



WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

Video: Roachzilla Returns *Description Nonfiction Text Structure* (main idea and details)



How Can I Identify Text Structure?

Authors signal text structure in a variety of ways.

- They use introductory headings, sentences, or paragraphs to explicitly tell the reader how the text is organized.
- They use explicit connectives (signal words) that link two sentences in order to make the structure more obvious to readers.

Researchers found that description text structure is one of the more difficult text structures for students to recognize. Although many elementary school content-related textbooks contain extensive descriptive text, it often occurs in short segments within other structures. Rarely is descriptive text the single organizing framework for the entire text. When text structures are embedded within one another, it makes it difficult for readers of any age to easily identify and use to enhance their comprehension.

When Should I Be Learning About Text Structure?

Instruction in text structure can be effective at virtually any grade level. It can increase a reader's awareness for the different nonfiction structures so that they can begin to anticipate their presence. Research suggests that formal teaching of text structures should occur beginning in third or fourth grade. Less formal instruction, however, can begin at lower grade levels.

What Are Some Text-Previewing Strategies That Will Help Me?

Text-previewing strategies can often alert readers to the overall structure of a book. Ways that help readers recognize these patterns include:

- Examining the table of contents to recognize the path the author will take through the material. The chapter titles may signal description text structure if they highlight characteristics or features of the topic.
- Examining the text headings. The headings alert the reader to the information that will be described in each section.
- Noticing any graphic organizers, maps, charts, diagrams, or other visual aids that the author includes which provide a visual parallel of the text structure.

References:

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