

## Pulling It All Together: Patterns of Text Structure in Informational Texts

Whether you are a veteran teacher or are just beginning your teaching life, you probably have files on ideas, activities, strategies, just about anything to make your lessons hit the mark. We want students to take the lessons we have taught, internalize them and generalize their applications to other appropriate tasks. This is certainly true when working with informational texts.

Authors, including S. Harvey (1998), L. Hoyt (1999), and Fountas and Pinnell (2001) indicate how crucial the understanding of text structure of expository books are to the students' ability to glean information from these text. Pulling information together from multiple sources can be a task. The grid that follows is a short cut designed to connect all the loose pieces so that:

- resources and ideas are organized and therefore easily accessed
- the necessary links are made between text structures, webs, sample books and text excerpts so that all the connections among these pieces of information are explicitly made.

Add the titles that you use to model and guide your students use of these structures and you will have a personalized grid that will help you to stay on top of those unruly files that we all have.

### Text Structures in Informational Texts

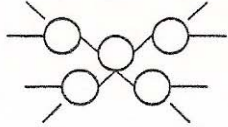
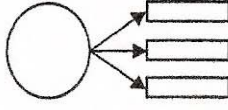
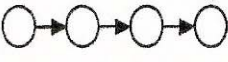
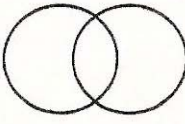
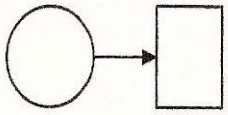
Text Pattern	Definition	Key Words	Maps/Webs	Examples of Texts	Examples of Texts
Description	Descriptive details about characteristics, actions, etc.	<i>descriptive adjective and words like: on, over, beyond, within</i>		<i>The crocodile is the master of deception in water. It stalks its prey and then swiftly closes in for the kill.</i>	<i>Goose bumps make me shiver. I get little bumps on my skin. They look like sesame seeds.</i>
Problem/Solution	Sets up a problem and its solutions	<i>propose, conclude, a solution, the reason for, the problem or question</i>		<i>One problem to resolve in crocodile watching is transportation. How can an observer get close enough . . .</i>	<i>Goose bumps make me shiver. But they disappear as soon as I cover up with a jacket or sweater.</i>
Time/Order Chronological	Gives information in order of occurrence	<i>first, second, before, after, finally, then, next, earlier</i>		<i>Archaeologists have helped us to understand that the evolution of the crocodile began with . . .</i>	<i>Goose bumps make me shiver. First I get cold. Then I shake all over.</i>
Comparison/Contrast	Looking at two or more items to establish similarities/differences	<i>while, yet, but, rather, most, same, either, as well as, like and unlike, as opposed to</i>		<i>The power of the crocodile is like that of a monstrous machine. With one lunge it can . . . Compared to the alligator the crocodile . . .</i>	<i>Some people get goose bumps from fear. Others get goose bumps when they are touched emotionally.</i>
Cause/Effect	Give reason/explanation for happening	<i>because, since, if/then, due to, as a result, for this reason, on account of, consequently</i>		<i>We observed the crocodile as it stalked a raccoon . . . As a result of the noise we made, the rabbit bolted . . .</i>	<i>Goose bumps make me shiver. When the temperature drops below 45 degrees, my skin crinkles into goose.</i>
Source of Information	Dept. of Education Western Australia, <i>First Steps</i> , 1995.	Fountas, I., and Pinnell, G. 2001. <i>Guiding Readers and Writers Grades 3–6</i> . Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.		Hoyt, L. 1999. <i>Revisit, Reflect, Retell</i> . Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.	Harvey, S. 1998. <i>Non-fiction Matters</i> . York, ME: Stenhouse.

Figure 8-1 This material was contributed by Teresa Therriault.