

Using Text Features

Reading and Learning Strategy



Before Reading Strategy

Text Features

Purpose of using text features:

Different types of nonfiction text contain common features that students can recognise and use to help them understand the information being presented, identify main idea as well as key words and concepts. Drawing attention to, as well as discussing the text features with students can help them to find and understand information, enabling them to be more effective readers and learners. Looking at text features by skimming and scanning the chapter activates prior, helps students make connections and predict what the text is about and so increase comprehension.

Explicitly teaching text features:

Step 1

When beginning a new chapter or a new textbook students can be introduced to the different features and consider how these help comprehension. Explain to students that text features are parts of their textbook that have been created to help them locate and learn information. Explain how text features include the design and organisation of pages in their textbook. For example the title page and table of contents are text features found at the beginning of a textbook. Headings, graphics, main idea boxes and bolded words are some of the text features found in the chapters of their book, while glossaries and indexes are some text features found at the end of a textbook.

Step 2

Demonstrate how looking at text features can help identify what is most important in a topic and help locate information quickly. For example explain that by looking at the headings and subheadings the important ideas in a topic can be identified or how bolded or coloured text draws attention to key ideas, words or phrases.

Step 3

In pairs have students familiarise themselves with the different text features in their different textbooks.

TEXTBOOK TRIFLES

Trifles – Find out the ingredients of your textbook!

Title

What is the title?
 What do I already know about this topic?
 What does this topic have to do with the chapter before it?
 What do I think I will be reading about?

Read the headings

What does this heading tell me I will be reading about?
 What is the topic of the paragraph beneath it?
 How can I turn this heading into a question that is likely to be answered in the text?

Introduction

Is there an opening paragraph?
 Does the first paragraph introduce the rest of the chapter?
 What does the introduction tell me I will be reading about?
 Do I know anything about this topic already?

First sentence in a paragraph

What do I think this chapter is going to be about based on the first sentence in each paragraph?

Look at the visuals and vocabulary

Does the chapter include photographs, drawings, maps, charts or graphs?
 What can I learn from the visuals in a chapter?
 How do captions help me better understand the meaning?
 Is there a list of key vocabulary terms and definitions?
 Are there important words in boldface type throughout the chapter?
 Do I know what the boldfaced words mean?
 Can I tell the meaning of the boldfaced words from the rest of the sentences?

End-of-chapter questions

What do the questions ask?
 What information do they point to as important?
 What information do I learn from the questions?

Summary

What do I understand and recall about the topics covered in the summary paragraph?



Now you're ready to eat up the information in your textbooks!

WHAT'S IN YOUR TEXTBOOK TRIFLE?



Topic Title: _____

Textbook Page/s: _____

T	
R	
I	
F	
L	
E	
S	

TAKE A TEXTBOOK TOUR

In pairs look through your textbook and see can you answer the questions about the text features in the book – you're against the clock!

1. Using the Table of Contents, find the chapter number for the topic _____.
2. In the Index at the back of the text, find and list all the pages that deal with _____.
3. On page _____, what is the purpose of the coloured box (*e.g. highlights a key or main idea*).
4. What diagram appears on page _____? How is it connected to other information on that page?
5. In the Table of Contents, which topic is covered in Chapter _____, Section ____?
6. On page _____, what special feature helps you to identify the definition of _____?
7. In the Index, how many page references are there for _____? Which reference provides you with the most complete information on the topic?
8. In Chapter _____, how many subheadings appear throughout the chapter? Where is the subheading that identifies _____ (*e.g. summary, activity*)?
9. Where would you go in the textbook to (quickly) find information about _____?
11. Turn to page _____. Read the first paragraph and find the words in italics. What is the purpose of this feature?
12. Open the text to pages _____ and _____. Scan the words in boldface type. Why did the writers use this feature?
13. Open the text to page _____. Look at the graphic (*e.g. map, photograph, graph*). What is the purpose of this feature?

BIG FOX

In pairs look through your textbook and see can you find the text features below.

		Examples and page numbers
B	Bold - List any words or phrases that are in bold print.	
i	Italics - List any words or phrases that are in italics.	
G	Graphics - Describe any graphics (photos, drawings, graphs, charts, maps, tables, etc.).	
F	Facts - List at least 5 facts found in the pages.	
O	Opinions - List any opinions found in the textbook piece.	
X	X marks the spot - or at least the main point. In 2-3 sentences, write the main point of the piece you have previewed (Hint - read the opening sentence of each paragraph).	

TEXT FEATURE CARDS

<p>Text Feature:</p> <p>What information does it tell me?</p>	<p>Text Feature:</p> <p>What information does it tell me?</p>
<p>Text Feature:</p> <p>What information does it tell me?</p>	<p>Text Feature:</p> <p>What information does it tell me?</p>
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TEXTBOOK SCAVENGER HUNT

How do we use the text features of books to find and understand information?

Directions: You and your partner are on a quest to find examples of the text features below in your textbooks by completing the chart on the next page.

But this is a **TIMED** exercise – you are against the clock!



Before you start, look at some of the features you will be searching for below. Do you know what these features look like? Before you and your partner start make sure you ask the teacher to explain any of the text features below that you're not 100% sure about.

- Photographs
- Pictures/drawings
- Captions
- Maps
- Charts
- Timelines
- Chapter titles
- Headings
- Subheadings
- Index
- Glossary
- Highlighted/bolded words
- Contents page
- Diagrams
- Coloured boxes
- Icons
- Bullet points



TEXTBOOK SCAVENGER HUNT

* With your partner find as many of the following features as you can in your textbook. For each feature you find, write the page number (if you're using different books write the title or subject).

TEXT FEATURES			
Print Features	Graphic Aids	Informational Aids	Organisational Aids
Bold print <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ <i>Italics print</i> <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Coloured print <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Underlined print <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Font size/type <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Bold print <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____	Photos <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Drawings / Pictures <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Diagrams <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Tables/Charts <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Graphs <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Maps <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Cartoons <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____	Introductions <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Timelines <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Captions <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Bullet Points <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Boxed Text <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Numbered Steps <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Icons <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Summary <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____	Titles <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Chapter Titles <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Headings <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Subheadings <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Contents <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Numbered Steps <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Index <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____ Glossary <input type="checkbox"/> book: _____ page: _____
<u>Print features</u> help you pay attention to important words.	<u>Graphic aids</u> help you visualise or make pictures in your mind.	<u>Informational aids</u> help you understand new or important information.	<u>Organisational aids</u> help you find information or connect the ideas.

TAKE A CHAPTER TOUR

Chapter 1

What is the chapter or topic title?

Chapter Title

Heading 1

List the headings and subheadings.

Heading 2

Heading 3

Heading 4

Text

Introduction

What is the main idea or general gist of the 1st paragraph?

The Reverse Monte Carlo [1] method (RMC) produces glass structure models tending to the best fit of diffraction data.



List important key words and sketch any key images or diagrams.

Conclusion

What is the main idea or general gist of the last paragraph?

As stated in my hypothesis, I believe that the size of Sun ray angles at noon cause seasonal temperatures, small angles causing warm temperatures and large angles causing cold temperatures. The experimental data supported my hypothesis, indicating a direct relation between the angle of the Sun's rays and the air temperature. This direct relation between the ray angles and the temperatures was found to apply over different seasons. The smaller the ray angle, the warmer the season, and



Write two questions you think you will find the answer to when you read this chapter or page.

DOES IT FEATURE IN YOUR TEXTBOOK?

Directions: Use your textbook to answer the questions below about text features.

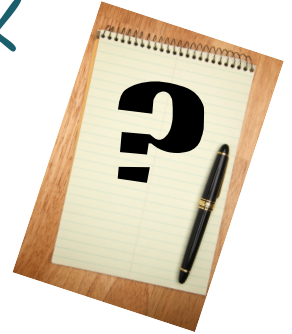
1. Read the text features listed. Write yes or no if your textbook has the text feature and a page number where the text feature can be found. Then explain how it helps you understand the content on the page.

Text Feature	Write yes/no and a page where there is an example of the text feature.	Explain how you think the text feature will help you understand what you are reading.
Chapter Titles	Pg:	
Headings and Subheadings	Pg:	
Photos and Illustrations	Pg:	
Diagrams	Pg:	
Bold or Highlighted Words	Pg:	
Graphs/Charts/ Maps	Pg:	
Main Idea Boxes	Pg:	
Bullet Points	Pg:	
Topic or Chapter Questions	Pg:	

SKIM AND SCAN YOUR TEXTBOOK

Skimming means to read quickly to get the general gist or idea.

Scanning means to look quickly for one thing in particular.



Name _____

Directions: Would you most likely skim or scan to do each of the following?

1. I would _____ through the table of contents to see what information a book contained.
2. I would _____ through the index of a textbook to look for a certain topic.
3. I would _____ through the glossary to find the meaning of word from the textbook.
4. I would _____ through the headings of a chapter before I read it to see if I know anything about it.
5. I would _____ to search for an unanswered question on an exam paper or test.
6. I would _____ to find a location on a map.
7. I would _____ to find a number in a chart.
8. I would _____ to refresh my memory about a topic I'd studied before.

USING CLUES TO PREDICT

1. **Before** you begin reading, use the clues of the text features listed in the first column to predict what you will learn. Based on these clues summarise what you predict you will learn from your reading.
2. **As you read**, as well as after you read, identify and note down what you've learned. Then summarise or write the gist of what you've learned.
3. **After reading** see how many of your predications were correct and what text features helped you the most.

<p>What I think or predict I will learn about based on the text features.</p> <p>Page/s:</p>	<p>After I read I learned...</p> <p>Topic:</p>	<p>Check for confirmation of your predications. What helped?</p>
<p>Title/Heading:</p>		
<p>Subheadings:</p>		
<p>Bold:</p>		
<p>Italics:</p>		
<p>Charts/Diagrams:</p>		
<p>Pictures:</p>		
<p>In summary, from the above text feature clues I predict that...</p>	<p>In summary I learned...</p>	

PREVIEW, READ QUESTION THINK SHEET

<p>Before reading preview the text features. Write two or three questions you expect to find the answers to as you read.</p> <p>Note what text feature/s caused you to write each question.</p>	<p>After reading write the answers to your questions</p>
<p>Question:</p> <p>Text Feature:</p>	<p>Answer:</p>
<p>Question:</p> <p>Text Feature:</p>	<p>Answer:</p>
<p>Question:</p> <p>Text Feature:</p>	<p>Answer:</p>

NOTES (A)

<p>1. Skim through the chapter and write down key words and phrases (Hint: some of these words might be highlighted, bolded, italicized)</p>	<p>2. As you read each paragraph or section write a definition of the key word or phrase.</p>

 **NOTES (B)**

3. Turn the headings and subheadings in your textbook into questions in this column.	4. As you read write notes in this column that help you answer the questions you have asked.
3. Retell or summarise what you have read.	

SKIM, SCAN AND PREDICT

Before you read, skim and scan read the whole text looking closely at:

- **H**EADINGS
- **S**UB-HEADINGS
- **P**ICTURES AND DIAGRAMS
- **L**ABELS AND CAPTIONS
- **L**ARGER WORDS OR WORDS IN **CAPITALS**
- **W**ORDS IN **BOLD** OR *ITALICS* OR UNDERLINED
- **N**UMBERS AND BULLET POINTS
- **S**PEECH BUBBLES
- **F**RAMED SECTIONS



PREDICT:

- **W**HAT IS THIS TEXT GOING TO TELL ME?
- **W**HAT ARE THE MAIN POINTS GOING TO BE?
- **W**HERE WILL **I** FIND THE INFORMATION **I** WANT?

Read All Over Bookmark

1. Look closely at all the pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, etc.



2. Read all the headings and sub headings.



3. Read any **bolded** or **highlighted** words.

What do these words mean?

4. Read the introduction and the conclusion.



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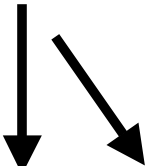
3. Read any **bolded** or **highlighted** words.



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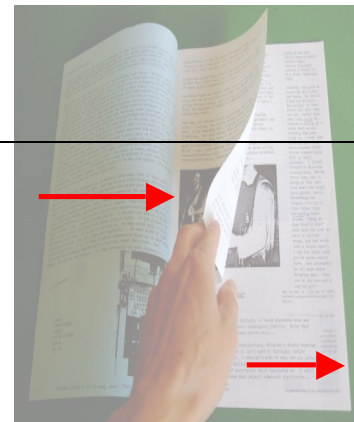
SCANNING

Scanning	
What is it?	When you <i>SCAN</i> , you move your eyes quickly down a page to find one specific detail, for example what time your favourite TV programme is on!
Why do I scan?	Scanning allows you to quickly find a specific fact, date, name or word in a page without trying to read every word. You may need that fact or word to answer a question or to add a specific detail to something you are writing.
How do I scan? Read in this direction. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note how the information is arranged on a page. Scan the features like headings, diagrams, boxed, highlighted, bolded terms or words, names and dates. 2. Move your eyes up and down, or diagonally down the page, letting them dart quickly from side to side looking for bolded words and other text features.



SKIMMING

Skimming	
What is it?	When you SKIM, you read quickly to get the main idea or gist of a paragraph, page or chapter and a few (but not all) of the details.
Why do I skim?	Skimming allows you to read quickly to get a general gist. You may also skim to get a key or main idea.
How do I skim?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the first and last sentences of each paragraph, that is, the first few sentences and concluding sentences. 3. Look at any pictures, diagrams, or charts and their captions. These may help you to understand the main idea or important details. 4. Remember you do not have to read every word when you skim. 5. Generally, move your eyes left to right (and quickly) when you skim.
Read in this direction.	



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