Text Structure Instruction

Courtesy of Dr. Ruth Gumm, Florida Department of Education

### Description

Instruction in text structure supports reading comprehension. Authors organize their texts in different ways, and students learn how to recognize these organizational patterns. The goal of text structure instruction is to develop skill in recognizing signals that go together as a set. These signal words designate patterns of thinking such as sequence, contrast, or cause-effect. Familiarity with such patterns makes it much easier for the reader to follow the line of thinking in text as they read. This places the reader at a comprehension advantage for understanding the overall message of the author and being able to summarize what they read.

### Purpose

Use *before*, *during*, and *after* reading to:

* Show students how to recognize a new organizational pattern of text before they are expected to read or summarize text
* Model for students how to use text structure information to comprehend text
* Use graphic organizers that align with the text structure to depict the text’s organizational pattern and help students organize text information
* Provide opportunity for student practice in identifying a text structure that has been taught
* Allow students to demonstrate understanding of text structure through the use of graphic organizers or summarizing text with a specific text structure that has already been taught.

### Directions

* Enlarge the passage for all students to see a demonstration.
* Read the passage aloud and highlight significant/relevant signal words/phrases while reading.
* During instruction, conduct a think-aloud to model the thinking process behind identifying signal words. Draw attention to signal words /phrases using such methods as highlighting or underlining, etc.
* Next, model how to organize the identified significant/relevant text information using a graphic organizer
* Draft a brief summary statement using significant/relevant text information from the graphic organizer.
  + Generate questions about the passage that match the text structure.
  + Post on the wall as a model set of text structure references:
  + Enlarged passage with highlighted signal words/phrases
  + Completed graphic organizer
  + Summary statement
  + Questions

### Extensions

* Divide students into small groups and assign a different text passage to each group. Have them identify signal words in their content-area passage, organize text information in a graphic organizer, and draft a group summary. Have each group post their products so others in the class can see in a Gallery Walk.
  + Have students work in pairs or small groups to draft a content-area paragraph using one of the text structure writing frames to support student understanding and use of significant/relevant signal words.
  + Have students identify paragraphs/passages with specific text structure in their text.