Use a published book to provide the template and help a child who is writing about race cars realize that his topic will go on the cover, and then realize that the things he knows about race cars (kinds of them, famous drivers, what happens at a race) get listed on the Table of Contents page and that each topic on that list will then become a separate chapter.
- You may set up a few children for tomorrow's lesson by helping them see that some of their chapters are How-To chapters and will need How-To paper and others are different-kinds-of-things chapters and can profit from paper that supports this structure.

See the conference cited at right.
Remind the children of their chart about the genre. Read each item from the chart while children point to where they've incorporated that item in their drafts.

"Yesterday I told you how my son Evan goes to the skate park and studies what kids who are practically pros do to pull off skateboard tricks. Then he comes home and tries the same things. And we studied Gail Gibbons, who is a pro at writing All-About books and we learned things she does to write All-About books." I revealed the chart the class had made the day before.

**All-About Books Often Have**

- A big All-About title
- A How-To page
- Chapters or sections
- Headings
- Table of contents

"Many of us decided to try the same things. Let's check out what we've done and what we haven't done. Put your book (or your cover and your table of contents) in front of you. Okay. Let's reread our chart and check. All-About books often have 'a big All-About title.' If you have this, point to it. All-About books often have 'a How-To page.' If you have this, point to it. If you plan to have it, thumbs up. All-About books often have, 'chapters or sections.' Thumbs up if you plan to have those. And All-About books often have 'headings' and a 'table of contents.' If you have either of these, point to it."

Tell children that by reviewing charts, you often realize work you still need to do.

"Writers, when I reread charts and check my work, I sometimes realize things I need to do tomorrow. If rereading this chart gave you ideas for tomorrow, that's great."

There are a couple of wise moves in this share session. First, I very briefly review the trajectory of thought we've been on before moving forward into the new work of showing children how to use a chart to guide their review of their work and their plans for tomorrow. If we really do want today's work to stand on the shoulders of yesterday, it helps to show how today fits with what's gone before. This is something good readers do and good teachers do it as well. Then, too, it's important for us to think through the logistical challenges in our teaching so as to keep things as smooth as possible. First children lay yesterday's work out, then I reread one item from the chart, then each child points to where he or she incorporated this item in his or her writing, then I read the second item from the chart. The logistical forethought makes this double.
Assessment

Take home your students’ writing right away and look at what they have done. Although they haven’t written much at this point, you will get an early sense of whether their topics taking them on the right journey. Your children’s work will give you a window into their understanding of this new genre of nonfiction writing.

After you are fairly confident about your students’ choice of topics, have a fast look at each child’s table of contents. Because your children have recently studied the intricacies of how-to books and are probably quite adept at this kind of writing, you should expect to find How-to sections in every book. In fact, some of your students might choose to have even more than one. Nicole’s table of contents lets us know that she is planning a section on how to feed a baby, but also another one on how to change a baby’s diaper. More cars at About Cars or cooking contains a “How to Make a Sandwich” section as well as a “How to Set the Table” section.

Then, too, you will expect to find that many students are planning a different kind of something sections. Because you’ve planned a mini-lesson on the possibilities within the topic, Carlos has planned a section on different kinds of toys. On the other hand, Felito has so far planned only a section on how to choose candy. Relate to and children like him may need to see more examples of other possibilities and may need more individual conferences or small-group work. Why not plan now for how you will support these students over the next few days?
This session moves writers to a dramatic new level of thinking. You'll suggest that when writers plan out their subtopics (or their chapters), they think not only, "What will I write on this page?" but also, "How will this chapter be organized?" Then writers select paper (and a genre) that matches their content. This, of course, is rich intellectual work even for you and me, let alone for five- and six-year-olds, but it is work that can be taught in such a simple, concrete fashion that we shouldn't be afraid to bring it to youngsters.

Today, you'll show children that in some of their chapters they'll teach readers how to do something and will therefore want How-To paper (and will be using the How-To genre) and that in other chapters they will teach readers that there are different kinds of something and that these chapters will require paper that matches the design of their genre. (All forms of paper are on the CD-ROM.)
Connection
Tell the children that you'll teach them that when writing each chapter, the writer must select a genre and paper to match.

"Thumbs up if you have a topic for an All-About book. Great! Thumbs up if you tried out the topic by listing a bunch of different chapters you could write." Again, most children gave a thumbs up sign. "Great!"

"I know, too, that many of you looked at published All-About books to get ideas for your book. Today we'll look again at The Pumpkin Book, and I want to teach you that when we try to tell readers all about something, each of our chapters is like a new piece of writing. For each chapter, we need to think, 'What kind of paper do I need for this chapter?'

Teach
Remind the children that when Gail Gibbons wrote her book she used particular features and a particular format.

"Remember when Gail Gibbons wrote a chapter on how to carve a pumpkin, she made this chapter into a How-To page and she titled it 'How to Carve a Pumpkin' so readers would know what to expect. Ther she used other helpers, too, to help us learn from her book. She wrote steps to take when carving a pumpkin and numbered them one, two, three, and so on. Remember how she had pictures to go with her words, pictures that taught people what to do? Here, in another book, Apples, Gibbons writes, 'How to Plant and Care for an Apple Tree,' and she does similar things.

Whenever possible, I make new points by referring to familiar rather than to new texts. It's easier for a child to focus on the new point (rather than on a new text as well) if everything but that one new point is kept consistent and familiar.

I am reminding children of what they learned earlier in this unit—and setting the stage for the lesson I'll teach today.
"In your All-About books, you (like Gail Gibbons) will probably have a How-To page or two. If you make a How-To page, use those same helpers!"

"Here in this bin, I've put paper that is set up so you can write a How-To page or two in your books. I know Marco will write how to build a castle, and Joline will write how to invent stories to go with the clouds. I know you guys will want to use this special how-to paper for those chapters."

Ask the children to tell their partner if they will write a How-To page inside their books, and if so, what will they teach people how to do.

"Tell your partner if you think you might use paper from this bin and write a How-To page within your book, and if so, what it will teach people how to do."

Show another chapter organized as a different genre, written on different paper.

"But often, instead of teaching us how to do something, Gail Gibbons wants to teach readers that there are a few—maybe three or four—kinds of something. Remember this page in Apples?" I showed the page "Some Common Apples Grown in North America." "Gail shows us there are different kinds of apples by cutting the page into parts, with each square showing a different kind of apple. And here, at the back of Apples, she has another page. This page tells different kinds of facts about apples. She again cuts the page into squares, and for each square she has a picture and a bunch of words telling more about the picture!"

Demonstrate rereading your table of contents, deciding on the genre and paper for each chapter.

"I realize that I need to reread my table of contents and decide what paper I need for each of my chapters. Watch how I decide, okay? Let's see ..." I read from my earlier chart.

![Picture of a book]

"Hmm, I guess that in this chapter I'd want to tell readers you need a leash and a collar, and I'd say that the first thing you do ... Wait! That sounds like a How-To! I'll put the stuff you need up top like I put the stuff I needed to make cinnamon toast, then I tell the steps I take to train my dog to heel."

If I'm trying to make a general point, it usually helps to tell a few emblematic details—but only a few. When I say, "She used other helpers, too, to help us learn from her book," I follow this up by mentioning that she numbered her steps and provided pictures to match the words. But my goal in listing these details isn't to be comprehensive. It's to use these details as another way to make my general point. The same is true when I discuss what particular children will do. I don't cite more than two—Marco and Joline—because those two are enough to convey my general point.

Your purpose here is to show that each chapter needs to be ascribed a genre and given matching paper. To make this point, you need to move along quickly. No one kind of paper is crucial. You want your students to learn that non-narrative texts are structured in a variety of ways. Before a writer approaches a subtopic, he or she thinks, "How will I organize this?" The choices you demonstrate here are especially distinct and fundamental to non-narrative writing, but the fact that writers pause to consider their structure before writing a section is your most crucial point.

Again, each session revisits and builds on earlier sessions.

I reenact rather than summarize the process I go through to decide on the genre. Of course it's no accident that my first subtopic is written in the genre the class knows best.
I reread the next item on my list (as if to myself):

Then, as if I was just that moment becoming aware, said, "That's practically the same as 'teaching your dog to heel!'" I picked up another sheet of How-To paper. "I need How-To paper for that, too." Then I continued reading.

"Hrm, I'll say liver, bacon, dog biscuits... hrm, let's see. I'm thinking that I can't put step one, step two, if I want to tell about the different treats you can give your dog." As I spoke, I looked at the How-To paper, as if struggling to see how and if the content of a chapter on "Different Treats" could fit on the same paper (and in the same genre) as chapters on "Training Your Dog."

"I think this will need different-kinds-of-something paper." I picked up a piece of paper that was sectioned into squares, each containing a box for a picture and lines for words. [Fig. IX-1]

Pointing to one of the four empty squares, I said, "I can write 'dog biscuit' here and draw a biscuit and tell about that. Then I can draw 'liver' and tell about that."

My hope is that by saying out loud a sequence of thoughts, I encourage children to think along the same path and they will beat me to the conclusion I end up reaching. I want them to conclude that if I'm telling about different kinds of treats for my dog, this "chapter" fits the different-kinds-of-something paper.

Fig. IX-1  Different-Kinds-of-Something paper
Active Engagement

Together, choose the genre for each chapter in the book the class planned in the preceding lesson. Ask the children to tell their partner the genre and paper they'd use for the first chapter.

"So if we, as a class, took Christine's idea and decided to write a book about recess," I referred to the list the class made previously of chapters Christine's book might contain, "do you think one of her chapters might be a how-to-do-something chapter written on paper like this?" I hold up a sheet of How-To paper. [Fig IX-2] I read aloud the list the class had made:

![TODS TO DO AT RECESS](image)

- Playing Red Rover
- Walking up the slide
- Different kinds of things to do during a rainy-day recess

"Tell your partner if you see a chapter in Christine's recess book in which she could use How-To paper." Each child in the class turned to sit knee to knee with a partner; and soon everyone was talking.

Reconvene the class and say what you heard.

"I heard smart ideas. Christine could write, 'How to Play Red Rover,' or 'How to Walk Up the Slide' and she'd be smart to write those as How-To chapters. She'd have to think, 'What do we do first when we play that? Next? Next?' Some of you came up with more How-To chapters she hadn't even thought of yet. Christine could write 'How to Jump Rope.' So she needs to get this kind of paper," I picked up a sheet from the bin full of How-To paper, "for those pages of her recess book."

I've carefully set up children for success. Obviously, the first two chapters on this list could be written as procedural text, which children have already learned how to do.

I worded the third item in this manner because otherwise each of these items could conceivably be written on How-To paper, which doesn't make my point.

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Fig. IX-2 How-To paper
Help children consider whether the same child's book might contain a chapter that requires different-kinds-of-something paper. (Be sure the answer is yes!)

"Now, listen up. Here is my next question. Do you suppose Christine could use this kind of paper and write about different kinds of something in her recess book?" I held up a piece of paper as shown in Figure IX-3.

Ask the children to imagine what they'd write in a chapter titled "Different Things We Do During Indoor Recess."

Pointing to the line at the top of the page where a title would go, I said, "You could write, 'Different Things We Do During Indoor Recess.' Hmm, what might go in these different boxes? Hmm, different things we do during indoor recess. Hmm. Will you think about what might go in the different sections of the paper? Tell your partner." The children began to talk excitedly.

After just a minute, I reconvened the class. "I heard you say we could write that during indoor recess we play games," I pointed to one square, "we read," I pointed to the next square, "and we talk. Or you could say, 'We play Clue, we play bingo, we play cards.' It's up to Christine."

**Link**

Ask the children to think of a How-To page they could write. Then ask them to think of a different-kinds-of-something page they could write.

"So right now, in your mind, do this. Think of a How-To page you could write using this paper in your All-About book." There was a long silence. "Thumbs up when you've thought of one.

"Now think of what could go on a different-kinds-of-something page you could write using this kind of paper." Again, there was a minute of silence. "Thumbs up if you've thought of this. Keep these pages in your mind now as you get started on today's work. As you leave the meeting, take whichever paper you'll need for your first bit of writing. If any of you are not sure how to get started, stay on the rug and we'll work together."

The sequence of our teaching is very important. The last words we say are those our children carry with them, so it's often wise to reiterate the main direction you want children to take.

The moment of silence is more important than you can imagine. Don't rush past it.
Ask children to search with you in published books for other organizational structures to use in All-About books.

"Today we talked about making a parts-of page in your All-About books. You can get ideas for other pages and for the special paper they require by looking at published All-About books. Let's try it together, okay? Will one of you come up and look through this book and find a page where you think Gai has done something we could learn from?"

Rosa settled on the last page in Gibbons' book, which was a catalog of facts about pumpkins.

Suggest children can try these structures in their own books.

"How interesting. What a great choice! This is a different page. Gail Gibbons made a page full of interesting facts that she knew her reader would want to know. Decide with your partner if you can include a similar page in your book."

By now you should anticipate that instruction is usually sequenced so that in the end, we invite and support initiative, invention, and independence.
Getting Ready

All-About books in which the children have been writing (ask them to sit on them until it is time to attend to them)

See CD-ROM for resources

Teaching children to write is like teaching them to swim. There is very little you can do from the front of the class to make your children good swimmers. If they are going to learn these strokes, they need to do them. Therefore, you wisely describe a technique for a minute or two and then get into the pool. “Come on in,” you say, and get them to try what you have described. “That’s it. I love the way you are. . . .” And then you notice one thing they need to do differently. “The only thing I’d suggest is. . . .”

By this time in your study of All-About writing, you will have spent plenty of time on the side of the pool, describing the moves you want your children to make. Now they need to plunge in, and you need to watch, and to be ready to say, “That’s it. The only thing I’d suggest is. . . .”

The challenge is to think, “When I watch my children doing this, what can I imagine teaching that might make a difference?” In this session, you will respond to your children’s tendency to share feelings rather than teach facts. You’ll respond to the fact that they seem more apt to write, “I love cats. They are cute and nice,” rather than, “Persian cats have long fluffy hair.”

In this session, you remind the children that All-About books contain information and ideas, and you encourage them to become students of their subject, gathering bits of information they can include in their books.
Connection

remind children they are trying to teach about the subject of their books.

"For the last few weeks, you have been writing books that teach. Last night I took your All-About books home and studied them. I realized that I want to talk to you today about being teachers because that is what you are when you write teaching books."

"In my town, there are classes for grown-ups. I can sign up to go to a cooking class or a computer class or a flower class. I recently took a class on flowers."

"I sat in the chair with all these other grown-ups in the other chairs." I acted out my words, demonstrating that I sat diligently, an eager student. "I was ready for our class on flowers. Our teacher came in and he looked at us. He said, 'Today I will teach you about flowers.' Then he said, 'I had a suggestion that would hardly be adequate instruction' "Flowers are nice. Flowers are pretty. I love flowers. Flowers are great, great, great. Some flowers are red, some flowers are yellow. All flowers are pretty.' Then he said, 'Class is over. You can go home.'"

Looking out at the children, I asked, "Do you think that was a very good class?"

In unison, the children chorused, "No!"

"You're right. I said to that teacher, 'But, but, but ... I didn't learn anything yet.' You see, when a teacher says, 'Come to my class on flowers,' the teacher is sort of making a promise. The teacher is promising to teach people about flowers."

explain that when a writer writes a teaching book, the writer is teaching a class on the subject.

"Writers, I am telling you this because when you write an All-About book,
you are the teacher. And when you give people your book,” I gestured to show a child handing someone his or her book, “you are saying, ‘Come take my class on flowers’—or cats—or recess—or stickers. And you are sort of making a promise. You are promising to teach people about your topic.”

“If I come to your class, if I read your book, and it just says, ‘Cats are cute, cats are nice, cats are sweet, I love cats,’ and I don’t learn anything, then when I finish reading your book, when it says ‘The end, you can go home now,’ I’m going to say, ‘But, but, but . . . I didn’t learn anything yet.’”

“Whenever you write a teaching book, you need to make sure you don’t break your promise. You have to teach your reader. Today I will show you how to do that.”

Teach
Tell the children to ask, “What do I have to teach that my reader might not already know.” Demonstrate.

“Teaching is sort of like giving, and if I am going to teach you about my topic, I have to think, ‘What do I have that I can give you?’ So if I were going to teach people about our recess time, I’d have to think, ‘What do I have to give them—to teach them—about recess?’”

“Watch me getting ready to teach grown-ups about our recess because pretty soon I am going to ask each of you to teach people about your topic.”

“So first I think, ‘What do I know about our recess?’ Hmm. I know kids play at recess, but I bet everyone knows that! Hmm. What do I know about recess that grown-ups might not know? Maybe I could teach them about the special games you all play at our recess—like yesterday, I saw you all making a long train on the slide, with each of you holding someone’s waist. I bet they don’t know about that! And I bet they don’t know that you play King of the Castle on the pile of tires! I could say which games lots of kids play and which games some kids play.”

Remind children to ask, “What do I know that I could teach?” and tell them writers of All-About books must ask this.

“Did you notice that when I wanted to write a teaching book on recess, I

This minilesson folds back on itself. I tell the story of a teacher who doesn’t deliver in a way that we expect and therefore lets us down, and then I suggest that my students, like that teacher, need to actually teach or else they, like the teacher, will let people down. Because I am trying to suggest that my students are similar to that teacher, I use the same terms to describe the teacher as I use to describe my students.

The teaching method I use in this minilesson is demonstration. Therefore I reenact step by step the procedure I go through as a writer. Because I want my children to learn from this demonstration, the subject that I choose to write about in my role-play is a topic on which each of my children is an authority. This way, my role-playing is more apt to be within their reach. Also, the topic—recess—is the same one I wove through my earlier minilessons. I don’t want to jump around in a chaotic fashion, role-playing one day that I am writing about cats and another day about recess. By keeping many aspects of my minilesson simple and consistent, I spotlight the teaching point I am trying to make.
asked myself, ‘What do I know that I could teach people?’ and even, ‘What do I know that they might not know?’ Those are questions writers who are teachers need to ask.”

Active Engagement

Ask the children to reread yesterday’s writing counting how many things they taught readers.

“In a minute, I am going to ask you to open your book to the page or two you wrote yesterday. Then I am going to ask you to read what you wrote yesterday and, on your fingers, count up how many new things you taught your readers during yesterday’s writing. Do that now. Let’s each work alone, quietly.”

Set up children to practice teaching about yesterday’s topic with a partner.

“Writers, can I have your eyes up here please?” I waited for their attention. “Will you think of your topic? Think, ‘What do I know about that topic that I could teach people?’ Squeeze your mind. Think, ‘I could teach them that . . .’ and see if you come up with something you know that your reader might not know. Do that quietly.”

“So partner one. Right now, you are the teacher. And partner two has come to take a course with you on your topic. Say to your partner, ‘Hello. Today I am going to teach you about . . .’—you say the topic. Then teach your partner some things you know. Okay. So partner one, start off by saying, ‘I am going to teach . . .’ Begin.”

As the children talked, I moved among them, encouraging the teaching partner to give examples and to provide details and encouraging the listening partner to ask questions.

Asking children to do something on their own, quietly, while they sit before you on the rug is much more powerful than you might think. Be sure you don’t break the spell by talking with a child during this interval. If you have been writing your own All-About book along with the children, tell them, “I’ll do this too,” and model the activity. Otherwise say, “I’m going to admire you as you work,” but don’t ever talk one-on-one or they’ll get restless.

Speak as if your words can mobilize every child to do this—and they can! Give them time; expect their minds to be doing as you suggest.

This is an important part of this lesson. You are positioning your children to adopt the mindframe that is fundamental to this kind of writing. The goal of this lesson is to convey to children that when they write information texts, they need to teach others about their topic; that is, it isn’t enough for them simply to comment on or talk about their topics. Instead, they need to think of something to teach and then teach it. Here, you set up kids to do this, much as a person does who runs along behind a bicycle, getting a novice bicyclist up and going.
Remind students of what they are doing well and ask partners to switch roles.

"Teachers, I loved the way many of you told your students little tiny details about baseball and Frisbees and baby brothers. You didn’t just say ‘You can play games,’ you told particular games! You didn’t just say, ‘Baby brothers are messy,’ you told particular ways that they are messy.

‘Will partner two now become the teacher? Start off by saying, ‘I am going to teach you about ___.’ And don’t forget to be detailed. Give examples."

Link

Remind the children that when they write teaching books, they are promising to teach.

"Writers, remember that whenever you write a teaching book, you make a promise to your reader. Your reader comes to your book like I came to that man’s course on flowers. Your reader wants to learn stuff, just like I wanted to learn at that class. And when the teacher just goes, ‘Flowers are nice, flowers are great, I like flowers,’ I said, ‘No fair. You promised to teach me.’ Remember, when you write a teaching book, you are making a promise that you will teach us."

If children are searching for something to teach readers, they can think of information pertaining to their topics and numbers.

"Writers, some of you are having trouble thinking of all the stuff you know on your topic. Let me show you something. Right now, think of your topic.” I waited. “So I am thinking of recess. One thing you can teach people is, you can teach them numbers that go with a topic. So I am thinking about the numbers that go with recess. Umm. Well, the number of minutes is twenty minutes, recess is twenty minutes long. The number of swings we have is eight. The number of kids that can get on one swing at a time is two. So I could put those numbers in a teaching book about recess. Will you and your partner see if you can come up with numbers about your topic?"

Here I tack a follow-up point under the main message of the minilesson. I expect that the stronger writers may pick up on this pointer and that it will fly over the heads of others.

Notice that once again my link circles back to earlier aspects of the minilesson.

It is crucial that we not only assign but also teach. It would have been easy simply to exhort children to make their books informative. The challenge instead is to equip them to do this. It’s a little challenging to come up with guidelines like these because it’s not really clear what will equip kids for the mental actions that are so fundamental to writing well. In this instance, I thought, “What do I do when I am trying to drum up something to say?” and I invented this suggestion. You will come up with others to share. Some will pan out; some won’t. The point is, we need to do more than simply tell kids what we hope they will do.

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Remind children they can teach their readers names related to their topics.

“Writers, another thing you can teach people is the names of things. Like I could teach them the names of our playground aides—Ms. Merriman and Mr. Flax—and I could teach them the names of the games you guys play, like Red Rover and Spud. Tell your partner names of things that go with your topic.” Again, the children began to talk excitedly.

“I heard Maggie telling her partner the names of parts of the violin, and Sherry said the names of different kinds of pizza.”

Remind children they can share advice or weird facts related to their topics.

“Writers, another thing you can do to teach people is to share advice. I could tell readers, ‘At recess, don’t forget your coat or you’ll have to go back and get it.’ Will you tell your partner advice you could give your reader on your topic?”

“One of the most fun things to put in your book is something weird about your topic. I learned yesterday that each mosquito has one hundred fifty teeth. I can’t put that in my recess book, but if you know something really weird and interesting about your topic, tell it to your partner and definitely put it in your book.” Again, the room was filled with talk.

“I heard Keisha say that pigs only have four toes on each foot! That is definitely something Keisha should include in her book!”

I learned about the number of a mosquito’s teeth from the lid of a Snapple drink. As teachers, we collect whatever we can and weave it together into instruction.
This minilesson posed some interesting challenges for your students. There will be children returning to their text who are trying to see if their teaching book is really teaching. You can also expect to have many conferences with your students showing them various types of information that they might want to incorporate into their text. Many of these conferences can also be done with small groups of children as strategy lessons. Because you encouraged your students to look at books, it will be helpful to have a few carefully selected books on hand to refer to in your conferences. Here are some tips to remember. These tips are listed in more detail on the CD.

- Help a child weave advice into the rest of the book. Show her the option of a “Remember to” section (Click) or “Helpful Hints.”
- Help a child find a “home” for a weird fact. Show him how to make a new section, “Can You Believe This” or “Fun Facts.” (Click, Recycle)
- Help a child see different ways to use numbers in relation to his topic (weight, year, kinds of, length of time).
- Help a child see different ways to use names in relation to her topic (lists of places, related people).
- If a child has written factual information, help her to reread her writing and find a place that she might want to add her own thoughts or response.

These conferences in The Confering Handbook may be especially helpful today:

- “Make a Mental Movie of Yourself Following Your Directions to Test Them for Clarity”
- “What Will You Write in Your Table of Contents?”
- “If There’s No Punctuation, When I Read Your Report It Sounds Like Gobbledygook”

Also, if you have Confering with Primary Writers, you may want to refer to the conferences in part six.
Tell the children that some of them realized they needed to learn more before they could teach others. Send them off in small groups to study related nonfiction books, to inform their texts.

"Writers, some of you aren't sure you really know enough about your topic to write a teaching book that really teaches. And that's a very smart thing to realize. But I want to tell you a secret. The way teachers get smart is, we study our topics. There are books written on most of your topics. I don't have books on everybody's topics, but I do have many. And I thought you guys could read these books together, and work together to see if the books can teach you things that you can add to your books."

"If you learn things that you want to put in your book, you know how to revise to add information, don't you?"

"So, right now, will Emily and Melinda come up? I have a book for you two. And will Napoleon and Michael come up? I have a book for you the two of you as well." Soon the class was full of children reading books related to the topics on which they were writing.

Encourage writers to bring these "study books" into the reading workshop and to take them home that evening, continuing to read them.

After five minutes, I intervened. "Writers, may I stop you? Writing time is over, but many of you have asked whether you can bring these books into the reading workshop and whether you can take them home in your book baggies tonight, and the answer to both questions is yes. It is a great idea to get really smart on the topic about which you are writing."

If you are worried about children copying from these books and want to caution them to put what they learn into their own words, you can do so. With these children, it didn't seem necessary. This wasn't an issue for us yet.

It's wise to encourage children to take these books home because their caregivers can help them to read them.
Suggest that students observe the world to learn about their topic, not just read about it.

"Writers, I know that many of you will be taking home books on your topic to learn more information, but I want to tell you that another way that writers study their topic is to use their eyes to see what they can learn. So today, I can imagine that Napoleon can study the fire engines when he passes the firehouse on the way home. And I can imagine that Micali might stop and look at all the flowers she passes on the way home. This is called observation, and today, see if there is something that you can observe that will make you smarter about your topic. Make sure you take some paper so that, as you are doing this important work, you can draw pictures and write words about what you are seeing, and then tomorrow you can add the new information to your writing."
Today's mid-workshop advice or share or minilesson can easily become a minilesson for a second or third day. If you decide to do that, for today's share have two children teach the class about their subjects.

You could help the children know that it is important to think, "What might my reader want to know more about?" and even to anticipate the particular questions a reader might ask, adding information that will answer these questions. One of the guiding principles of this kind of writing is, "Answer your readers' questions when they ask them."

You could suggest that the children prepare for this kind of writing by using the prompt, "I will teach you that...."

You could ask the children to reread their writing looking for sections that can be deleted. When I do this with my own writing, I speak of these as sections of my text that don't earn their keep. That metaphor won't work for children, but you can find a way to convey that sometimes they've chatted on and on about a topic and their words are sort of empty. What a great thing it is for writers to realize "I wasn't really saying anything there" and to delete those passages.

You may want to encourage the children to listen to writing done by one another, by you, or by other authors, noticing when and how writers put information into their text.

If your children are old enough, you might notice together the kinds of information writers include in their texts: numbers, quotations, definitions, history, warnings, instructions, and so on.
You will definitely want to see what this mini-lesson worked. If you simply collect children's work and take it home, you won't know which sections of children's writing were written today and which already existed. You may therefore want to take a moment at the end of today's writing workshop to ask children to mark where today's writing work began. Then you can look over at least a sample of their pieces to see whether today's mini-lesson helped the children include more information. If you don't see much of an effect, you will probably want to revisit this concept for another day or two.

Riger comes from pursuing a line of thought or work. Once you see children including more information, you can say to yourself, either, 'Good, that's done,' or 'So that's done. What's next?' Every step forward opens up new horizons. If children are including information, you can extend this in a host of ways. For example, you will probably find that children throw facts together without a lot of thought about the order of these facts. You can also show them that not only do writers include facts and other types of information, they also order in these facts. It is also great if children learned the myth of well-told with a fact, then one of surrounding the fact will come through in a commentary.
The Star Spangled Banner Lyrics

By Francis Scott Key 1814

Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country should leave us no more!
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph o'er wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved home and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!
A Nation's Strength
by Ralph Waldo Emerson

What makes a nation's pillars high
And it’s foundations strong?
What makes it mighty to defy
The foes that round it throng?

It is not gold. Its kingdoms grand
Go down in battle shock;
Its shafts are laid on sinking sand,
Not on abiding rock.

Is it the sword? Ask the red dust
Of empires passed away;
The blood has turned their stones to rust,
Their glory to decay.

And is it pride? Ah, that bright crown
Has seemed to nations sweet;
But God has struck its luster down
In ashes at his feet.

Not gold but only men can make
A people great and strong;
Men who for truth and honor’s sake
Stand fast and suffer long.

Brave men who work while others sleep,
Who dare while others fly...
They build a nation's pillars deep
And lift them to the sky.
The Flag Goes By

by H.H. Bennett

Hats off!
Along the street there comes
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums,
A flash of color beneath the sky:
Hats off!
The flag is passing by!

Blue and crimson and white it shines,
Over the steel-tipped, ordered lines.
Hats off!
The colors before us fly;
But more than the flag is passing by.

Sea-fights and land-fights, grim and great,
Fought to make and to save the State;
Weary marches and sinking ships;
Cheers of victory on dying lips;

Days of plenty and years of peace,
March of a strong land's swift increase:
Equal justice, right and law,
Stately honor and reverent awe;

Sign of a nation, great and strong,
To ward her people from foreign wrong;
Pride and glory and honor, all
Live in the colors to stand or fall.

Hats off!
Along the street there comes
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums,
And loyal hearts are beating high:
Hats off!
The flag is passing by!
George Washington
by Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benét

Sing hey! For bold George Washington,

That jolly British tar,

King George’s famous admiral

From Hull to Zanzibar!

No—wait a minute—something’s wrong—

George wished to sail the foam.

But, when his mother thought aghast,

Of Georgie shinning up a mast,

Her tears and protests flowed so fast

That George remained at home.

Sing ho! For grave Washington,

The staid Virginia squire,

Who farms his fields and hunts his hounds

And aims at nothing higher!

Stop, stop it’s going wrong again!

George liked to live on farms,

But when the Colonies agreed

They could and should and would be freed,

They called on George to do the deed

And George cried “Shoulder arms!”

Sing ha! For Emperor Washington,

That hero of renown,

Who freed his land from Britain’s rule
To win a golden crown!

No, no, that’s what George might have won

But didn’t for he said,

“There’s not much point about a king,

They’re pretty but they’re apt to sting

And, as for crowns—the heavy thing

Would only hurt my head.”

Sing ho! For our George Washington!

(At last I’ve got it straight.)

The first in war, the first in peace,

The goodly and the great.

But, when you think about him now,

From here to Valley Forge,

Remember this—he might have been

A highly different specimen,

And, where on earth would we be, then?

I’m glad that George was George.
Washington Monument by Night
Carl Sandburg (1922)

1

The stone goes straight.
A lean swimmer dives into night sky,
Into half-moon mist.

2

Two trees are coal black.
This is a great white ghost between.
It is cool to look at,
Strong men, strong women, come here.

3

Eight years is a long time
To be fighting all the time.

4

The republic is a dream.
Nothing happens unless first a dream.

5

The wind bit hard at Valley Forge one Christmas.
Soldiers tied rags on their feet.
Red footprints wrote on the snow . . .
. . . and stone shoots into stars here
. . . into half-moon mist tonight.

6

Tongues wrangled dark at a man.
He buttoned his overcoat and stood alone.
In a snowstorm, red hollyberries, thoughts, he stood alone.

7

Women said: He is lonely
. . . fighting . . . fighting . . . eight years . . .

8

The name of an iron man goes over the world.
It takes a long time to forget an iron man.
Here is the Star-Spangled Banner reader's theater script. I do this unit in three to four 30-minute class periods. During the first class, I tell students the story as outlined here. I make it as dramatic and exciting as possible, adding lots of details. At the end of the class, we talk about what happened to the flag after the war and look at pictures of it hanging in the Smithsonian, battle holes still there. During the second class period, I hand out these scripts, and we assign parts and look over the scripts for unfamiliar words that they may need help in pronouncing. We read the script as a performance in the classroom. If there is time, we read it a second time, and this time we spic it up with battle sounds (always lots of volunteers) and use flashlights covered with red and yellow cellophane flashed on the wall to simulate the 'rockets' red glare.' During the third class period, we look at the entire text of the song and discuss the meaning of the words. They are always amazed at how much sense it makes once they know the story. We end the class period by singing all the verses, standing at attention with the flag raised. Depending on the weather, a fourth class period may be used to go outside (or to the gym, I suppose) and measure a 30 X 42 foot rectangle, so that they can see the actual size of the original flag.

The Story of The Star-Spangled Banner
By Becky Olson

Cast: Major George Armistead, Mary Pickersgill, Caroline Pickersgill, Dr. William Beanes, John Skinner, Francis Scott Key, British Admiral, 2 British Sailors, Narrators

Narrator 1: The year was 1812, and America and England were at war again! The Americans fought to capture British forts in the north and west. The British responded by attacking American ports and creating blockades of ships so that people and goods could not get in or out.

Narrator 2: In Baltimore, Major George Armistead was in charge of the American fort - Fort McHenry. Fort McHenry was shaped like a star, with large cannons at each point. It guarded the city of Baltimore and the surrounding countryside.

Narrator 3: Major Armistead wanted the British to know that Fort McHenry belonged to the Americans, so he hired Mrs. Mary Pickersgill, a local seamstress, to sew a gigantic American flag to fly over the fort.

Major Armistead: Mrs. Pickersgill, I know that you have made flags for many ships, but now I want you to make a flag bigger than any you have ever sewn. I want it to be 30 feet high and 42 feet wide. I will fly it over the Fort for all to see.

Mary Pickersgill: Sir, I would be honored to make this flag for you, but such a big flag will require more room than I have in my tiny shop. I will see if there is a larger space in which to work. If I can find a place, I will sew the flag.

Narrator 4: Mrs. Pickersgill asked and got permission to use the floor of a large warehouse in Baltimore to spread out her flag. She had to work at night, when all the workers had gone home, so she and her daughter Caroline sewed by the light of oil lamps.

Caroline: Mother, these stars are so big! They are nearly two feet across. They will certainly be seen from the harbor if the British come here.

Mary: Sew them on well, Caroline. This flag must be very sturdy and strong. See, I have sewn the binding twice, so that it will not come off of the flagpole. Fifteen stars and fifteen stripes will wave over Fort McHenry soon.

Narrator 5: When the flag was finished, Major Armistead proudly raised it over Fort McHenry. All through the winter and spring the flag waved in the stiff breeze. Finally, in the summer of 1814, the British ships arrived in the harbor, and the Major knew that Baltimore was now part of the war.

Narrator 6: During the summer there were many smaller battles between the Americans and the British. Both sides captured prisoners. Some of the British soldiers had their wounds treated by Dr. William Beanes. But Dr. Beanes himself was captured in a British raid and taken as a prisoner to the largest warship in the harbor.

Narrator 7: Major Armistead asked two men to go to the British Admiral and talk to him about releasing Dr. Beanes. It was a dangerous mission, so he chose two brave men. Mr. John Skinner was in charge of prisoner exchanges with the British. Mr. Francis Scott Key was a lawyer in Baltimore. Both men agreed to go.

Narrator 8: Before they left, Francis Scott Key took time to visit the British prisoners being held in the fort. He had them sign letters saying that Dr. Beanes had been kind to them and treated their wounds. He put the letters in his pocket and took them to show the British why they should release Dr. Beanes.

Narrator 9: Early on the morning of September 12, John Skinner and Francis Scott Key got into a boat and
began to row out toward the British ship. They held a white flag to let the ship know not to shoot at them. They had come to talk, not to fight. When they reached the ship, they were given permission to come aboard and talk to the Admiral.

**John Skinner:** Sir, we are here to talk to you about the release of our friend, Dr. William Beanes, who is being held as a prisoner on your ship. If you will agree to let Dr. Beanes go free, we will let some of your men go free, too.

**Admiral:** I am sorry, but I cannot consider freeing Dr. Beanes.

**Francis Scott Key:** Sir, before you make your decision, please take the time to read these letters from your own men. They will tell you themselves that Dr. Beanes has helped them and treated their wounds. Many of your men are still alive because of him.

**Admiral:** Wait on the deck until I have had time to read these letters and consider your request.

**Narrator 10:** Mr. Skinner and Mr. Keys made their way to the deck of the ship. From here, the Fort looked far away, but they could see the large American flag, still waving above the walls. While they were waiting, two sailors standing nearby began to talk to each other.

**British sailor 1:** Well, it won't be long now until the battle begins. By this time tomorrow, Fort McHenry will belong to us.

**British sailor 2:** Their Fort will never be able to survive the blasts of our cannons. We are sure to win.

**Narrator 11:** Mr. Skinner and Mr. Keys were shocked to know that an attack would take place that very night. They must get back to the Fort and warn their friends! But they could not leave until the Admiral had made his decision about releasing Dr. Beanes. Soon, the Admiral called for them.

**Admiral:** Gentlemen, I have read the letters you brought, and I will agree to release Dr. Beanes. However, I cannot allow you to leave the ship. I believe that you may have heard our plans, and I cannot let you warn the Fort of our attack. You must stay here on this ship until the battle is over. Then I will release you all.

**Narrator 12:** John Skinner, Francis Scott Key, and Dr. Beanes stood on the deck of the ship. There was no way for them to send a warning, and they knew that Fort McHenry did not have enough soldiers to hold out for very long. As the sun set that evening, they looked across the water to see the Stars and Stripes flying bravely over the Fort.

**Francis:** I wonder if we will see that flag tomorrow, or if a British flag will fly in its place.

**John:** We will know soon enough.

**Narrator 13:** Early the next morning, while it was still dark, the British cannons began firing. All around Fort McHenry there were explosions. As the bombs lit up the night sky, the men peered through the smoke to see if they could spot the American flag. At first they were able to see it, but soon the air became so filled with smoke that they could hardly see at all. All through the day the battle raged, and on into the next night.

**Narrator 14:** Finally, after 25 hours of battle, the cannons stopped. The battle smoke began to clear, and the sky began to lighten. The tired Americans rushed to the deck of the British ship and strained to see the Fort.

**Dr. Beanes:** What can you see?

**John:** Nothing, yet. There is not enough light. The sun is coming up now, and soon we will know how we have fared.

**Francis:** I believe I can see something. I can see a flag. Yes, it is the American Flag. Fort McHenry has been defended! The Americans have won! Quickly, I must have paper and pen. I must write about what has happened, and what we have seen.

**Narrator 15:** So there, on the deck of a British warship, on the morning of September 14, 1814, Francis Scott Key began to write the famous words for which he is still remembered.

**Francis Scott Key:** O say can you see by the dawn's early light,

(Add Skinner and Beanes) What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming:

(Add other characters) Whose broad stripes and white stars, through the perilous fight,

(Add narrators 1-5) O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?

(Add narrators 6-10) And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,

(Add narrators 11-15) Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.

(all) O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave

O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?
THE STORY OF THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

1. In 1814, the United States was at war with England. One terrible battle of the war was fought near Baltimore, Maryland. The English attacked Fort McHenry. The American flag was flying on the fort.

2. Francis Scott Key was an American. He was on a warship. He saw the flag before the sun went down. He watched the battle all night. It was dark, but rockets and bombs were exploding. Sometimes he could see the flag by the light from the bombs and rockets.

3. In the early morning the battle was over. Francis Scott Key looked for the flag. Was it still there? Yes it was. The flag was still waving. It had eleven holes in it, but it was still waving.

4. He was very happy. He wrote a poem. This poem told the feelings of the Americans.

5. The words of the poem fit the music of a song that people knew. People liked Key’s song about the “star spangled banner.” They started to sing the new words. Congress made this song the National Anthem. This is the official song of the United States.
THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

Oh say can you see
By the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed
At the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars
Through the perilous fight
O'er the ramparts we'd watched
Were so gallantly streaming.
And the rocket's red glare,
The bombs bursting in air
Gave proof through the night
That our flag was still there.
O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free
And the home of the brave?