WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY
SPOT: Text Structure
Public Service Announcement

SP☻TS

think ABOUT IT

Using Patterns to Make Sense of Text

Successful readers know how texts are organized, and they use this information to make sense of what they read. When you become aware of these patterns, you will have a framework for approaching and comprehending texts more effectively.

Authors arrange ideas according to a particular structure, depending on their purpose. For example, if authors want to describe historical events over a period of time, they typically use a sequential pattern to outline the events in time order. The best informational texts typically use this pattern and others such as description, compare-contrast, cause-effect, and problem-solution to organize their writing. Authors often use multiple structures throughout a longer text, choosing the structure at that best helps them to convey their message according to their purposes.

Why Point Out These Patterns?

- Text patterns provide you with a map that guides you as you travel through nonfiction text. The greater your awareness of the various text structures and organizational patterns, the better you can follow the thread of the author's message.

- Understanding these patterns helps you to see how ideas within texts are connected to each other. You are more aware of the ways authors choose to create links from one sentence or paragraph to the next.

- Research tells us that when you are aware of and understand these patterns, you comprehend and recall nonfiction text better than those who don't. The time it takes to learn about these patterns is time well spent.

Reference:

Moss, B. (2002). *Exploring the literature of fact: Children's nonfiction trade books in the elementary classroom*. New York: Guilford Press.