

# CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

## ANCHOR 5

### English Language Arts Standards Reading: Informational Text ANCHOR 5

**Reading Anchor 5:** Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

K	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.	Know and use various text features (e.g., headings, tables of contents, glossaries, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text.	Know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.	Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.	Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause-effect, problem-solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.	Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause-effect, problem-solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.

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## Decision Tree for Reading: Informational Text ANCHOR 5

### Do my students need focused instruction in relation to Reading Anchor 5?

Anchor 5 is aimed at helping students learn to use text structure to support meaning making. (Refer to your grade-level standards for specific details.)

When some or all of your students could use support in this area, it is recommended that you start the process by implementing three types of instruction in sequence over the course of about a week:



The initial demonstration requires just one session (to be repeated as needed), leaving one or two days for collaborative engagement and one or two days to begin the independent applications, which become ongoing as you choose. If you find during any phase of the instruction that some or all of your students could use more intensified support, it is recommended that you move to the lessons for intensifying the instruction.

### Do my students need intensified support using surface features to support meaning making?

Using surface features helps students locate key information in a text. Students who have difficulty locating information or who seem to have difficulty holding meaning across the pages of a text can benefit from support with previewing the surface features. See page 228.

### Do my students need intensified support using internal structures to support meaning making?

Effective readers use their knowledge of text structure as a mental frame for both comprehending and retelling. Students who do not retell accurately, concisely, and with a logical sequence can generally benefit from intensified support in this area. See page 229.

## Demonstration

Anchor 5 is aimed at helping students learn to *use text structure to support meaning making*. Text structure includes *surface features* that are easy to see, such as headings, tables of contents, indexes, and glossaries, as well as *internal structures* that are not as transparent, such as a cause-effect or problem-solution approach to the narrative.

Nearly all of the informational text that students read falls into two categories of internal structure: *descriptive* and *sequential*. (See Figure RIT 5.3.) The most frequent descriptive structures are *lists* (the author presents a set of items or attributes), *webs* (the attributes of an object are described), and *matrices* (the attributes of more than one object or type of object are described.) Common sequential structures are *strings* (step-by-step descriptions or instructions), *cause-effect* (one event leads to others), and *problem-solution* (the author poses a problem or question that is followed by a solution or answer; Dymock and Nicholson 2010).

Both types of structure are important for making meaning. Having an understanding of the surface features allows readers to find information quickly and efficiently. If students know about tables of contents, headings, indexes, and online features such as hyperlinks and sidebars, they can quickly home in on the information they need. Having a sense of the internal structure—or how the narrative itself is organized—can do two important things: It can support students in holding meaning across the pages of a text, and it can support them in pulling together all of the critical pieces of information. (See sidebar for information on common structures.) Teacher-led instruction toward Anchor 5 builds a common language for discussing and analyzing text structure in ways that contribute to meaning making.

1. **Choose the text.** Any text from the content areas you are studying can be used to help students develop understandings about using structure, but over time, work to ensure variety in terms of the structural elements that are represented. To give students a broad range of experience navigating surface features, we should use both print and online material. Online material has a surface structure that is different from books and magazines and should be included in the instructional process. Figures RIT 5.2 and RIT 5.3 feature a set of structural features that are of value to teach in K–5 settings. You will need just one text per lesson.
2. **Introduce the text and the concept.** As with any informational reading, be clear with your purpose. For example, say something like, “Let’s see if this book can help us learn about the differences between amphibians and reptiles” or “We need to find out all we can about the natural resources found in our state.” Show the students the surface features you use to help get a feel for the overall content

or that help you to locate the section you plan to read, making your use of these features explicit.

3. **Demonstrate and discuss the concept.** As you read through the text, demonstrate how you attend to text features, including those designated as appropriate for exploration at your grade level (see the grade-level standards), moving beyond your grade level as it is useful within the reading event. (Figure RIT 5.1 offers a starter set of prompts.)

Figure RIT 5.1

**READING ANCHOR 5:**  
**Prompts to Support Teacher-Led Modeling and Discussion of Text**

**Kindergarten**

- Let's look at the information provided by the front cover (show title and author). What does the cover tell us?
- Let's look at the title page. Let's talk about what is here.
- Let's look at the back cover. Sometimes, extra information is provided here.
- Let's look inside. Look at where the author put the writing (refer to structural elements such as titles, captions, labels, and so on). How does this help us?
- What looks like writing you have seen before? Which parts are different?

**First, Second, and Third Grades**

- Let's preview all the features of this book (or website). What features do you see? What are they for? How do they help us?

**Fourth and Fifth Grades**

- Let's see if we can tell how this author has organized the information with this section. First, let's think about whether this is information with a sequence that matters or without. Then we can dig in further to think about how the information is organized. (Use Figure RIT 5.3 as a guide.) Important: What matters is not that students identify the "right" structure, but that they identify a structure that allows them to hold the information in their minds and organize it for retelling or rethinking.



## Some Important Surface Features

### Organizational Features

- **Table of contents.** Provides an overview of what the text contains and where it might be located.
- **Headings.** Provide information about key topics in a text and the order in which they are presented.
- **Subheads.** Provide information about the key topics in a section of text and the order in which they are presented.
- **Index.** Shows the topics addressed in the text; is organized alphabetically so that the reader may quickly locate information.

### Informational Features

- **Diagrams.** Used to show relationships among concepts.
- **Charts and graphs.** Used to summarize and compare information.
- **Maps.** Used when location is relevant to understand.
- **Illustrations.** Provide a visual interpretation of the way something looks.
- **Captions.** Describe what is happening in the illustration.
- **Labels.** Provide information about parts of the illustration.
- **Bold, italics, colored print.** Used to signify important words or concepts, and made to stand out for quick location. Often, such words are found in the glossary.
- **Glossary.** Provides definitions for key words in the text.

### Features Unique to the Electronic Environment

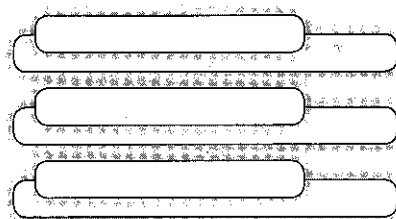
- **Electronic menu.** Consists of a series of titles that link the reader to the desired information.
- **Electronic sidebar.** Contains hyperlinks that provide new information.
- **Icons.** Images that can be "clicked" in the electronic environment to link the reader to the desired information.
- **Search terms (key words).** Used to narrow down and locate key information in the Internet or on a website.
- **Hyperlinks.** Move the reader to a new page within the website, or to another website.

Figure RIT 5.3

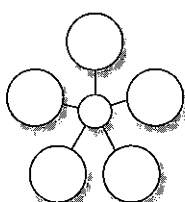
## Some Important Internal Structures

### DESCRIPTIVE STRUCTURES

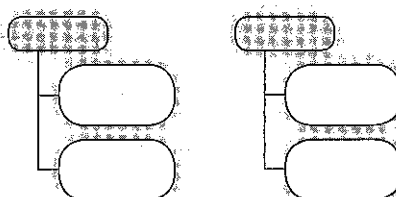
- **List.** The author lists a set of items or attributes.



- **Web.** The author describes the attributes of an object.

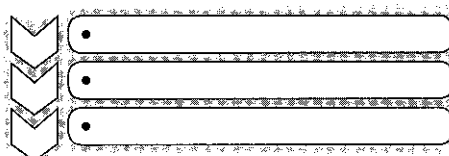


- **Matrix.** The author describes the attributes of more than one object (used for comparison).

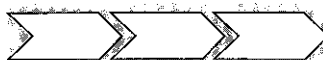


### SEQUENTIAL STRUCTURES

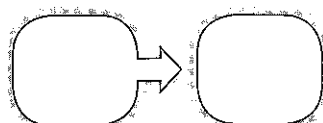
- **String.** The author provides a chronological description or step-by-step instructions.



- **Cause-effect.** The author presents one event that leads to others.



- **Problem-solution.** The author presents a problem or question that is followed by a solution or answer.



Structures are identified by Dymock and Nicholson 2010; organizers are adapted from their work.

## INTENSIFYING THE INSTRUCTION

### Previewing Surface Features

*Previewing* is a comprehension strategy that involves using surface features to locate key information in a text. Students who have difficulty locating information or who seem to have difficulty holding meaning across the pages of a text can benefit from support with previewing.

1. Choose a feature-rich informational text for demonstration, and have a copy available for each student or student team.
2. Set a purpose for the reading. For example, "I am interested in learning something specific about leaves. I want to know how leaves change color." In light of this purpose, show students the relevant surface features (such as tables of contents, index, and chapter headers) you can use to find your information. Identify the section you might read in light of your purpose.
3. Go to the section, and if there are subheads, use them to predict what the author addresses under each. You may read the section at this point, or continue with the previewing lesson.
4. To continue with the previewing lesson, have students look for specific information as you observe and provide support. For example, "Now you see if you can find the section that tells why leaves fall from trees." Ask the students to turn through the pages and note any special surface features that could help them locate relevant information. Then have them closely review and make predictions based on subheads and other features within that section, as you have demonstrated.
5. Have students report their strategies back to the whole group and remind them that previewing before reading can help them be more efficient and better understand the text.

Figure RIT 5.5

## **INTENSIFYING THE INSTRUCTION**

### **Identifying Internal Structures**

Effective readers use their knowledge of text structure as a mental frame for both comprehending and retelling or summarizing. Students who do not retell accurately, concisely, and with a logical sequence can generally benefit from intensified support in this area.

1. Choose an informational text for demonstration, and have a copy available for each student or student team. Also have available chart paper and a copy or enlarged replication of the graphic organizers from Figure RIT 5.3.
2. Meeting with a group or the whole class, set a purpose for the reading. For example, "I am interested in learning something specific about leaves. I want to know why leaves change color." In light of this purpose, show students the relevant surface features of the book (such as tables of contents, index, chapter headers, and subheads), and demonstrate how you use them to identify and locate the section you want to read.
3. Let students know that as they read the chosen section, you want them to think about the organization of the text. Show them the possibilities from Figure RIT 5.3 and ask them to predict the structure the author might use to address the question of how leaves change color: descriptive or sequential. Let them know that they will use the author's chosen structure to help retell or summarize the content.
4. Guide them to match the content to one of the structures. Let them know that there is rarely a "perfect" match and that they can choose the one they think fits best and adapt the organizer if necessary.
5. Have students use the chosen graphic organizer to retell the content. They can be asked to do this orally or in writing. Provide follow-up instruction as needed.



## READING ANCHOR 5: Prompts to Support Student-Led Group Discussion of Text

### Kindergarten

- Gather a bin of feature-rich books for each group. Allow students time to browse and discuss the features, bringing the class together afterward to discuss the interesting features they noticed.
- Students sit together as they each design the front and back cover of a book. They may do this on one sheet of paper “just for fun” or they may be instructed to create a cover based on a real book. As students work, they are encouraged to talk about what they are drawing and writing.

### First, Second, and Third Grades

- Give each group a bin of about a dozen informational books. The task for each group is to list the different types of features in the books and to identify the purpose for each. Along with naming the features and recording their purpose, students should record page numbers. Each group can share a set number of features with the class.

### Fourth and Fifth Grades

- After reading a section of text, students reread together to determine the internal structure using the strategies you have demonstrated (see Figures RIT 5.1 and RIT 5.3). After they have determined the structure, they should draw a large diagram that helps show it. (They may use or adapt a diagram from Figure RIT 5.3.) The diagram is filled in and used to summarize.
- Give students a passage from a sequential text that has been cut into parts. Students read the parts and place them in logical order. (This may occur before or after the text has been read. The whole text need not be used.) Ask students to determine the structure (string; cause-effect; problem-solution) and to be prepared to provide a rationale for their decision. (See Figure RIT 5.3.)
- Give students a short passage from a descriptive text and ask them to decide whether the information could fit best into a list, web, or matrix. (See Figure RIT 5.3.)

## Independent Application

### Browsing Bins

Provide your students with the resources necessary to develop familiarity with different text features and structures by organizing bins of informational texts and access to key websites. Include books and websites with varied features so that students gain familiarity with all types, and be sure the information is related to the key content you are studying.

To help students maintain focus, you can ask that they record ideas or findings in a response journal (see page 165). Or information can be recorded on individual sticky notes or chart paper and then discussed after the browsing session. As another option, ask students to team up after reading and list on sticky notes all the text features they found in their books. They can then use their collaborative lists to generate a class list of text features and their purposes (as in Figure RIT 5.2).

### Page Design

After students have examined different text features and structures through demonstration, collaborative engagements, and independent reading experiences, allow them to create their own informational text page designs. Designing a single page for a class-created text is a manageable way for students to explore different features and their purposes.

1. Students will need support in choosing a topic. Model how to create a list of possibilities within a given theme and then home in on one that you know and care about. For example, if you are studying what plants need to grow, students might choose a particular plant to focus on. Whatever topics are chosen, you will want to require that students can find reading material (at least one book or article) in relation to the topic so that they can use reading for information as part of the writing process.
2. Model how to collect and organize your ideas for writing. If your students are ready, show them how to choose one of the graphic organizers (Figure RIT 5.3) to collect and organize ideas. Or just show them how you jot down a list of the ideas to include, and then think about how to organize them. And show students how you could use a variety of text features (as in Figure RIT 5.2) to present your information.

3. Allow students time for planning and reading. When students are still in the planning phase, support them in using resources such as books, magazines, and Web information to create their content.
4. Allow students time to prepare their pages and compile the pieces into a class book.

### Book Design

After students have worked with different text structures and features through demonstration and collaborative engagements, allow them to create their own books. Before creating a book, you may also wish to work with them to design a single page for a class-created text (see Page Design above). This will help them develop some of the necessary skills for creating an effective book of their own.

1. Students will need support in choosing a topic. You can ask them to choose a key focus from within a thematic area you have been studying as a class. Model how to create a list of possibilities and then home in on one that you know and care a lot about. You may wish to give a set of choices. For example, whether you are studying important people in history, how we use shapes to describe the physical world, simple mechanical devices, or the effects that organisms have on one another, you can offer several choices within the theme area and let students choose just one. Whatever topics are chosen, you will want to ensure that students can find reading material (at least one book or article) in relation to the topic so that they can use reading for information as part of the writing process.
2. Model how to collect and organize your ideas for writing. If your students are ready for structured informational writing, you can show them how to choose one of the graphic organizers (Figure RIT 5.3) to collect and organize ideas. Or just show them how you jot down a list of the ideas you would like to include, and then think about how to organize the ideas onto separate pages and/or into separate sections with appropriate subheads. As you plan, show students how you could use a variety of text features (as in Figure RIT 5.2) to present your information.
3. Allow students planning time. Use this time to be sure they have appropriate resources available and to see that they are planning to include varied text features appropriately.
4. Allow students time to prepare and share their books.

## Website Browsing

*Website browsing* offers opportunities for students to study the design of Web pages and learn how to navigate through the information available on a site. If you have a computer lab or even one computer with a projector, you can help students develop skill at finding and interpreting information online by coming up with a question and then using features such as menus, icons, sidebars, links, and key words to answer it. Be sure to show students how to choose key words. Discuss the terms you choose and why, and allow them to explore the results of trying out their own different combinations of words. Following are some sites with easy-to-use, kid-friendly features:

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/>  
[www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org)  
[www.wordcentral.com](http://www.wordcentral.com)  
<http://kids.yahoo.com/>

Accessing information on the Internet requires special skills and strategies that are unique to the online environment. For children to be successful with online literacy, they must learn to quickly find, evaluate, use, and communicate information using digital technologies (Leu et al. 2004).

## Website Design

Website design involves students in thinking through key information on a topic and how it might be best presented in an online environment. After students have gained experience viewing and browsing websites with your guidance, they can create their own site designs based on a content-area topic. Depending on the technology you have available, they may be able to work on an actual site, but even without specific tools available, thinking through the design can support their development of both content knowledge and technology skill.

Figures RIT 5.7 and RIT 5.8 show a basic design that could be used or adapted for a science topic. At the top of the page, students fill in information for screen 1, which functions as a home page, by writing or typing the topic and the menu choices that would serve as hyperlinks to another screen. At the bottom of the page, they show what the linked screens would contain. Each link contains a space for a definition and example that would be filled in by the student. Students could decide to hyperlink these pages (usually signified by blue font and an underline) to another page or to a website. For example, they might send the reader to an online dictionary for the definition.

Students should be encouraged to consider the audience for their pages. Is it other members of the class? Or is it perhaps younger students? Along with content and structure, students can consider what colors and fonts and visual images might appeal to their audience.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The diagram illustrates a web page layout. At the top is a rectangular box labeled "Home Page". Below it is a large, rounded rectangular box labeled "Topic". At the bottom are two smaller, rounded rectangular boxes labeled "Menu Item 1" and "Menu Item 2", positioned side-by-side.

Links Page	
Menu Item 1	Menu Item 2
<b>Definition</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Example</b>	<b>Example</b>



Figure RIT 5.8

## Home Page/Links Page (4 menu items)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Page**

Topic

Menu Item 1      Menu Item 2      Menu Item 3      Menu Item 4

**Links Page**

or

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Menu Item 1</b></p> <p>Definition</p> <p>Example</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Menu Item 2</b></p> <p>Definition</p> <p>Example</p>
or	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Menu Item 3</b></p> <p>Definition</p> <p>Example</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Menu Item 4</b></p> <p>Definition</p> <p>Example</p>

## Writing in Structure

*Writing in structure* involves identifying the structure of a text and using a graphic organizer to summarize it. Start with a text the whole class has read or listened to, choosing an important section to summarize. Guide students to choose the best-matched organizer from Figure RIT 5.3, or to develop their own. They should write out only the key content. After working with the students through several texts, provide opportunities for them to write in structure independently or in teams.

## Collaborative Sequencing

*Collaborative sequencing* is a whole-class effort involving putting together the pieces of an informational text. After reading or listening to a text read aloud, each student is given one-quarter of a piece of paper or an extra-large sticky note to sketch one key part and write one rich and detailed sentence about that part.

If working with a sequential structure, students then determine where the event falls best: the beginning, middle, or end. The class then meets in three groups (whose membership is based on who has drawn parts from the beginning, middle, and end) to determine an order for each piece within that group. Finally, the class works together to read the whole retelling and revise the placement of the pieces as necessary.

If working with a descriptive structure, the class works together to create a web or matrix that contains all of the ideas. The class then stands in a circle around the room and reads the combined pieces in sequence.