



## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

### Video: Roachzilla

*Description Nonfiction Text Structure  
(main idea and details)*



### Strategic Use of Text Structures

Good readers who are aware of an author's use of text structure use this information to help them identify and remember main ideas and supporting information, and to summarize. This ability to identify main topics, important supporting details, and the connections between main ideas appears to be central to developing comprehension. Awareness of text structure also helps you to recognize inconsistencies in text. This is key to becoming a critical reader.

Unfortunately, many textbooks, particularly social studies textbooks, are found to be lacking in explicit text structure or organization. Therefore, it is important for you to be able to describe events in your own words and create visual representations to help you organize and remember key points.

### Strategic Use of Well-Presented Text

Good readers make use of the physical presentation of text. When you use titles, headings, subheadings, chapter titles, paragraph topics, or any other way to help you organize text, you are better able to determine the author's main ideas. This helps you to remember information better. Other text features, such as maps, graphs, diagrams, or charts provide you with additional information that can help you better understand the author's message.

### Strategic Use of Signal Words

Good readers are on the lookout for signal words that can help identify text structure and make connections between ideas. For example, "looks like," "sounds like," "feels like," or "tastes like" are words authors use to describe things. Skillful authors use precise language and make clear the relations between concepts, ideas, and sentences.

### Graphic Organizers are Helpful

After the main ideas and details within text have been identified, it is often helpful to draw a visual representation of these ideas. By creating a graphic organizer, you are better able to notice the connections between main ideas and details, between main ideas, and between details. You are also better able to summarize what you've read.

Reference:

Dickson, S. V., Simmons, D. C., & Kameenui, E. J. (n.d.). *Text organization and its relation to reading comprehension: A synthesis of the research*. Retrieved from: <http://idea.uoregon.edu/~ncite/documents/techrep/tech17.html>