

Show Me How

Using Mentor Text to Guide
Readers and Writers in Grades 6 and 7

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Show Me How: Introduction

The Reading and Writing Connection

Connecting the dots between reading and writing does not always come naturally to our students. The lessons in *Show Me How* focus on integrating the two written language processes of reading and writing to enhance students' comprehension of expository texts, specifically informational and persuasive texts, and on supporting students' ability to produce these writing forms independently. The link between the two written language processes is explicit and ongoing throughout the instruction.

Hoyt, Mooney, and Parkes (2003) describe reading as “writing in the head” to signify how print is transformed into language. They go on to characterize writing as “reading through the pen” when the writer turns language into print. Readers who spend significant time engaged in writing become more proficient readers. Writers who read frequently and broadly become more polished writers. Allowing students opportunities to get an inside view of both reciprocal processes allows them to be both producers and consumers of written language.

When writers write, they also act as readers, since writers must read and reread during the composing process. Proficient writers are always aware of their audience—their readers. They want their readers to comprehend, and so they learn to make their writing readable. They learn how to structure their writing to get their message across, how to get the reader's attention, and how to keep the reader engaged in the reading. This attention to the role of the reader when composing supports students' ability to engage actively in monitoring for understanding during reading.

Likewise, readers often notice and learn from an author's aspects of writing, such as different styles, organizational structures, interesting phrases, or new vocabulary. Readers derive topics to write about and fresh ways to incorporate their voice into the message. They discover new ideas for leads and closings. They develop an ear for and appreciation of different types of genres. The writing techniques learned by reading eventually enter into their own writings.

Use of Mentor Texts

Mentor texts are pieces of literature that serve as exemplars. Instead of one-time read-aloud experiences, each mentor text is revisited time and time again as together teacher and student explore the characteristics and techniques used by the author. The text does double duty. Students first become familiar with the author's content. Later they concentrate more fully on the author's techniques and style. Mentor texts become the models for the types of writing that students study and imitate, thereby growing as writers.

Freeman (2003) explains in this way the use of mentor texts to strengthen the bond between reading and writing:

Writing is a craft, and one of the best ways to learn a craft is to imitate the masters . . . budding artists, musicians, dancers, and athletes the world over imitate the pros and draw inspiration from them. Writers can do the same. We can copy the techniques of master writers.

Instruction in the *Show Me How* lessons incorporates the use of mentor texts to provide students with models of quality expository texts. These texts serve to scaffold students' decisions about what to write and how best to write.

Importance of Expository Text

Just as much of our reading lives as adults involves reading expository text—think of our daily doses of newspapers, magazines, professional texts, and the Internet—our adult lives revolve mainly around writing expository text. Few of us engage in writing narrative tales beyond our school days; instead, we focus on writing informational and persuasive pieces of text. The work of reports, essays, letters, notes, cards, parent newsletters, journals, essays, directions, advertisements, and invitations becomes our adult writing lives.

If we expose students exclusively to a steady diet of narrative text in school, we limit their ability to grasp the art of reading and writing nonnarrative texts. We stunt their present and future literacy lives. Infusing expository text in our read-alouds, teaching its specific text structures and features, and allowing students time to explore the genre enable readers to understand better the nonnarrative writing that surrounds them. It also helps to form writers who are able to compose expository texts more clearly.

Expository Text Structure

Expository writing seeks to inform, explain, teach, persuade, or amuse (Freeman, 2003). It can have many forms, such as reports, summaries, letters, essays, advertisements, observations, biographies, and news articles, to name a few. It is the literature of fact.

Unlike narrative text structure, which tells a story chronologically and organizes around characters, setting, and plot, expository text structure clusters related information in some way. The text always has a focus topic, and information is relayed through paragraphs of main ideas and supporting details. The writer of expository text strives to be clear to enable the reader to understand the message. While the text conveys facts, it does not have to be boring. Good expository writing is lively and engages the reader.

The author of an expository piece thoughtfully chooses an organizational structure that will help the reader make sense of the information presented. While the labels for these varied structures may differ from one listing to the next, organizational tools are important in helping students anticipate the content they read and organize the content they wish to write. Knowledge of the writing plan used by an author helps the reader make a correct choice of graphic organizers, which assists the reader in comprehension. Some common structural patterns used in expository writing are descriptive, sequential, question and answer, problem and solution, cause and effect, time order, compare and contrast, and narrative nonfiction.

The *Show Me How* series of lessons explores the majority of these organizational structures in both reading and writing. A reproducible table listing the structures of informational text and a definition of each is located in the Instructional Resources section (IR 2: Informational Text Structures and Signal Words).

Expository Text Features

Expository texts contain some unique features that lend valuable support to both the reader and the writer. These text features are utilized by writers to make their ideas more clearly understood by the reader. Students who are aware of these features in texts and use them deliberately in their writing remember more and understand more deeply (Hoyt et al., 2003). A list of expository text features and the purpose they serve is located in the Instructional Resources section (IR 4: Informational Text Features).

The mentor texts employed in the *Show Me How* lessons, as well as many of the student-guided reading passages, include expository text features. As students learn about these features in reading, they are encouraged to add them to their writings.

Overview of *Show Me How* Lessons

The *Show Me How* lessons are designed to be used as mini-lessons within the framework of Reading and Writing Workshops.

A Reading Workshop is a block of instructional time in which the teacher and students work with a reading concept or strategy. Reading Workshop includes the following:

- A teacher-led mini-lesson with the whole class to introduce a specific concept or reading strategy
- Student practice of the concept or strategy in small groups or individually with teacher support
- Whole-group sharing time

A Writing Workshop is a block of time every day for students to practice what good writers do. It does not involve editing and publishing every piece. Students plan, compose, revise, edit, and share their writing on a daily basis without writing to prompts. Writing Workshop includes the following:

- A teacher-led mini-lesson with the whole class to explore a facet of good writing
- Student independent writing
- Teacher conferences with individual students or small groups of students with a similar writing need
- Whole-group sharing time

The *Show Me How* reading and writing lessons are sequential, each one building upon previous lessons. However, teachers are encouraged to be thoughtful practitioners. If students need more support with a concept, the teacher can delve deeper by inserting additional lessons before returning to the sequence of the *Show Me How* lessons. Do not skip over lessons in *Show Me How*. The reading and writing lessons present information in a certain order to support scaffolding students in developing their own writing products. The mentor texts and student Reading/Writing Notebooks are chronological in nature as well.

The lessons in *Show Me How* employ the “gradual release of responsibility” model developed by Pearson and Gallagher (1983) in both reading and writing instruction. This model (labeled “I Do,” “We Do,” and “You Do” in the lessons) stipulates that the teacher gradually move from assuming all the responsibility for performing a task to students assuming all the responsibility. By using engaging activities, extensive teacher modeling, guided practice, and independent practice, students explore and interact with expository texts to become more proficient readers. The gradual release model is just as necessary in writing, as noted by Fisher and Frey (2007):

Most students . . . write the best they can each time they write. However, in the absence of instruction and feedback their writing looks fine to them. . . . in too many classrooms the emphasis is on independent writing at the expense of writing instruction. With appropriate instruction, . . . through a gradual release of responsibility model, students are able to acquire new skills and practice them alongside their peers until they are able to perform the tasks independently.

Stead (2002) further states:

Sometimes we even “need to jump into the swimming pool with them and hold them up until they feel confident enough to let go and swim for themselves.” Ultimately, what

students learn from the teacher modeling, the shared and guided writing experiences are applied to their own independent writing.

A more detailed overview of the *Show Me How* lessons follows this introduction.

Resources

The following resources are used in completing the lessons of *Show Me How*. These resources include:

Reading/Writing Notebook

The Reading/Writing Notebook (a template for the notebook is included in this book) contains instructional resources for each lesson, as well as student passages that are used in completing some lessons. Teachers can choose to copy the entire Reading/Writing Notebook and have students keep it in the classroom for the duration of the expository unit. Another option is to reproduce the pages as needed and have students store their Reading/Writing Notebooks in a three-ring binder or folder.

Student Passages and Assessments

Short expository passages are included for guided and independent practice during the reading lessons. Teachers have the option of distributing the passages for assessment purposes to provide practice on how expository text questions are asked in a test format.

Conferencing

Ongoing conferencing with students on their writing is integral to the lessons. Teachers meet with students along the way to assess and evaluate. The Conferencing section describes how to note strengths, give feedback, teach, and set goals within the conference framework. Two conference forms are included as options for teachers to keep track of teaching points they make while conferencing with students.

A writing rubric for use as an assessment tool with a student's final written piece is included in the Appendix.

Resources for English Language Learners

The English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) have been included in each lesson to ensure that English Language Learners (ELLs) acquire both social and academic language proficiency in English. The section Vocabulary Instruction for English Language Learners includes information on ways to support ELLs in direct vocabulary instruction. Each book in the *Show Me How* series features a different approach to vocabulary instruction, which is critical to helping ELLs and

struggling readers close the vocabulary gap. This first book highlights using the Generative Vocabulary Approach. Templeton, Bear, Johnston, and Invernizzi (2010) explain this approach to teaching students how words work (e.g., exploring how *photosynthesis* is related to *photocopier*, *telephoto*, and *photograph* as well as *synthesize*, *synthesizer*, and *synthetic*). This section helps describe how you can “crack the meaning code” that pervades the English language.

This method of learning Greek and Latin roots and affixes will prompt students to uncover the meaning of countless words, gain a deeper word knowledge, and begin to make connections among words. Our goal is to assist teachers in delivering vocabulary instruction that will be both engaging and meaningful to students. By tapping into this system of vocabulary instruction, students will be at a greater advantage in learning new vocabulary.

Appendix

A piece on how to support students in previewing an expository text is located in the Appendix. Getting a feel for the text before reading prepares a reader to be a more active participant during the reading and helps the reader to remember more of the text after the reading is finished.

Students also become more engaged in *Show Me How* instruction through the “think-pair-share” technique. An explanation of this discussion strategy is located in the Appendix.

Expository Unit Overview

INFORMATIONAL GENRE		
Lesson 1	Informational Text Structures	Lesson 2
Lesson 3	Choosing a Writing Topic	Lesson 4
Lesson 5	Creating an Essential Question	Lesson 6
Lesson 7	Establishing Audience and Purpose	Lesson 8
Lesson 9	Asking Questions	Lesson 10
Lesson 11	Summarizing/Synthesizing Information	Lesson 12
Lesson 13	Cause and Effect Text Structure	Lesson 14
Lesson 15	Descriptive/Classificatory Text Structure	Lesson 16
Lesson 17	Organizing Notes for Writing	Lesson 18
Lesson 19	Developing Main Ideas	Lesson 20
Lesson 21	Transitions	Lesson 22
Lesson 23	Writing Effective Leads and Introductions	Lesson 24
		Informational Text Features
		Identifying Essential Questions about Topics
		Identifying Purpose and Audience
		Identifying Author's Questions
		Evaluating Summaries
		Understanding Sequential Text Structure
		Compare and Contrast Text Structure
		Taking Notes
		Developing Ideas
		Paraphrasing Ideas
		Establishing Purpose with Leads and Introductions
		Drawing Inferences

Expository Unit Overview

INFORMATIONAL GENRE		
READING LESSON		WRITING LESSON
Lesson 25	Writing Effective Conclusions with Inferences	Lesson 26 Using Strong Verbs as Writing Tools
Lesson 27	Using Specific Nouns as Writing Tools	Lesson 28 Using Prepositional Phrases to Add Detail
Lesson 29	Using Subordinating Conjunctions to Combine Clauses	Lesson 30 Three Levels of Revision and Editing
PERSUASIVE GENRE		
Lesson 31	Persuasive Genre	Lesson 32 Authors Write to Persuade
Lesson 33	Evidence to Support Arguments	Lesson 34 Evidence to Support Arguments 2
Lesson 35	Rhetorical Fallacies	Lesson 36 Persuasive Writing Techniques
Lesson 37	Organization of Persuasive Text	Lesson 38 Organization of Persuasive Text 2
Lesson 39	Leads and Conclusions	Lesson 40 Leads and Conclusions 2

Mentor Texts Grades 6–7

Anderson, L. H. (2008). *Independent dames: What you never knew about the women and girls of the American revolution*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. ISBN: 978-0-689-85808-6

Beeler, S. B. (1998). *Throw your tooth on the roof: Tooth traditions from around the world*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co. ISBN: 0-395-89108-6

Collard, S. B. III. (2003). *The deep-sea floor*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-57091-403-4

Guiberson, B. Z. (1993). *Cactus hotel*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Co. ISBN: 978-0-8050-2960-4

Harwood, J. (2007). *Should we drill for oil in protected areas?* New York, NY: Mondo Publishing. ISBN: 1-59336-767-8

Jenkins, S., and Page, R. (2008). *Sisters and brothers: Sibling relationships in the animal world*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Co. ISBN: 978-0-618-37596-7

Matthews, E. (2007). *Different like Coco*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press. ISBN: 978-0-7636-2548-1

Micucci, C. (2006). *The life and times of the ant*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co. ISBN: 978-0618-00559-8

Show Me How, Lesson 2: Informational Text Features

Key Question	What special features does informational text have?
TEKS	N/A Although understanding and using text features is not part of the RLA TEKS for grades 6–7, it is a prerequisite skill needed to help students navigate and comprehend a variety of informational texts.
ELPS	4 (J) Demonstrate English comprehension and expand reading skills by employing inferential skills such as predicting, making connections between ideas, drawing inferences and conclusions from text and graphic sources, and finding supporting text evidence commensurate with content area needs.
CCRS	Reading II.A.2. Use text features and graphics to form an overview of informational texts and to determine where to locate information.

Resources

- Blank chart paper, writing surface, or projection device
- Mentor texts:
 - *Sisters and Brothers: Sibling Relationships in the Animal World*
 - *The Deep-Sea Floor*
 - *The Life and Times of the Ant*
 - *Cactus Hotel*
 - *Independent Dames: What You Never Knew About the Women and Girls of the American Revolution*
- A variety of nonfiction texts that have various text features (e.g., charts, tables, diagrams, captions, timelines, cutaways, insets, pictures, etc.). These should include content-area textbooks in science, social studies, math, or health.
- Students' Reading/Writing Notebooks
 - IR 1: Reading and Writing Log
 - IR 4: Informational Text Features
- Sticky notes

Teacher Notes

Show Me How, Lesson 2: Informational Text Features

Lesson

I DO

- Remind students that they learned about informational texts in the previous lesson and that these types of texts are written to inform, or explain, about a topic.
- Tell students that informational text has certain features, or qualities. Tells students that these features are sometimes called graphic features.
- Display and distribute to students IR 4: Informational Text Features. Point out and explain each type of feature.
- Post and point out the Key Question for Lesson 2:
 - **What special features does informational text have?**
- Explain that this is the question they will explore in this lesson.
- Conduct a quick poll to find how many of the listed text features students have seen in informational texts they have read.
- Display, read aloud the title and author, and point out the text features of the following mentor texts (display with a document camera if possible).

Mentor Text	Text Feature 1	Text Feature 2	Text Feature 3	Text Feature 4
<i>Sisters and Brothers: Sibling Relationships in the Animal World</i>	pictures, bold print	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>The Deep-Sea Floor</i>	pictures and captions (p. 8)	cutaway (pp. 10–11)	map (p. 13)	N/A
<i>The Life and Times of the Ant</i>	timeline (p. 4, “Masters of the Earth”)	sketches/drawings (all pages)	close up (pp. 14–15, “The Ant’s Body”)	chart (p. 21)
<i>Cactus Hotel</i>	closeup (p. 6, pack rat)	closeup (p. 16, Gila woodpecker)	cutaway (p. 19, Gila woodpecker)	cutaway (pp. 22–23, holes for animals)
<i>Independent Dames: What You Never Knew About the Women and Girls of the American Revolution</i>	text boxes (throughout body of text)	timelines (as running commentary at bottom of pages)	sketches (throughout text)	cursive text (in insets throughout text)

WE DO

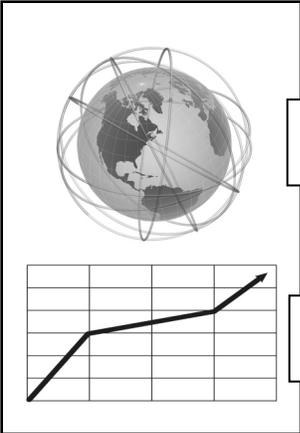
- Display and distribute copies or transparencies of an informational text with multiple text features.
- Point to each feature and ask students to think-pair-share to identify the text feature. To stimulate further discussion, ask students to identify what type of information was included in the text feature and how it helps the reader to gain information (e.g., “It contained information about . . .”).

Show Me How, Lesson 2: Informational Text Features

YOU DO

- Organize students into small groups. Provide each group with sets of informational texts or copies of texts that have a variety of text features represented.
- Provide a pad of sticky notes to each group. Have groups work cooperatively with their members to identify as many of the text features as possible and mark the page with a sticky note to label each feature and identify why it is important. Have students place this handout in their Reading/Writing Notebooks.

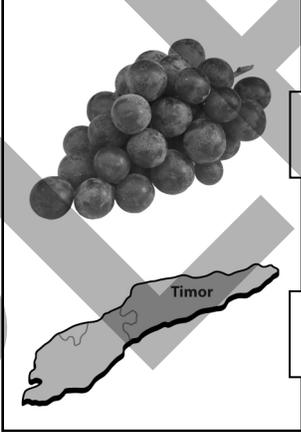
Examples



diagram

graph

diagram
helps reader understand the tilt of Earth's axis



close up

map

SHARE

Ask a few students from different groups to share examples of text features. Have students record what they learned in their Reading and Writing Log (IR 1) from their Reading/Writing Notebooks. Remind students to focus on the Key Question:

- **What special features does informational text have?**

Date	Strategy, Skill, or Ideas	Example(s)	Why This Is Important
1.26.11	Informational text has text features (graphic features).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pictures/photographs • timelines • text boxes 	Text features help the writer communicate important details about the topic.

IR 2: Informational Text Structures and Signal Words

Text Structure	Signal Words	Examples
<p>Descriptive/Classificatory</p> <p>The supporting details of two or more major ideas indicate how those concepts are similar or different. In the classificatory structure, authors organize ideas around categories, or types of things, people, or events.</p>	<p><i>to begin with, some, is a characteristic of, for example, most important, to illustrate, is a feature of, also, another, in fact, for instance, the next, additionally, in addition, and, furthermore, moreover, other, category, type, typically, class, attribute, several</i></p>	<p>There are two basic <u>types</u> of guitars: acoustic and electric. The acoustic guitar has several distinguishing features. <u>To begin with</u>, its body is <u>typically</u> wide and <u>hollow</u>, which gives it a full, rich sound. <u>Additionally</u>, acoustic guitars do not require amplification to be played.</p>
<p>Sequential/Chronological</p> <p>Gives readers a chronology of events or a list of steps in a procedure.</p>	<p><i>after, afterward, as soon as, before, during, finally, first, following, finished, long ago, immediately, initially, later, meanwhile, next, not long after, now, on (date/day), preceding, second, soon, started, step, then, third, today, until, when, ultimately, while</i></p>	<p>Hitting a baseball requires concentration and skill, and following these <u>steps</u> will help you be successful. <u>First</u>, have your feet planted firmly on the ground. <u>Second</u>, keep your eye on the ball at all times. <u>Third</u>, stride into your swing, using your legs. <u>Finally</u>, swing all the way through in order to make full contact.</p>
<p>Compare and Contrast</p> <p>The supporting details of two or more major ideas indicate how those concepts are similar or different.</p>	<p>Compare <i>similar/similarly, is similar to, in the same way, likewise, both, each, alike, also, and, just as . . . so, comparatively, can be compared to, same, in comparison, much like, each</i></p> <p>Contrast <i>whereas, yet, than, is different from, differences, although, instead, however, but, in contrast, on the other hand, conversely, different from, neither . . . nor, either . . . or, nevertheless</i></p>	<p>While <u>both</u> middle school and high school offer a wide choice of classes to students, there are some distinct <u>differences</u>. High school standards are designed to prepare students for college and careers, so they are more demanding. High schools also offer greater options <u>than</u> middle schools for extracurricular choices.</p>
<p>Cause and Effect</p> <p>Shows how one event causes another or a series of events.</p>	<p><i>by, caused, affected, effect, due to, because, so, since, when, whenever, after, consequently, hence, therefore, if . . . then, thus, as a result, therefore, from . . . to, until, as expected, resulting, has made, making, makes, this means, can lead to, leads to, leading to</i></p>	<p>Tides are <u>caused</u> by the gravitational interaction between Earth and the Moon. The gravitational attraction of the Moon <u>makes</u> the oceans bulge out in the direction of the moon. This <u>leads</u> to a high tide.</p>

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