



WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

Video: Floods of Fury

*Cause-Effect Relationships Nonfiction Text Structure
(single cause- multiple effects)*



Learning Content in Social Studies through Cause-Effect

Researchers have found that as much as 90% of the content taught in the typical social studies classroom occurs by assigning students to read their textbook. Much of this content can be framed using cause-effect nonfiction text structure. (e.g., What were the effects of hardships faced by the pioneers? What were the causes of the colonial rebellion against the British government?) Unfortunately, the combination of textbook reading and cause-effect text structure challenges many students.

Social studies textbooks are particularly difficult to read due to the large number of complex concepts covered in a brief amount of space, unfamiliar vocabulary, poor structure, and irrelevant information that distracts students from the important ideas. Cause-Effect nonfiction text structure is considered to be one of the most difficult structures for students to understand because of the complex comprehension skills (making inferences, judging sequence, and making predictions) required to interpret causes and effects.

Fortunately, when students are provided tools to help them navigate the text, they are able to access and comprehend the information that is presented to them. Students from grade two through adolescence can successfully understand the cause-effect relationships presented in social studies when they receive explicit instruction in cause-effect text structure. This understanding can be increased through simultaneous instruction in the areas of thinking processes, cue (signal) words, key vocabulary, and graphic organizers.

References:

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