

LITERARY NONFICTION TEXT STRUCTURES (Expository Literature & Narratives)

EXPOSITORY LITERATURE: This type of nonfiction explains, informs, or describes. It is different from traditional nonfiction because it presents a more narrowly focused topic in a creative and engaging way, often using a unique perspective and voice. This type of literature also utilizes literary devices to enhance and enrich the writing. Three types of expository literature text structures are LINEAR, LIST/SURVEY, and DESCRIPTIVE. Each of these has several subcategories.

EXPOSITORY LITERATURE

- Presents a narrowly focused topic in a creative way
- Showcases a unique side of a topic and reflects the author's passion for that topic
- Offers a unique voice & POV
- Incorporates engaging language and literary devices to enhance and enrich the writing
- Utilizes a carefully chosen text structure and innovative format
- May include layered text, sidebars, callouts, back matter and more
- Illustrations often add another layer

1. **LINEAR:** Text follows a straightforward order of events or instructions for how to do something.

How To: Describes steps to do or accomplish something.

HOW TO BUILD AN INSECT by Roberta Gibson

THIS IS A BOOK TO READ WITH A WORM by Jodi Wheeler-Toppen

Chronological/Sequence: Relates events, actions, or processes in the order they happened.

THE NEXT PRESIDENT by Kate Messner

A HISTORY OF UNDERWEAR WITH PROFESSOR CHICKEN by Hanna Holt

SOAR HIGH DRAGONFLY! by Sheri M. Bestor

OUT OF THE BLUE: How Animals Evolved from Prehistoric Sea by Elizabeth Shreeve

Reverse chronological: Text presents events in reverse order from how they occurred.

BEFORE SHE WAS HARRIET by Lesa Cline-Ransome

In Media Res: Story begins in the middle of the actions or events, with context and background filled in later.

THE MAGICAL YET – (fiction) by Angela DiTerlizzi

SMALL WONDERS: Jean-Henri Fabre and His World of Insects by Matthew Clark Smith

ABC Books: Text uses and follows the alphabet to provide information about a particular topic.

AN AMISH ALPHABET by Ingrid Hess

WOMEN ARTISTS A to Z by Melanie LaBarge

Counting Books: Text is organized by numbers; some books count up from one, others count down.

13 WAYS TO EAT A FLY by Sue Heavenrich

OCTOPUSES ONE TO TEN by Ellen Jackson

2. **LIST/SURVEY**: The main idea of the book is on the first spread, with each spread that follows presenting examples to support the idea. The last spread often summarizes the main idea, circles back to the opening, or has a surprise or twist.

CROSSINGS by Katy Duffield

WE ARE STILL HERE! Native American Truths Everyone Should Know by Traci Sorrell

Circular: The narrative begins and ends in the same place.

ROUND by Jennifer Ward (is also pairs, seasons, compare/contrast)

FLOWER TALK by Sara Levine

Pairs: Two things (people objects, animals, verbs, or more) are presented together, sometimes using rhyme.

FEATHERS: NOT JUST FOR FLYING by Melissa Stewart

FREAKY FUNKY FISH by Debra Kempf Shumaker (pairs rhyme)

Seasons: Text follows the seasons.

WE ARE GRATEFUL: Otsaliheliga by Traci Sorell

MY HAPPY YEAR BY E. BLUEBIRD by Paul Meisel

A STROLL THROUGH THE SEASONS by Kay Barnham
COME NEXT SEASON by Kim Norman

Through the Day: Text follows the passing of a day.

BUGS DON'T HUG by Heather Montgomery

Question & Answer: Text presents a sequence of questions and answers that engage readers and lead them through the book.

BONE BY BONE: Comparing Animal Skeletons by Sara Levine
CAN AN AARDVARK BARK? by Melissa Stewart
WHAT IS THIS TAIL SAYING? by Carolyn Combs
EYE BY EYE: Comparing How Animals See by Sara Levine

Cause and Effect: Explains the effect or result of an event, occurrence, or action.

IF SHARKS DISAPPEARED by Lily Williams
BECAUSE OF AN ACORN by Lola M. Schaefer

Problem/Solution: Defines a problem and its solution.

MAKE WAY FOR ANIMALS! A World of Wildlife Crossings by Meeg Pincus
THE BOY WHO HARNESSSED THE WIND by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer
MESMERIZED: How Ben Franklin Solved a Mystery that Baffled All of France by Mara Rockliff

Linked: Information or ideas are linked from spread to spread by text or format often in a unique or surprising way.

MOVE! by Steve Jenkins
YOUR PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE by Jason Chin

Poetry Collections: Collections of poems about a single topic, usually offering a variety of poem types.

EEK, YOU REEK! by Jane Yolen and Heidi E.Y. Stemple

3. **DESCRIPTIVE**: Text provides an overview of a subject through descriptions of examples or key characteristics and features.

TINY CREATURES: The World of Microbes by Nicola Davies
BONKERS ABOUT BEETLES by Davey Owen

Parts to the Whole: Text examines or explores different elements that make up a larger whole.

SUPERPOWER FIELD GUIDE – BEAVER by Rachel Poliquin
GIVE BEES A CHANCE by Bethany Barton
NO MONKEYS, NO CHOCOLATE by Melissa Stewart

Whole to the Parts: Text begins by looking at a whole, then examines the parts.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ELEPHANTS by Maxwell Eaton III

Compare & Contrast: Examines how two or more creatures, things, ideas, actions, events, or occurrences are similar to and different from each other.

ASTRONAUT/AQUANAUT by Jennifer Swanson
OVER AND UNDER THE POND by Kate Messner
TERRIFIC TONGUES by Maria Gianferrari
CROCODILES & ALLIGATORS by Seymour Simon
GOODBYE WINTER, HELLO SPRING by Kenard Pak
MOTH AND BUTTERFLY by Dev Petty

Opposites: Explores two things that are completely different.

FLOWERS ARE PRETTY WEIRD by Rosemary Mosco
DAYLIGHT STARLIGHT WILDLIFE by Wendell Minor
THE STREET BENEATH MY FEET by Charlotte Guillain
CONTRARY CREATURES by James Weinberg

Parallel/Dual Narrative: Presents topics or storylines from two perspectives.

THE DIAMOND AND THE BOY by Hannah Holt
MARTIN & ANNE: The Kindred Spirits of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Anne Frank by Nancy Churnin

Comparison: Presents a topic using an extended metaphor.

IF YOU WERE THE MOON by Laura Purdie Salas
BE A TREE by Maria Gianferrari
PLAY LIKE AN ANIMAL! Why Critters Splash, Race, Twirl, and Chase by Maria Gianferrari

Ladder: Information or examples build to the middle of the book, then reverse.

SKULLS by Blair Thornburgh
SWIRL BY SWIRL: Spirals in Nature by Joyce Sidman

Cumulative: Information is presented on each spread, then is repeated on subsequent spreads as new information is presented, accumulating throughout the book.

I KNOW AN OLD LADY WHO SWALLOWED A FLY (fiction) by Nadine Bernard Westcott
THE MESS THAT WE MADE by Michelle Lord
THE NEST THAT WREN BUILT by Randi Sonenshine
HERE IS THE TROPICAL RAINFOREST by Madeleine Dunphy

Clustered: Information is grouped to emphasize how things are related or connected, or to highlight important ideas. The clusters often present new ways to consider a topic.

THE NEXT PRESIDENT: The Unexpected Beginnings and Unwritten Future of America's Presidents by Kate Messner
PLAY IN THE WILD: How Baby Animals Like to Have Fun by Lita Judge

NARRATIVE: Narrative nonfiction books present information as a sequence of events; they tell a story or convey an experience. It has a narrative writing style and typically features the same chronological sequence text structure as fiction. Narratives can be chronological, episodic, braided (several storylines woven together), a cycle, or a journey.

NARRATIVE NONFICTION

- Tells a story or relates an experience
- Utilizes a story-telling writing style
- Often reads like fiction
- Utilizes literary devices to enhance and enrich the writing
- Involves real characters
- Set in real places
- Includes dialogue
- Has a narrative arc – with rising tension, a climax, and denouement

Picture Books

“SMELLY” KELLY AND HIS SUPER SENSES: How James Kelly's Nose Saved the New York City Subway by Beth Anderson
THE ELEPHANTS COME HOME: A True Story of Seven Elephants, Two People, and One Extraordinary Friendship by Kim Tomsic

OLD ROCK IS NOT BORING by Deb Pilutti
ARE WE PEARS YET? by Miranda Paul
THE BOY WHO GREW A FOREST by Sophia Gholz
MAGIC RAMEN by Andrea Wang
ONE PLASTIC BAG: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia by
Miranda Paul
BALLOONS OVER BROADWAY by Melissa Sweet
THE BOY WHO LOVED MATH by Deborah Heiligman
JOAN PROCTOR, DRAGON DOCTOR by Patricia Valdez
SEPARATE IS NEVER EQUAL by Duncan Tonatiuh
OWEN AND MZEE: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship by Isabella
Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff, & Paula Kahumbu

Middle Grade

BUZZKILL: A Wild Wander Through the Weird and Threatened World of Bugs by
Brenna Maloney
A WOLF CALLED WANDER (Rosanne Parry)
BOMB (Steve Sheinkin)
ALL THIRTEEN: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team by
Christina Soontornvat

Young Adult

THE 57 BUS: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their
Lives by Dashka Slater
WORLD WITHOUT FISH by Mark Kurlansky
THE FAMILY ROMANOV by Candace Fleming

**RESOURCES USED TO COMPILE THIS LIST
(AND TO USE FOR FURTHER STUDY)**

“26 Engaging, Informative Nonfiction Books for Middle Graders | Summer Reading 2021”
(*School Library Journal*)

<https://www.slj.com/story/26-nonfiction-books-for-middle-graders-summer-reading-2021>

“30 Nonfiction Books for Middle Schoolers” (*Teaching Expertise*)

<https://www.teachingexpertise.com/classroom-ideas/nonfiction-books-for-middle-school/>

“Best Young Adult Nonfiction Books” (American Montessori Society)

<https://amshq.org/Blog/2022-10-26-Best-Young-Adult-Nonfiction-Books>

Behind the Books: What the Heck Is Expository Literature? (Melissa Stewart)

<http://celebratescience.blogspot.com/2017/02/behind-books-what-heck-is-expository.html#:~:text=And%20so%20expository%20literature%20can,superior%20or%20lasting%20artistic%20merit.>

“A Look at Nonfiction Text Structures” (Melissa Stewart)

https://www.melissa-stewart.com/img2018/pdfs/NF_Text_Structures.pdf

“Teaching Narrative Nonfiction” (*Alyssa Teaches*)

<https://alyssateaches.com/teaching-narrative-nonfiction/>

“Top Ten Dual Narrative Picture Books” (Stefanie Hohl)

<https://www.stefaniehohl.com/new-blog/2022/1/28/top-ten-dual-narrative-picture-books>

“Understanding Text Structures in Nonfiction” (*School Library Journal* – Melissa Stewart and Terrell A Young)

<https://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/story/understanding-text-structures-in-childrens-nonfiction>

“What are Literary Devices?” (Grammarly)

<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/literary-devices/#:~:text=What%20are%20literary%20devices%3F,devices%2C%20which%20continue%20to%20evolve.>