

Forms and Features of Text: A Resource for Intentional Teaching

OSPI Document

Text Forms and Features:
A Resource for Intentional Teaching

Dr. Terry Bergeson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Cheryl L. Mayo
Assistant Superintendent
Learning and Teaching

Barbara Lawson
Director
Program Development

Jerry A. Miller
State Reading Specialist

This material is available in alternative format upon request. Contact Program Development, 360/586-1486 or TDD 360/664-3631. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction complies with all federal and state rules and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or marital status.

**Developed by Margaret E. Mooney on behalf of the
Superintendent of Public Instruction for distribution within the
State of Washington.**

October 1998

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	68
Text Forms and Formats	70
Text Features	96
Examples of Techniques Authors Use to Engage Readers	106

Introduction

This document is designed for use by K–12 teachers. It is authored in response to teachers' questions about the attributes and characteristics of various forms of writing. This resource has been developed to provide easily accessible information about text forms and features referenced in the reading and writing sections of the *Essential Academic Learning Requirements Technical Manual* (July 17, 1998) and "A Framework for Achieving the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in Reading Grades K–6 (Draft)."

It is anticipated that the resource will have several uses by providing guidelines for:

- Reassessing material already available.
- Extending the range of material available for classroom use.
- Identifying teaching points to help students understand the nature of a specific text form and how this affects the rate and style of reading or its function as a vehicle for written communication.
- Assisting teachers and students to establish rubrics for assessing writing and reading tasks and accomplishments.
- Identifying common targets and vocabulary within buildings or districts.

This resource is intended for use as a reference for teachers, but **not** as a curriculum guide. It is to be used in conjunction with other documents supporting the essential academic learning requirements. However, the information is not definitive, nor is it specific to any particular level. Teachers will need to delete and add according to the competencies of their students and the nature of the current lesson or task.

The number in parentheses after each item refers to the grade at which it is introduced in "A Framework for Achieving the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in Reading K–12 (Draft)." It is emphasized that this grade denotes the suggested level of introduction. Teachers will need to make their own decisions about the most appropriate time to introduce a form or feature. Once introduced, an item will need continued focus in subsequent grades with students receiving frequent opportunities and guidance to extend their understanding and use of the form or feature in an increasing range of contexts.

The suggested level of introduction does not mean that all of the features should be taught at that time. For example, expository texts are first introduced at kindergarten. The list of features goes well beyond simple forms appropriate for this level. On the other hand, dictionaries are introduced at the second grade. This does not mean that the children will not have been using dictionaries before that time. Some forms are introduced twice (for example, diaries at kindergarten and third grade) reminding teachers of the fictional and nonfiction function of many forms.

The general format for each entry is why, what, and features. However, all three are not necessarily included.

- The first part of this document deals with text forms, which can loosely be thought of as "genres" of text. It is followed by a section on text features. These form the bulk of the document.
- They are followed by examples of links between text forms and show how a text form introduced at one level can be the springboard for introducing other forms at later levels. It is emphasized that the introduction is only the beginning and further teaching and practice will be necessary at subsequent stages.
- The final section reminds teachers of the breadth and depth of intentional teaching required in order to implement the essential academic learning requirements in reading through examples of some of the techniques authors employ to engage their readers and ways in which knowledge about one text form can lead to learning about another.

The entries or items within entries are not listed in hierarchical order. The number and order in which any are introduced or are emphasized in the classroom will be determined by the teacher or the teacher and the student.

As with all parts of this resource, the content here is as applicable to writing as it is to reading. **It is strongly recommended that students should first have experiences with the various text forms and features through hearing then read and through reading them in supported and independent situations before being expected to write them on their own.** Text and form features identified during and following the reading experiences can then form a foundation for frameworks and rubrics to be extended or used for reflection during further reading and/or writing activities. In one classroom, for example, after reading fables to the students and providing opportunities and materials for the students to read some on their own, the teacher and students identified the following five features as essential elements of all fables:

The animals are always animals.
The animals act and talk like humans.
There is always some trickery in the story.
A fable always has a moral.
Fables tell about one incident.

Each student then made a rubric choosing three of the above features to guide their planning and reflection when writing their own fables.

	My mark	My T's mark
My characters are animals.		
The animals talk.		
My fable tells a moral.		

This resource is intended to be a working document for teachers to add to and amend as necessary. Space is provided for teachers to list titles and to make notes on skills and strategies introduced, as well as notes on writing opportunities and assignments related to each form of text. This resource is not intended to be a stand-alone—it needs to be used alongside other manuals, guides, and references and always matched with the competencies, interests, and experiences of the students.

Text Forms and Formats

Advertisements

Why To develop loyalty to a cause, person, or product. To tantalize, persuade, and invite. To circularize information. To promote an event, product, cause, or person. To endorse a product over that of a competitor. To correct actual or perceived misinformation. To generate good will. To sell a service or product.	What Billboards, fliers, circulars. Pamphlets, posters packaging. Blurbs. TV and radio spots. Inserts or notices in magazines and newspapers.
Features Uses concise language structures. Sometimes a third party is involved in sponsorship. Persuasive language—superlatives, comparisons with competitors. Abbreviated language and often abbreviations—the latter are often specialized or technical terms. Extensive use of graphics—layout, color, type font and size, and visual images. Often emphasize price, quality, reliability, new or current product. Often designed to appeal to a specific audience or to extend audience. Elements of urgency—limited availability, special offer, sale, discount. Other vocabulary: trademark, retail price, guarantee, warranty, special conditions apply, ingredients. Most include contact information. Radio and TV ads may include jingle or song, printed ads will probably include a logo of the product or company. Excellence or superiority is often claimed rather than proven or backed by research. Asterisk often refers to the “fine print” and the conditions or limitations or warnings. Size or duration varies. Almost always linked to revenue. Often uses metaphors.	

Almanacs

Why To show organization of the year or a period of time. To highlight specific dates or rhythms within a period. To provide information in a quick and easily accessible form.	What A book or table that comprises a calendar of the year showing days, weeks, and months. A table showing the rhythm of the sun and moon. A register or record of feast days. A record of astronomical information. A record of genealogies and statistics. A book of reference material.
Features Layout consistent within document. Layout will vary according to purpose and origin (e.g., some weeks will begin on Monday, others Sunday). Cultural influences determine the length and format of time periods. Often linked to a culture or religion. Determines introduction or amendments of laws, taxes, or holidays. Information categorized in some by topic.	

Atlases

Why To show location of a continent, country, or place within a country.	What Collection of maps, each with a specific focus.
Features Maps may show outlines, regions, typography, resources, political divisions, or the world. Scale. Abbreviations. Links or overlaps between maps. Table of content. Index with grid reference. Longitude and latitude. Symbols. Use of color or shading for relativity.	

Autobiographies

Why To share aspects and incidents of one's life through the printed word. To correct misinformation. To reflect on one's own life. To acknowledge those who have made a contribution to the author's life. To explore a period of time.	What A first person account (usually narrative) of all or part of one's life. Diaries, memoirs, journals, and personal letters are autobiographical items but are not usually continuous narrative.
Features Offers insights into the attributes, personalities, interests, and opinions of the subject and of those close to the subject. Offers insights into the conditions and times in which the person lives/d. Usually continuous narrative. Often unreliable as a record of facts. May be based on memory, or on other people's impressions and memories rather than research or reference to factual records. First person. Usually some emotive and reflective language. Usually includes feelings and opinions. Usually highlights one's better traits. Illustrations most likely to be photographs, grouped and presented in signatures. Photographs usually grouped chronologically. May include flashbacks. Probably some direct and indirect speech. Index common. May have a ghostwriter. Chapter headings usually descriptive.	

Biographies

Why To highlight achievements. To dispel biased views. To publicize the subject. To perpetuate the memory of a person or achievements. To reflect on aspects of historical interest.	What A written account of a person's life that focuses on character and career or achievements. Ideally, an accurate history of a person's life (as perceived at that time) and a reflection of the time and place in which he/she lived.
Features Detail may include family background, childhood experiences, education, personality traits, business ventures, comments by critics, contributions to his or her field of work or interest and the effects of these. Usually well researched. Research base may include diaries, newspaper clippings, official documents, subject's letters and memos to or from others, memories of contemporaries, personal knowledge. Illustrative material usually photographic. Photographs usually between signatures of book. Probably includes quotes or comments from other people. Usually shortcomings as well as virtues highlighted, or at least included. Usually organized chronologically. May be written while subject still alive or posthumously. Chapter headings usually descriptive.	

Book Reports

Why To summarize reaction to a book. To influence other readers. To promote or introduce a book.	What A synopsis of a book, tailored for other potential readers, discussing noticeable features and new insights.
Features Differs from book review, as a report focuses mainly on what is objectively observable. Format may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Title and author.• Characters, setting, and point of view or purpose.• Brief synopsis of content.• Comment on the theme or perspective.• Quotations from book to support statements.• Recommendation on appropriate readership.	

Brochures

Why To inform. To invite. To persuade. To market a product, attraction, or event. To create interest and good will.	What Single sheet, often folded, of promotional material advertising a product, attraction, or event.
Features Symbols Abbreviations. Directions. Color, font, type size and layout are important. Schedules and timetables. Language may vary within one brochure from concise and factual (especially when giving information of price, responsibilities, reservations) to emotive and persuasive descriptions using superlatives and making comparisons with competitors. Vocabulary: guarantee, reservations, responsibility, warranty, location. Contact information—address, phone, fax, Internet. Illustrative material often includes photographs portraying best aspects of subject and maps.	

Cartoons

Why To entertain through satire or humor. To express an opinion. To politically persuade.	What A pictorial reflection on a topical issue, event, or person. An illustrative exaggeration of characteristics or issues.
Features Captions are often dialog. Inferential reading of illustrative material and caption required. Assumes background knowledge. Caricatures depicting peculiarities or defects. Often engenders congenial rather than derisive laughter. Often topical and only of interest to specific group (e.g., local or where characters or issue are known). Speech bubbles.	

Classics

	What A work generally acknowledged as a model or example of a standard. A work of the highest class among others in similar form. A work which has been a long-standing favorite.
Features Usually several or many editions. Abridged versions common. Book language. Originals of older classics had little illustration. What is perceived as a classic at one time, might not be at another. Several works originally labeled as classics have been criticized for stereotyping.	

Cinquains

	What A five-line stanza, usually unrhymed, with a set syllabic pattern.
Features Pattern of syllables: two, four, six, eight, two. Content usually related to nature. A single glimpse.	

Comics

Why To entertain through humor. To tell a story through pictures and minimal dialog.	What Booklets or magazines containing one or more comic strips.
Features Dialog and text describing setting or time minimal. Main action carried through illustration. All text within frames. Speech bubbles. Inferential reading required. Sequence of dialog within frame often left to reader to decide. Characters often have their own series. Main distinction between issues is number and cover illustration rather than title. Contractions and idioms. Characters known through speech and action (no descriptive text). Some comics have become classics.	

Consumer Reports

Why To help potential buyers make an informed decision about a purchase. To maintain standards. To show how one product or service is viewed in relation to others available.	What Evaluative surveys of goods and services for personal use rather than those used for the production of other goods or services. Clear and objective presentation of advantages and disadvantages of a product or service in relation to others of similar intent.
Features Uses comparison and contrast and cause and effect. Rating system often present using numerals, stars, letters, percentages, or bar graphs. Usually prepared by independent group. Criteria known to readers. Field testing, clinical research, and/or consumer surveys. Often rated against national or international standards. Usually include summary and recommendations for purchase or use. Present and objective and impersonal tone. Uses third person point of view. Includes headings, graphs, charts, tables. May include personal testimonies presenting positive or negative experiences.	

Diaries

Why To record events or thoughts day by day. Two distinct purposes—one as a planning record of appointments and the other as a reflective and personal record. For reflective reading or planning or scheduling.	What A book marked and arranged in calendar order in which to note appointments or keep a personal record of thoughts and activities.
Features Arranged sequentially, day by day, and sometimes by shorter periods. Personal—often notes rather than complete sentences. Personal—emotive and descriptive language common. Personal—inner thoughts revealed. Appointments—usually only name and brief description of content. Abbreviations common. Personal diaries often for author's use only. Appointments diary may be kept on behalf of someone else. Conventional punctuation and spelling often not important in personal diaries.	

Dictionaries

Why To promote the correct or conventional use of language. To provide a common understanding of the spelling, meanings, use, and derivation of words.	What Reference books, arranged alphabetically, listing words and their meanings, alternative spellings, and parts of speech, and often origins and pronunciation guides. Some dictionaries also use the word in a short sentence. Reference books, arranged alphabetically, giving a word of similar meaning in another language. Reference books listing words for specific contexts or use—a biographical or mathematical dictionary, dictionary of synonyms and antonyms, rhyming dictionary.
Features Alphabetical listing with consistent format for each entry within style or that edition. Parentheses. Abbreviations. Symbols. Pronunciation guide. Sounds and stress marks in pronunciation guide for each entry. Derivations of words. May include encyclopedic entries. Guide words. Use of type for importance (bold, italics). Variants, inflections, parts of speech, and grammatical information usually included.	

Directions

Why To direct action. To give a sequence in order for something to be completed successfully. To set out rules or parameters.	What Procedural texts giving step-by-step instructions.
Features Clarity is critical. Sequence is critical. Numbering of steps. Diagrams and figures are common. Layout—often space between steps. Sequence may be indicated by arrows, especially in diagrams or when layout is not vertical. Few adjectives. Often on a sheet of paper within package.	

Editorials

Why To persuade others to have the same opinions as the editorial writer. To share opinions. To force public officials to reconsider decisions or priorities. To suggest alternative procedures. To influence readers. To bring current issues to the reader's attention. To entertain.	What A short persuasive essay which expresses opinion or reaction to a news story or topical event. An informative outline of contents in a magazine.
Features Expresses opinion; sometimes biased. May be controversial. Anticipates counterarguments. Critical reading required for reader to make informed decision. Sometimes esoteric. May focus on negative. Consistent placement and length. Usually written by chief editor.	

Encyclopedias

Why To provide accessible reference material. To give facts about a topic.	What A book or collection of volumes containing brief articles or information on various topics, often arranged alphabetically, dealing either with a range of knowledge or with a specific focus.
Features Usually updated regularly, hence editions are important. Preface to each edition noting reason for or summary of changes. Usually includes some illustrative material. Carefully researched. Usually objective with little or no bias. Detailed index with key reference usually in bold. Abbreviations. Often in columns with guidewords.	

Epics

Why To present models of greatness of character. To reflect values of a culture. To comment on a social issue of the period.	What A long narrative story or poem set in a remote time and place and about a heroic character/characters.
Features Characters larger than life in strength, intellect, or bravery. Content important in history of a nation. Character reflects full range of virtues of the time. Many originally written in poetic form. Translations may lose rhythm and strength of emotion, bravery, or danger of original. Many of the originals were sung or said to the accompaniment of a musical instrument. Danger and a demonstration of physical strength common essential elements.	

Essays

Why To explain, explore, or argue ideas on a single topic.	What A short, nonexhaustive composition where ideas on a single topic or theme are explained or argued in an interesting manner. Formal essays, informal essays, biographical essays, photo essays, narrative essays, question responses.
Features Nearly always written in prose (note: photo essays). Maintains tight focus on topic. Most essays are relatively short. Follow clear organizational form. Directed toward a specific audience. May include cause and effect, analogies, opinion, persuasion, classification, descriptions, reviews, comparison and contrast. Introductory sentence presents issue and perspective.	

Expository Texts

Why To explain the what, when, why or how of facts, ideas, and opinions.	What Explanatory writing, detailing or justifying information, ideas, and opinions. In short form: essays, articles. In longer form: travel books, research papers, informational texts. Explains an idea, develops a thought, and proves a point or fact.
Features Usually nonfiction. Tells how, where, when, why, which things happen or have happened or are as they are. Tells what things are like—size, color, shape, texture. Tells what things can do—movement, use. Tells how many. Tells where things are found. Usually detailed and descriptive. Information organized logically. Systematic explanations or arguments. Often includes illustrative material, especially diagrams and tables. Longer expository texts usually have a table of contents and index and descriptive headings. Many have a bibliography. Detailed reading is usually required.	

Fables

Why To demonstrate a moral.	What A short and fairly simple didactic story in prose or verse usually with animal characters acting as humans. A traditional form of story related to proverbs and folklore.
Features Anthropomorphic. Characters are impersonal—called by generic name. Characters represent aspects of human nature, e.g., sheep represents innocence. Usually one two or three characters. Element of trickery as turning point. Usually one incident. More complex than often thought—conveying abstract truth in very few words.	

Folk Tales

Why To tell an entertaining story. To reveal human nature. To instill cultural beliefs, values, and practices. To explain natural and social phenomena. To kindle imagination. To discover universal qualities of humankind.	What Forms of narrative that have been handed down. Epics, fairy tales, ballads, myths, legends, fables, folk songs.
Features May not have been intended for children, but strong plot, quick action, and identifiable structure have attracted children through ages and cultures. Usually reasonably short. Always end happily. The Underdog usually triumphs or good overcomes evil. Wishes come true as a result of a test or struggle. Contain an element of magic. Every culture has its own folklore reflecting its history and values Identifiable structure. Action quickly reflects direct plot. Characters, setting, and problem revealed early. Characters often opposite in personality and appearance—usually several adjectives to describe each character. Quick ending contains resolution—instant, painless death; lavish wedding without apparent preparation. Repetition a basic element—repetition often related to number of characters. Three is a common element—characters, main episodes, attempts to solve problems. Chants or repeated verses are common. Always set in yesteryear. Many versions of same tale—often adapted to a culture but also many versions within a culture. The same theme is reflected in different tales in different cultures.	

Haiku

	What A lyrical poem, with a definite structure, that focuses on a single moment.
Features English: seventeen syllables arranged in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables. Creates clear images. Written in present tense. Focuses on natural object or scene. First part focuses on some aspect of nature and the second on the engendered mood or emotion. Often relates to seasons. Evokes emotion. Reader needs to add context and often create the setting.	

Idioms

	What Ways in which words are commonly combined. Ways in which a specific or identifiable group combine words in a particular context.
Features The meaning may not be predictable from individual words in the expression. Difficult to translate because of unique syntax. The context and the user often define the meaning.	

Informational Posters

Why To convey a large amount of information in a succinct and graphical form to a distant and fleeting audience.	What Billboard, fliers, TV advertisements.
Features Appeals to a specific audience. May include slogan, logos, reference to public figures. Illustrations may include photographs of well-known people. Link with product may be obscure but causes tend to be overtly explicit. Graphics usually sell the message. Inferential reading a common requirement. Uses concise language. Often includes metaphors.	

Interviews

Why To record conversations with or questioning of a person for a specific purpose or audience. To obtain and share information about predetermined topics through a question-and-answer session.	What Usually magazine or newspaper articles set out in question-and-answer format.
Features Little or no scene setting. Verbatim recording of questions and answers. Interviewee does not usually have opportunity to use reference material. Use of bold type, abbreviations, and colons in presentation. May include idioms, incomplete structures. Sidetracking is common.	

Journals

Why To provide a record of thoughts, experiences, dreams, memories, plans.	What A scholarly periodical A personal record of thoughts, impressions, and events important for the present or as a plan for future reference or action.
Features Entries dated. Includes summaries, responses, unanswered questions. Contains autobiographical information. First person. May be a mixture of tenses. Often focuses on what has been learned. Can be a source of ideas for writing or some action. Entries may be more spasmodic than in diaries. Entries may be more reflective of thoughts, impressions, and ideas than in a diary.	

Legends

Why To explain a social phenomena. To focus on positive character traits. To present models of behavior and ethics. To use story to explain aspects of human nature.	What Narratives often part fact and part fiction about the life and deeds of a famous hero or a saint, kept alive mainly through oral retellings. Stories about heroes before the time of recorded history.
Features Focuses on character traits, especially of strength and bravery. Often exaggerated accounts—some of the acts of heroism become more exaggerated with each retelling. Many have historical basis. Many follow the pattern of traditional tales. Often called hero myths. Often distinguished from myths in that they have humans rather than gods as characters and they sometimes have a historical basis which myths do not have. Many epics are based on legends.	

Letters

Business Letters

Why To request or to respond to a request. To express an opinion To inform. To apply for a product, information, or a position.	What Part of correspondence between two parties, one of whom is part of an organized body.
Features Lay out more details, and body of letter has more defined structure than that of a personal letter. Full address of sender and recipient included. Structure includes purpose of letter and reference to any previous correspondence on the same topic, explanation, and thanks which often summarizes intended or decided action. Opinion often stated as fact. May include "Reference: Attention." Recipient or writer may be acting on behalf of a group or committee. May include technical information specific to topic or specific item. If more than one item is being discussed, paragraphs are used. Might be numbered with subsection defined by letters. Letterheads.	

Functional Letters

	What Letters for a specific purpose, often "one-offs" such as expressing condolence, thanks, or congratulations. Sometimes an open letter, such as a letter to an editor intended for public readership.
--	---

Personal Letters

Why To maintain a relationship. To exchange records of incidents and ideas of common interest.	What A written communication from one person to another, traditionally sent in an envelope by post, but electronic mail is becoming more common.
Features Sequence may not be important. Idioms and natural language common elements. Some content probably of significance only to writer and main recipient. Often used in research for biographies or autobiographies. Address and date often abbreviated. Usually longer length than business or functional letters. Grammar and spelling are often not as closely checked as in other forms of letters.	

Lists

Why To provide quick access to information with a common purpose or focus. To provide a quick reference for considering ideas or facts and their relationships.	What A collection, often arranged vertically, of words or phrases with a common theme.
Features Often the result of individual or collective brainstorming. Usually same parts of speech within a list. May be reorganized into a logical sequence to form an outline or procedure. Bullets. May focus on main ideas. Can be a form of note taking.	

Magazines

Why To provide short reads on a variety of subjects or different aspects or views of a single topic or theme within one publication. To pursue a topic or issue on a regular basis. To update information. To inform readers of the lives of famous people. To provide the views of several people. To develop loyalty to a product or cause.	What A collection of items published for a specific audience or to promote a cause. A volume or issue with a consistent format and approach.
Features Light and easy to handle. Often free or cheap. Offers detailed reading or content for “dipping and delving.” May be biased or emphasize a perspective. Each issue may vary according to focus and contributors. Cover gives information of main topics or the focus. Usually wide range of graphics within an issue. Columns. Range of type. Technical or specialized vocabulary. Items may be continued from one issue to another. Contents may include: Cover information—publication date, issue, volume, key topics or theme. Table of contents. Publication staff. Publication information. Subscription information. Editorial. Reviews. Letters to the editor. Profiles. Articles. Advertisements. Achievements and milestones. Forthcoming events or issues. Latest news or research. Interviews. Articles. Regular features (puzzles, recipes, snippets, reports).	

Magazine Articles

Why To explain, inform, express opinion, report. To engender interest or response.	What Short text within a collection. Often a stand-alone item within the collection, either by form or content.
Features Usually topical or current and linked to focus of magazine. May be by regular contributor to magazine. May be a one-off topic. Often biased.	

Manuals

Why To guide or direct action. To explain the components and/or operation of a product. To explain how materials or equipment can be used or repaired.	What Synonym: handbook. An intermediary between manufacturer and consumer. A procedural text. A factual and descriptive explanation of how, what, when, and why.
Features Usually includes technical or specialized language. Diagrams are usually labeled and referenced from text. Diagrams often show sequence, are cut away to show inner components, or just label components. Requires detailed reading, though tendency is often to skim or refer to diagrams first. Often uses bold or italic type and framed sections. Chapter summaries often in note form at beginning of chapter. Detailed index and often a troubleshooting section. Often subsections within table of contents. Appendices may include specifications. Synonym: handbook. Authorized service agents.	

Memos or Memoranda

Why To inform of past or intended action or to direct action.	What A formal or informal letter, note, or written message, usually between departments or branches of a business, of something that needs to be remembered or enacted.
Features Heading includes To, From, Date, Subject. Others receiving a copy for information. Formal memos are often copied to supervisor of both writer and recipient. May be reporting on conversations or reminding of agreed action. Printed form or e-mail may determine format. Usually written like a business letter with main idea in first paragraph followed by necessary details and indication of required response or action. Copy kept by sender. Often includes file reference.	

Memoirs

	What Form of autobiography. Usually focuses on a single period in author's life and on notable people known to author. May be selected from longer or more detailed recordings of events and thoughts.
Features First person. Narrative. May be selected diary or journal entries or letters to a close friend or family member or selections from official documents. Usually focus on the implications of a major event in the author's life or a specific historical period. Usually little illustrative material. Often very descriptive with attention to detail of places or emotions. Sometimes strong characterization of third party through detailed description of actions, speech, or physical attributes.	

Minutes

Why To provide a record of the official business of a meeting.	What A secretary's documentation of decisions, reports, queries, recommendations, financial matters, and intended action discussed at a meeting of people with a similar interest or duty.
Features Consistent format which will include: Date, time, and place of meeting. Name of person who calls meeting to order. List or number of those present. List or number of absent members. Indication of reading and acceptance or amendment of minutes of previous meeting. Listing and/or summary of committee reports and actions. List of unfinished business. Record of new appointments. Explanation of any business transacted, including names of proposer and seconder of motions, and any actions taken. List of forthcoming events or business. Date, time, and place of next meeting. Time of adjournment. Secretary's signature.	

Myths

Why To explain aspects of life, culture, and nature. To explain origins.	What An anonymous narrative that explains the origins of life and elements of nature. A fictional story containing a deeper truth. A fictitious tale kept alive mainly through oral tradition. In literary sense, "myth" does not mean untrue but a generalized understanding or belief.
Features Characters are supernatural beings or elements of nature personified. Many follow the pattern of traditional stories. Short stories that contain action and suspense. Every culture has its own collection of myths as well as a universal bank of myths. Each culture has its own creation and nature myths—the former about how the world began and the sun and moon got in the sky, and the latter explaining seasonal changes, movements of the sun and earth, animal characteristics.	

Narratives

Why To entertain. To enable the reader to enjoy experiences vicariously. To record experiences.	What The record of a series of factual or fictional events in which the linking of the events gives a sequence and shape to the telling. Short stories, epics, ballads, biographies, autobiographies, novels, romances are examples of narratives.
Features Realistic, humorous, fantasy, historical, science fiction. Structures familiar in narratives for beginning readers include cumulative, interlocking or chain (ab, bc, cd ...), common sequences (seasons, days of the week), rhyme, repetition, and time sequence. An identifiable problem or tension which gives shape to the plot: Beginning—introduction of characters, setting, problem. Middle—development and elaboration of problem or tension, introduction of other elements. Conclusion—resolution or acceptance of inevitable. Characters, mood, tension, strength of story line, and setting are interwoven and interdependent elements. Often rely on sensory details for impact.	

Newspapers

Why To inform readers of international, national, and local events, services, and opportunities.	What A collection of topical news reports, articles, notices, and advertisements published daily or weekly on folded sheets of paper.
Features May have a specific focus or bias. Main components: articles, reports, editorial, advertisements, classified advertisements, public notices, personal messages, obituaries, classified index, special features. Subsections may include entertainment opportunities; obituaries, births, and marriages; houses, land, vehicles, products for sale; employment opportunities; financial and transport information; tourism information; reports of meetings; legislation; sports. Larger newspapers divided into regular sections, many with a daily feature section. Layout consistent from one issue to another. Some newspapers in large cities may have more than one edition per day. Layout usually in columns with headlines often spreading across columns. Majority of each paper, and all of some, are in black and white on newsprint paper. Usually have regular readership; home delivery still common. Preparation time for each issue is very short—usually less than 24-hour turnaround, giving sense of urgency for staff and immediacy for reader. Many people will work on one item in a short time prior to publication, including reporter, editor, subeditor, typesetter, proofreader, designer. Variety of typefaces and sizes within one issue.	

Newspaper Articles

Why To provide information or opinion about a current topic or issue.	What Two main categories: news article that provides a record of what happened or what was said and a feature article that offers opinion or focuses on the human aspect.
Features News articles usually written by journalists or publicity personnel for an organization or business. Key or topic sentence is important as editing for space limitations may cut some of the subsequent details or explanations. Includes who, what, where, when, why, and how. Details are added in order of importance. News articles should report events factually and objectively, whereas feature articles often include opinion, judgment, and assumptions. Follows standard rules of grammar, punctuation, and format. Feature articles usually include background information.	

Novels

Why To entertain. To cause reflection on one's own life. To live vicariously. To provoke emotion. To encourage thought.	What A lengthy fictional narrative in prose form, presenting incidents, characters, and a setting shaped in a sequence or plot. Detective story, romantic novel, historical novel, science fiction, contemporary.
Features Although the work is fictional, the author presents the characters, incidents, and settings as realistically as possible. Most widely read form of literature. Usually long enough to be a publication by itself. Relationships and their changing nature are usually essential elements in a novel. Usually no table of contents. Chapter headings usually numbered rather than titled. Plot is presented through thought, action, speech of characters. Each type of novel has its own features, for example, historical novels: Setting gains greater importance—clothing, transport, social protocol, houses must all reflect time and place. Dialog may include unusual structures or phrases or words may have a different meaning requiring the reader to make greater use of context and perhaps employ read-on strategies. May require extra background knowledge or extra attention to detail if reading is not to be interrupted. Researching usually past tense—if not, the reader will have to remember setting and time to cope with actions and dialog.	

Novelette

	What A long short story. A work of fiction longer than a short story but shorter than a novel. Often used negatively to describe sentimental romances, stories, or thrillers.
--	---

Novella

	What A fictional narrative presenting a single event or conflict with a surprise element signaling the turning point.
--	---

Parables

Why To teach a lesson through something or someone's experiences. To present an abstract idea through credible and everyday situations.	What A short and simple story with a moral. An allegory that parallels the situation to which it is being applied.
Features Action and consequence are key to the form. Comparisons between characters are usually important. Usually more than one incident. Moral may be presented in character's dialog or thought at end of parable.	

Plays

Why To entertain or to provoke thought and emotion. To present a visual and aural experience for the audience and a participatory one for the players.	What A dramatic work written in dialog for presentation by more than one player.
Features Characters listed at beginning, usually in order of appearance. Character listing usually includes very brief description of age, appearance, role in play, or relationship to other characters. Major division of longer plays is acts which are divided into scenes. Setting for each scene is given in italics at beginning of text for scene. Stage directions usually in italics and square brackets at appropriate place in script, set in middle of page. Lines and sections are sometimes numbered on left hand side of page as a reference aid. Within dialog, actor's name usually in bold, even capitals.	

Poems

Why To create images through the rhyme and rhythm of language. To express thoughts and feelings through lyrical language. To cause reflection on the essence of an object, thought, observation or experience. To broaden or intensify the reader's experiences and understandings.	What Language composed according to a pattern of beat and melody of words. A work of verse, which may be in rhyme or in blank verse or a combination of the two, in which the words are linked and interdependent through sense and rhythm.
Features Varies in length from a few lines to book-length epics. Three main categories of poems—narrative, dramatic, and lyrical—and many subcategories within each. Every word is chosen for its sound as well as meaning and function. Meter and rhythm, and sometimes rhyme, determines line length. Relies on imagery to stimulate reader's thought and view of a larger message. The images created by the syntax, rhythm and context bring a poem to life. Usually more condensed than prose or everyday speech. Frequent and elaborate use of figures of speech, especially similes and metaphors or techniques for comparing and contrasting. Every culture has its own poetry and it is often associated with rituals or festivities or seasonal activities. Often focuses on intensity of emotion or observation. Often departs from usual word order or pronunciation or uses archaic words or creates new ones. Much of the meaning is conveyed by suggestion or by omission. Often includes words with multiple meanings, making every word count more than once. Reader needs to read and think beyond the superficial. Poems are difficult to paraphrase. Sometimes the rhythm of the language and the pattern of the lines reflect the mood of the content. Alliteration and assonance may complement or even replace the rhyme. Repetition is a common element—repetition of sounds, words, lines, phrases, images. Layout is important and often controls the pace and style of reading. Usually past or present tense. Often in first person or character anonymous. Uses unconventional punctuation and line breaks to convey meaning or to show relationships between ideas.	

Policies

Why To set parameters. To ensure consistency. To make known expectations and standards.	What Contractual documents outlining responsibilities of all involved parties and the conditions under which the responsibilities are to be executed.
Features Document outlines expected outcomes and ways in which these will be achieved. Headings and subheadings and clauses and subclauses. Signatures of main parties or a representative of each. Usually a time limit for the life of a policy. Usually checked by a legal adviser. Signatures usually need to be witnessed by an objective party. Formal language. Vocabulary: indemnify, subsidiary rights, contractual, infringement, royalties. May include penalty or cancellation clauses.	

Procedural Texts

Why To direct thought or action. To give a sequence for an action.	What A detailed sequence of how and when to do or say something in order to achieve a planned result. Recipes, instructions, manuals, blueprints, rules, handbooks, directions, laws.
Features Vocabulary: ingredients, method, procedure, “ordinals,” assemble, construct, materials, equipment. Present or future tense. Second or third person. Indirect speech. Usually short sentences. Numbering, bullets, arrows. Each step may start on a new line. May include diagrams (cutaway, outline, or shaded to focus on current action) or figures with insets for more detail of specific parts. Composite diagram showing or summarizing several steps. Explanatory captions.	

Promotional Material

See Advertisements, Brochures, Consumer Reports

Prose

Why To entertain, to inform, to express, to persuade, to create thought, or to imitate life.	What Straightforward oral or written discourse—the language of short stories, essays, and novels. Continuous text usually read from left to right and top to bottom.
Features Straight prose is not restricted by rhyme or rhythm, although there is poetic prose or prose poetry. Not organized according to a formal pattern. Continuity of thought is important. Paragraphs and chapters are the main divisions in prose. Punctuation is used conventionally. Length and complexity of sentence as well as word choice and author’s style determine how effectively the content is conveyed.	

Proverbs

Why To encapsulate a major idea within a few words. To present a commonplace truth or a useful thought.	What An ancient and wise saying, usually of unknown origin. A truth based on common sense.
Features Succinct but didactic. Often linked to common happenings.	

Public Documents

Why To inform the public of existing regulations and of deletions, additions, or amendments. To invite discussion on matters of public interest.	What Publications issued by national, state and local governments and agencies: journals, debates, acts, hearings, reports, committee documents, census data.
Features Publications are issued by Congress and state senates and houses of representatives, executive departments, agencies, local authorities, courts, regional departments. Many public documents are numbered with year and a serial number (if legislation, will usually also include session number); important because of frequent amendments or a change in status. Legal and formal language. Copyright usually belongs to governing body, even if written by an individual. Most are printed and distributed free by government agency. Clauses and subclauses. House and Senate journals contain motions, actions taken, votes on roll calls and are published at the end of each session. Reports and other public documents of frequent publication may be bound in serial sets.	

Recounts

Why To give a sequential and detailed account of an incident, series of incidents, or of a conversation.	What A written record of recall of events, with attention to sequence, accuracy, and often to detail.
Features Indicators in children's books include days of the week, use of ordinal numbers, characters acting in sequence, cumulative structures. Past tense. Sequence and time are important. Vocabulary: then, next, first, after that, immediately following, prior to, followed by. Dialog and/or indirect speech may be interspersed throughout. May be presented with author's or observer's opinions as an introduction or closing or as asides. No flashbacks.	

Reports

Why To record research, decisions, or events. To keep a record of progress on a task.	What A written summary of one or a series of incidents, conversations, studies, or observations. Newspaper and magazine articles, research papers, biographies, travel books, consumer reports, minutes of meetings, diaries, journals, some realistic fiction.
Features Includes some prioritizing, summarizing, generalizing, and paraphrasing. More indirect than direct speech, but may include quotes. Past tense. Organization may be chronological or topical. May include numbering, subheadings, margin entries, bullets, and asterisks. May include references. Some reports include recommendations. Sample framework for a nonfiction report: Introduction. Terms of reference. Background information. Facts. Opinions. Conclusions. Recommendations. Summary (in some cases, this may come at the beginning). Bibliography.	

Research Papers

Why To report or to evaluate research findings.	What A summary of the intent, process, sequence, and content of the research, findings, and conclusions.
Features Introduction establishes a thesis to be developed. May include direct quotations, paraphrases, or precis which support the thesis. May include endnotes, footnotes, or parenthetical notes. Includes a list of works cited. Should include reference to other research on the same topic, especially if issue is controversial. An abstract usually introduces the thesis and is a single paragraph, without indentation. A summary statement includes conclusions or findings and perhaps the implications of these.	

Rhymes

Why To create images. Emphasizes similarity between sounds. Emphasizes the musical quality of rhythmic and rhyming language. To provide a beat or rhythm for everyday chores.	What A verse or piece of poetry with corresponding sounds at the ends of the lines. A short verse or poem with a strong repetitive rhythm and emphatic rhyme. Counting, playground, skipping, or nursery rhymes; jingles, nonsense rhymes, limericks, chants.
Features Normally the last stressed vowel in the line and all sounds following it make up the rhyming element. Many survive because of the rhythm rather than the meaning which is often irrelevant outside original context. Many are part of the oral tradition of a culture. Origins of most traditional rhymes are obscure. Many are based on proverbs, riddles, street cries, chants from stories. Often humorous.	

Schedules

Why To inform readers of sequence and timing of items. To inform workers of tasks and timing for each. To show the interdependence of the work of members of a team.	What A plan or procedure to achieve a specific objective, including the sequence of and time allotted for each particular section of work and whose responsibility it is to perform and check each task. A detailed planning timeline. A list of predetermined and non-negotiable information, such as times or prices.
Features Usually presented in tabular form. Usually based on time. Sometimes forms an appendix to a more descriptive or a more general document. May be updated frequently. In implementation, one change usually has a domino effect.	

Science Fiction

Why To suggest hypotheses about improbable or impossible transformations about aspects of human existence. To encourage readers to view the world from a different perspective. To develop imagination and flexible thought.	What A form of fiction that makes use of scientific knowledge and/or conjecture.
Features Usually prose but also science fiction comics. Form of literary fantasy. Setting, plots, themes, and characters are based on scientific or technological speculation. Writer has to construct a futuristic world in which certain unknowns are accepted as proven fact. Setting and characters have to be believable and credible down to the last detail. Reader is put into a "what if" mode of thinking. Assumes a world vastly different from the one we know. Common elements are humans projected onto another planet, a creature from another planet visiting earth, life on earth after a major ecological disaster, humans transported into a futuristic world, one human among a group of aliens. Often raises questions of ethics or causes reader to think of enduring human qualities and responsibilities. May include preface or introduction which gives some information about setting or origin of characters.	

Speeches

Why To influence the audience to support a cause or to understand the speaker's perspective. To justify actual or proposed action. To inform audience of views, news, or facts or a combination of these.	What A talk or an address delivered to an audience.
Features Organization of ideas and facts must have a logical sequence as listeners do not usually have a printed reference Basic format is introduction, statement of the case, which may include points to be made or position taken, argument or explanation of position, conclusion. May include some visuals. Rhetorical questions, personal experiences, or humorous anecdotes often interspersed through main content to emphasize a point, engender emotive reaction, or maintain interest. May include some informal language or idioms. Short sentences to enable reader to maintain focus.	

Songs

Why To entertain. To combine words, tune, and rhythm in a planned sequence.	What A piece of music with text for the voice. A poem and its musical setting (although some poems are called songs, even if not set to music). A poem for singing or chanting. Ballad, war-song, chant, aria, madrigal, lyric, hymn.
Features Music and words may be composed together or one after the other. Document outlined expected outcomes and ways in which these will be achieved. Verse often equivalent of stanza. Imagery, figures of speech, alliteration common elements.	

Tall Tales

Why To entertain.	What A humorous account of adventures popular on the 19 th century American frontier. A folk tale specific to a culture and to pioneering feats.
Features Often exaggerated tales. Usually involves superhuman feats. Similar in structure to a folk tale. Focus on the pioneer spirit required to adapt to harsh environment. Superlatives common. Trickery. Problems or tussles often solved with good humor. Some are based on real characters, often with invented or exaggerated incidents and traits.	

Thesaurus

Why To find a synonym or a word to fit a thought. To expand one's vocabulary. To ensure the chosen word is appropriate for the context.	What Groups of words organized according to the ideas they express and their functions.
Features A comprehensive index is arranged alphabetically, but the body of the book is numbered. Works opposite to a dictionary where you know the word and want to check the spelling or meaning. In a thesaurus, you find the word to fit the meaning. Context shapes the selection of words. Headings, subheadings, keywords, cross-references, abbreviations. Understanding of word classes and functions is necessary for economic use of a thesaurus.	

Trade Publications

Why To extend the range of clientele. To provide technical information to inward or outward suppliers. To justify the quality of products.	What A range of text forms describing the manufacturing or the attributes, components, or uses of products or materials. Catalogues, schedules, advertisements, contracts, agreements, specifications, tenders, guarantees, warranties.
Features Technical language. Some for a specific audience, others seeking to expand audience. Trademarks and logos. Diagrams, tables, and schedules. Directions and descriptions.	

Traditional Tales

Why To present the case of the oppressed. To show the power of kindness, mercy, and love. To cause reflection on prevailing attitudes.	What Stories with a common structure that have been handed down, generally with an underlying moral or an emphasis on a certain virtue or attribute of human nature.
Features Similar to those listed for folk tales although culture is not such an important element.	

Text Features

Abbreviations

Why To shorten a word or expression in the following ways: Contraction, where one or some letters are omitted but the final letters are included. Where each of several words is represented by its initial letter only. Where the initial letter of two or more words has the phonetic form of a word in its own right (an acronym). Where usage is frequent and constant as in references.	What A shortened form of a word.
Features Appear most frequently in technical texts or in tables, notes, dictionaries, bibliographies, or lists. A period after the shortened form indicates the abbreviation, though this practice is not as common as previously.	

Acknowledgments

Why To acknowledge those who have enabled the author to complete the work or to present it in its current format and to cite references to already published material used or reprinted.	What Author's list of thanks is usually contained in the preface or preliminary section of the book unless it is sufficiently extensive to warrant a separate section. Acknowledgment of the use of material from another publication or outside source is a condition of use as well as a courtesy. Acknowledgment of use of other published material is included in main acknowledgment section but also cited on the page containing the relevant material.
Features Acknowledgment of material already published includes author's name, title of work, date and place of publication, publishing house, and an indication that permission has been granted for the work to be included or cited. May include some abbreviations. Set punctuation format according to house style.	

Appendices

Why To explain or elaborate on parts of the text which provide more detail or list references of research or further reading or clarification.	What A collection of extra or separate material that justifies or provides clarification on parts of a text.
Features Usually placed at end of book, though if essential to understanding of a chapter, may be at end of chapter. May include tables and charts. If the main work is a documentary or only presents factual material, the author's opinion may be given in an appendix. A separate appendix may be given to different aspects of the work. Where there is more than one appendix, each is given a number or a letter.	

Asterisks

Why To alert the reader to further information about the marked subject matter. To indicate levels of probability within a table.	What A star-shaped symbol placed within a text to signal further information, usually as a footnote at the bottom of the page or text. The first in a series of symbols used as reference marks.
Features Used to indicate or explain special conditions, doubtful matter, omissions, material from another publication, material explained in other sections of the work. Placed immediately prior to or, more commonly, following the relevant word within running text.	

Bibliographies

Why To justify or expand on information and ideas presented in main body of text. To provide suggestions for further reading or research. To cite works cited in text or referenced in preparation of the work.	What A list of sources, especially published material, used in the preparation of a work or to provide further reading on the topic. A list of works by the author of the book.
Features Content for bibliography within a book includes: Name of author institution responsible for the writing of the book. Full title of the book, including any subtitle. Title of the series and volume and number, if any. Edition, if not the original. City of publication. Publisher's name. Date of publication. Follows the glossary and precedes the index. Abbreviations. May be cross-referenced from main text and/or from index.	

Blurbs

Why To entice potential buyers or readers.	What A brief promotional description of a work, usually found on the dust jacket of a cased book or the back cover of a paperback.
Features Usually written by the publishing house. Gives some indication of setting, characters, and form of text. May include some brief reviews or recommendations. May reference other works by same author.	

Captions

Why To explain contents of an object or illustrative material. To summarize visual information. To expand visual information. To give another perspective. To provide a title. To clarify.	What A brief statement accompanying an object or illustrative material. The heading or title above an illustration.
Features General framework for captions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? Positioned closer to illustration than to text. Caption that is a complete sentence requires a full stop. May not be a complete sentence. May be a subtitle if a caption on television.	

Chapter Headings

Why To indicate major divisions within a work.	What Headings that link or distinguish episodes in a work of considerable length.
Features Usually on a new page, and often on a right-hand page. Usually numbered or titled. If titled, may be a cryptic summary of main event in forthcoming chapter. May indicate a new incident or topic or the passage of time.	

Chapter Summaries

Why To provide an overview prior to reading or a review at the end of the chapter.	What Synopses at the beginning or end of a chapter, usually of a nonfiction work. Sometimes included in the introduction.
Features May be a collection of subheadings or questions or a short summary in continuous text. Common in textbooks as a revision aid.	

Charts

Why To record or present information or ideas.	What Sometimes an on-the-spot recording of ideas or a plan.
Features Bullets or numbering. May be jottings or a list. Graphics may be important. Topic usually a heading. Usually presented as conclusion or parameters or expectations.	

Checklists

Why To provide an easily accessible reference for recording achievements or progress points.	What Items or names listed for comparison, checking, or assessment.
Features Often set up as a table. May be for cumulative use or as a one-off check. Markings may be a simple tick/cross/dash or a quantitative rating. Descriptors of expectation or standards often listed for checking. Entries on checklist may be sequenced in order of challenge or sequence of execution.	

Codes

Why To provide information briefly or secretly.	What A system of colors, letters, or symbols, and rules for their association by which information can be communicated. A system of colors, letters, or symbols for identification or selection purposes.
Features If codes are used for brevity, the key may be included below the representation. Often used to represent criteria in a process of selection or evaluation.	

Computer Menus

Why To instruct the program to carry out certain commands. To enable the user to select appropriate commands.	What A pull-down or bar list of icons or symbols of commands representing tasks the computer is able to perform.
Features The menu bar indicates the group function of items listed in the pull-down menu. When the menu system is active, a brief description of the function of the command appears at the bottom of the screen. Usually includes a short-cut code for accessing each command. Indicates which options are available—a shaded command indicates it is unavailable. An ellipsis following an ellipsis command indicates a dialog box.	

Diagrams

Why To draw attention to specific parts. To describe the sequence. To identify component. To summarize. To show relativity. To show layout.	What A sketch, plan, or outline demonstrating the form or workings of something. A pictorial representation of an object or parts thereof. Cut-away diagrams, cyclic diagrams, scale diagram, web, tree diagram, sequence diagram, Venn diagram.
Features Arrows. Captions. Labels—words out of textual context, but pictures provide context. May not be adjacent to relevant section of text. Vocabulary: figure, top/bottom left/right.	

Footnotes or Endnotes

Why To explain a fact or idea or give the source of a work cited in the body of the text. To direct the reader to further literature on the topic. To cross-reference to other parts of the text. For explanations that would interfere with the main text.	What A note printed at the bottom of a page to which attention is drawn by a reference mark or symbol in the body of the text. They are called notes or endnotes when printed at the end of a chapter or book.
Features Numbered consecutively through each chapter. Numbering usually "superior arabic," replacing the code system previously common. Reference marks are placed after the word, phrase, or paragraph or number referenced in the footnote or endnote. Endnotes are increasingly preferred to footnotes at end of page because of simplicity in typesetting.	

Foreword

Why To present an overview of a book by someone other than the author. Justifying recommending the book.	What Short introductory piece to a book written by someone other than the author. (If the introductory piece is written by the author it is called a preface.)
Features Set in same style and size of type as the text. Author's name usually given at end of foreword.	

Glossaries

Why To provide explanations for words used in a specific context. To explain words unfamiliar because of context or technical specificity. To provide definitions or clarify possible confusion without interrupting the text.	What A list of specialized terms used within a text and an explanation for each relevant to the context of the work. Alphabetical listing of unusual words and definitions at the back of a publication.
Features Usually precedes index. Arranged alphabetically. Begins on a new page. May include pronunciation guide.	

Graphs

Why To present comparative information in a graphical form. To show quantitative relativity of items with a common base. To identify trends or changes.	What Pictorial or graphical representation of data. Types of graphs include pie, line, bar, pictorial.
Features Line graph may show two or more sets of information Vocabulary: Bar graph—percentages. Line graph—anchor points.	

Indexes

Why To enable quick access to specific parts of a text. To enable a reader to crosscheck or to gather all information about a topic.	What An expanded table of contents. An alphabetical listing, usually at the end of a book, of persons, works, and topics mentioned in the text, indicating where reference is made.
Features Mainly in nonfiction texts. Entry is the main subdivision, citing the topic and followed by a locator, usually the page number, but sometimes chapter and/or section and then the page number. Each entry may have several references and/or a subheading. Main entry is usually in bold type, asterisked, or italicized. Illustrative material may be indicated. Crossreferences often included. If material is complex and there are a lot of characters, two indexes will be included. Abbreviations.	

Introductions

Why To state author's intention. To provide information about what caused work to be written or purpose of book. To give an idea of the theme and scope of the work and perhaps the setting.	What A short explanatory chapter or paragraph that follows the table of contents.
Features If not written by the author, this section is called a foreword. May include an overview or a succinct summary of the shape of the book. If the author has organized the book into sections, these will be explained.	

Labels

Why To identify a place or an object. To claim ownership. To identify a destination. To give brief instructions. To classify an object.	What A brief descriptive term or phrase directing or informing users or viewers of care, use, ownership, or location of an object. A trademark or display of a company or brand name on a product.
Features May be words or phrases rather than complete sentences. Brief descriptors. Usually attached to or placed near subject.	

Maps (also see Atlases)

Why To indicate location. To give direction from one place to another. For comparison of position, size, features.	What Pictorial procedural. May indicate street, road, country, land, or oceanic features. Atlas. Street directory. Historical map. May be an inset within another text form; e.g., map within a pamphlet or advertisement.
Features Scale. Longitudinal and latitudinal markings. Compass or part thereof. Specific focus, e.g., location, typography. Amount of detail varies; reader needs to know how to access more detail. Inferential reading may be required; e.g., significance of route number or to put part into whole. Usually includes symbols, some of which may be international. May be linked to an advertisement but usually factual and unbiased.	

Paragraphs

Why For ease of reading. To group ideas or information.	What A section of continuous text dealing with a single idea or topic and marked by indention or a line space.
Features Can stand alone but is usually part of a longer work. In expository writing, the first sentence usually identifies the topic or theme of the section with subsequent sentences expanding or explaining the first. In other writing the last may be the main sentence. Some paragraphs are “framed” with the first and last sentences giving the same main idea but in different words. Rhetorical paragraphs may be one sentence—used to achieve emphasis and variety. Each paragraph has a consistent and specific focus on the subject. When part of a longer work, paragraphs are usually linked by a transition statement or an obvious development. Organization of paragraphs: From general to particular. From particular to general. Alternating order of general and particular, or pro and con. Following order of time. Following order of space. Building to a climax.	

Parentheses

Why To set apart clarifying, explanatory, or digressive words, phrases, or sentences. To enclose numerals marking divisions in a text.	What The enclosure of expressions that are not essential to the meaning of the sentence but which can clarify or deepen understanding. Brackets that enclose a word or group of words that interrupt a sentence are called parentheses.
Features Parentheses are used to enclose scientific names of plants or animals. The parentheses may come within a sentence but can sometimes follow a sentence depending on whether it refers to part or all of the sentence. If brackets are not used, paired commas enclose the extra material.	

Preface

Why To give some explanation about the piece, for example, why it was written. To explain how a subsequent edition differs from the original. To introduce the work. To help readers understand the background or structure of the work.	What Introduction to the work written by the author (if it is written by someone else it is a foreword). Material essential to be read before the main body of the work. Each new edition may have a new preface, in which case it precedes the original one.
Features May include acknowledgments. Placed at beginning of book after table of contents.	

Quotation Marks

Why To distinguish speech within a text. To denote the beginning and end of a quote from written or oral language. To present dialogue within running text. To draw attention to new or unusual words, words or expressions used in unusual contexts, or to technical terms.	What Quoted words, phrases, and sentences included in text are enclosed in double quotations marks. Quotations within quotations are enclosed in single quotations marks. The marks denote the beginning and end of speech. Usually immediately preceded or followed by an indication of the speaker.
---	--

References

Why To direct attention to a passage elsewhere in the work or to another book.	What A coding system indicating the location of other information on the same topic or relevant to the marked item or part thereof.
Features May appear as footnote references or in bibliography. Reference marks often cite other views or expansions of the same view presented elsewhere in the same work. References may be linked to illustrative or graphical material elsewhere in the work.	

Story Maps

Why To plan or review elements and the interdependence of elements of a narrative.	What Usually pictorial webbing identifying the plot, characters, and setting of a story.
Features May be pictorial or words or phrases. May be based on a set format or a free-flow brainstorming of ideas or facts which are then grouped or sequenced. Usually nouns or references to incidents.	

Subheadings

Why To provide quick access to a specific piece of text. To clarify organization of a work.	What The heading or title of a subdivision or subsection of a printed work, usually nonfiction. Short, succinct descriptors of content of a paragraph or small section of text.
Features Usually has a strong link to the first sentence in the following text which often includes a word from the subheading. Some scientific or technical works require levels of subheadings and these are sometimes numbered. Usually set on a line separate from the text or in the margin (as a shoulder heading or margin entry). Sometimes used as running heads.	

Subtitles

Why To provide further explanation of the content, form, or focus of the work.	What Supplementary part of main title.
Features May only be used in some contexts or positions, e.g., on title page but not on cover or in running headings. May explain form or focus of work.	

Symbols

Why To represent information briefly.	What A sign or character representing a word or words. An object, person, or an idea used to suggest or represent something else.
Features May bear little or no resemblance to the word or words it represents. Graphics rather than orthographics are usually important.	

Tables

Why To present data for comparison in a succinct form.	What A framework for collecting, recording, and comparing data. An economical method of providing readers of a nonfiction book with detailed, often numerical, information.
Features Often includes numerical information. Supported by a heading and/or caption. Often cited as a figure (fig). Vocabulary: cells, rows. Reader often left to draw own conclusions or to test conclusions of others. May provide more detail to sections of text. Best tables are simple—too much information confuses the purpose. When more than one table is included in a work, each is numbered. Title should clearly indicate purpose of table. Caption should include source of information.	

Table of Contents

Why To show how a book is organized. To provide an overview. To allow quick access to specific parts. To help the reader decide where to begin reading. To give an indication of the form and style of writing. To list contributors. To give an indication of the length of each chapter or section.	What A sequential list of items or divisions within the work. Gives title and beginning page number of each section of a book.
Features May include subsections, particularly in technical books. When subheadings are used, they are indented. Page numbers usually flush on right hand of page. If a number of contributors, authors' names will be included.	

Timetables

Why To provide information about the time of events. To maintain a sequence, order, or schedule.	What A list or table of events arranged in a chronological sequence.
Features Usually presented as a table or vertical list. Abbreviations, especially a.m. and p.m. May be based on 24-hour clock. Span of time often indicated with an en dash. Asterisks. May represent daily, weekly, monthly, yearly schedules.	

Title Pages

Why To provide further general information about the work.	What Presents the full title (including subtitle, if any), author's name, and usually publisher's name and location. Children's books also list the illustrator and may have an illustration.
--	--

Examples of Techniques Authors Use to Engage Readers

Creating Tension

Change tense.
Switch from direct to indirect speech or vice versa.
Omit or add adjectival or adverbial phrases to change the pace.
Select vocabulary of anxiety or anticipation: in a flash, instantly, immediately, stealthily.
Use similes to increase imagery and draw reader into the action.
Increase the number of incidents leading to the climax or resolution.
Increase the contrast between the attributes of the characters.
Repetition of words, phrases, incidents.
Use of ellipsis.
Chapter breaks.
Page break.
Increase number or size of illustrations.
Contrast actions, for example, shout to whisper.
Interrupt with a flashback.
Increase or change punctuation.

Creating Mood

Increase adjectives describing the setting or feelings of characters.
Use similes to create images.
Use more indirect speech.
Include more of characters' thoughts.
Use present tense.
Write in first person.
Use impressionistic illustrations.
Describe sounds and smells of nature or environment.
Use emotive vocabulary.
A sudden switch in tone, for example, from humorous to serious.

Developing Characters Through Dialogue

Includes dialect, idioms, and natural speech patterns.
Includes some interjections or incomplete sentences.
Descriptive words or phrases to allow reader to "hear" the tone and mood of speech.
Uses a few words or phrases in several places.
Includes hand and eye gestures and posture when character is speaking or listening.
May use contrasting dialect and vocabulary with one or more other characters to highlight protagonist.
Contractions are common.
Maintains consistency for credibility.
Every piece of dialogue adds to or is true to development of character.
Includes some emotions in reaction to different situations.
Uses paragraphing to avoid overuse of descriptors or naming speaker.
Included "thought dialogue."
Uses dialogue to introduce character.
Uses dialogue to begin a new incident or chapter.