

Writing Features Overview for ELLs

Language Features of Seven Writing Genres ©Rojas, 2010

I. Overview of DESCRIPTION Text Features & Instructional Tools

Purpose:

Description is used in all forms of writing to create a vivid impression of a person, place, object, or event (e.g. describes a special place and explains why it is special, descr

Features:

- to
- to create characters
- to set a mood or create an atmosphere
- to bring writing to life

Text Features of Description

Adapted from www.tki.org.nz/r/esolonline/teach_strats

Description aims to **show rather than tell** the reader what something/ someone is like.

Description relies on precisely chosen vocabulary with carefully chosen **adjectives and adverbs**.

Sensory description - what is seen, heard, smelled, felt, tasted - is used.

Precise use of **adjectives, similes, metaphors** to create images/ pictures in the mind.

Description focuses on **key details, powerful verbs, and precise nouns**

Description uses **action verbs** (e.g. *bites, squirts*).

If it is a technical/ scientific description it will use **technical/ scientific language and the present tense**.

Suggested Instructional Tools for Description

VPRojas, 2009

Cooperative Learning Tools

7 Find Someone Who
17 Draw What I Say
#50 Team Mind Map

Vocabulary Tools

Analogies
Character Trait Maps
Concept Definition Map
Frayer Model
Semantic Gradient Scale
Semantic Feature Analysis
Simon Says, Science Says
Vocabulary Writing in Math

K-2 Reading & Writing Tools

Character Home Page
Content-Related Picture Books
Do You Hear What I Hear?
Sketch to Stretch

3-12 Reading Tools

Inductive Learning Strategy
Key Concept (Math)
Kindling (Language Arts)
Narrow Reading
Scintillating Sentences & Quotes
Visual Reading Guide

3-12 Writing

Brainwriting
Examples as prewriting
Divorce the Draft
Looping

Graphic Organizers

concept development organizers

Differentiation Tools

Alternative Assignments
Centers
TIC TAC TOE

* ELL Scaffolding & Extending Tools

Interpretation Charts
Meaning Maps
Mentor Text
Minilessons
Supported Note Taking
Semantic Grids

II. Overview of EXPLANATIONS Text Features & Instructional Tools

Purpose:

phenomenon.

Types of Explanations:

"How" (How does a computer work? How are mountains formed? How do we solve this problem?)

"Why" (Why do some things float and sink? Why is the ozone layer getting thinner? Why do we need food?)

Text Features of Explanations

Adapted from www.tki.org.nz/r/esolonline/

Explanations often begin with a **brief description** of the activity or process.

Explanations often have a **logical sequence of events**.

How something works is explained **OR** reasons for a phenomenon are stated.

Explanations use **cause/ effect relationships**: *then, as a consequence, so, if.*

Conjunctions are used to show **time relationships**: *first, then, following, finally*

Explanations are written in the **timeless present tense** (*are, happens, turns*).

Action verbs are used (*falls, rises, changes*).

Passives are used sometimes (*is saturated, are changed*).

The **nouns** tend to be general rather than specific (*cars, boats, insects*).

Pronouns are used (*their, they, them*).

Non-human participants are used (*the sea, the engine*).

Suggested Instructional Tools for Explanations

VPRojas, 2009

Cooperative Learning Tools

#2 Blind Sequencing

#7 Find Someone Who

Vocabulary Tools

4-Square

Knowledge Rating Scale

Magnet Summaries

Missing Words or Clozes

Open Word Sort

Stephens Elaboration Strategy

Verb Walls

Vocabulary Concept Chain

Vocabulary Notebook

K-2 Reading & Writing Tools

Comprehension Game

Experience-Text Relationship

Literacy Work Centers

PREP

Talking Drawings

Differentiation Tools

Activity Guides

Group Investigations

Multiple Materials

Socratic Seminar

Web Quests

Cooperative Learning Tools

#3 Circle the Sage

#14 Jigsaw Problem Solving

Graphic Organizers

event chains

flow charts

fishbone organizer

3-12 Reading Tools

Anticipation Guides

Check those Facts

Concept Collection

DRTA

Elaborative Interrogation

Investigative Teams

Pen in Hand

Q-Space

ROW

3-12 Writing

Cubing for Prewriting

Discussion Continuum

4-2-1

Journals

Task-Based Writing Rubric

*Scaffolding & Extending

Ask, Answer, Record

Sentence Scaffolds

Know, Do, Write

Text Frameworks

Vocabulary Cohesion Keys

III. Overview of PROCEDURAL Text Features & Instructional Tools

Purpose:

The purpose is to tell the reader how to do or make something.

Types of Procedural Texts:

There are different procedural texts for different purposes:

Texts that explain how something works or how to use the instruction manuals (e.g. how to use the video).

Texts that instruct how to do a particular activity (e.g. recipes rules of a game, science experiments).

Texts that deal with human behavior (e.g. how to live happily).

The purpose is **clearly stated** at the beginning.

The materials/ steps are listed in **chronological order**.

Each type of procedural text has a **format** (e.g. recipe = ingredients and method; scientific experiments = purpose, equipment, procedure, observations, conclusions).

Imperatives are used **directly** (*You should turn off the computer*) or **indirectly** (*Turn the printer off before shutting down the computer*).

Verbs are active, simple present (*you cut and fold*).

Conjunctions that **show time** are used (*first then ... when*).

Detailed information is given on how (*carefully, with the scissors*); where (*from the top*), when (*after it has set*).

Detailed factual description is given (e.g. shape, size, color, amount).

Modality may be used to show the degree of obligation (e.g. should, must).

Suggested Instructional Tools for Procedural

VPRojas, 2009

Vocabulary Tools

Magnet Summaries
Vocabulary Notebook
Vocabulary Concept Chain

K-2 Reading & Writing Tools

Choral Reading
Echo Reading
Pattern Reading
Talking Drawings

3-12 Writing Tools

Examples for Prewriting
Guided Writing
Hennings Sequence
Rewording for Revising

Cooperative Learning Tools

#2 Blind Sequencing
#17 Match Mine
#25 Paraphrase Passport

Graphic Organizers

sequence organizers

3-12 Reading Tools

Group Summarizing
K-N-W-S (math)
Math Notes
Math Reading Keys
Read Three Times
SMART
SQR3
X Marks The Spot

Differentiation Tools

Centers
Projects
Schedule Chart

*Scaffolding & Extending

Language Experience Approach
4 X 4 Jigsaw
Interactive Clozes
Know, Do, Write
3-Step Extensions

IV. Overview of NARRATIVE Text Features & Instructional Tools

Purpose:

The ba narratives can also be written to teach or inform, to change attitudes or social opinions. Narratives sequence people/ characters in time and place and set up one or more problems which must eventually be resolved.

Types of Narratives:

There are many types of narratives. They can be imaginary, factual, or a combination of both. They may include fairy stories, mysteries, science fiction, romances, horror stories, adventure stories, fables, myths, legends, historical narratives, ballads, personal experience, slice of life.

Text Features of Narrative

Adapted from www.tki.org.nz/r/esolonline/

Narrative has the following structure:

An orientation in which the characters, setting, and time of the story are established (usually answers who, when, where).

A complication(s) or problem which involves the main character(s).

A resolution(s) to the complication.

The structure of narratives includes **plot, setting, characterization, and theme.**

Action verbs provide interest to the story (*e.g. Instead of she laughed - she cackled*).

Written in the **first person** (I, we) or the **third person** (he, she, they).

Usually written in the **past tense**.

Conjunctions - linking words to do with time - are used.

Strong nouns have more specific meaning (e.g. oak rather than tree).

Careful and judicious use of **adjectives and adverbs** are used (i.e. to bring the story alive, provide description and information for reader).

A **variety of sentence beginnings** are used; for example, by using:

Participles (*Jumping with joy I ran home to tell everyone*)

Adverbs (*Silently the cat crept toward the bird*)

Adjectives (*Brilliant sunlight shone through the window*)

Nouns (*Thunder claps filled the air*)

Adverbial phrases (*Along the street walked the girl as if she had not a care in the world*)

Conversations/ dialogue (tense may change to the present or the future)

Narratives often use **figurative language**:

Similes (*The wind wrapped me like a cloak*)

Metaphors (*She has a heart of stone*)

Onomatopoeia (*splat, ooze, squish*)

Personification (*Clouds limped across the sky*)

Personal voice or writing that is honest and convincing is used. Narratives should have an impact on the reader (speaks to us).

Suggested Instructional Tools for Narrative

VPRojas, 2009

Cooperative Learning

#15 Line Ups
#35 Sages Share
#47 Team Pair Solo
#54 3-Step Interview

Vocabulary Tools

Analogies
Find Someone Who
Open Word Sort
Semantic Gradient Scale
Verb Walls
Word Boxes/ Journals

3-12 Reading Tools

Collaborative Strategic Reading
Group Summarizing
Kindling
LETS Connect
Learning Logs
Narrow Reading
Opinion Guide
Question Answer Relationship
Question the Author
RAFT
REAP
Story Grammar/ Map

*Scaffolding & Extending

Anticipation Guides
Circle Shares
Prediction Starters
Meaning Maps
Trash & Treasure

Graphic Organizers

compare/ contrast
concept development
relational
sequence

K-2 Reading & Writing Tools

Character Home Page
Guided Reading
Independent Reading
Language Experience Approach
Memory Boxes
Recorded Reading
Say Something
Sticky Notes
Story Hats
Story Impressions

3-12 Writing Tools

Cubing
Discussion Continuum
Story Notebooks
Looping
Conferring
Two-Column Count
Surprise!

Differentiation Tools

Activity Guides
Agendas
Jigsaw
Literature Circles

V. Overview of RECOUNTS Text Features & Instructional Tools

Purpose:

The purpose of a recount is to list and describe past experiences by retelling events in the order in which they happened (chronological order). Recounts are written to retell events with the purpose of informing or entertaining (or both).

Types of Recounts:

Personal Recount - these usually retell an event that the writer was personally involved in.

Factual Recount - recording an incident, e.g. a science experiment.

Imaginative Recount - writing an imaginary role and giving details of events, e.g. a day in the life of a pirate.

Text Features of Recounts

Adapted from www.tki.org.nz/r/esolonline/

The recount has a **title** which usually summarized the text.

The recount has **specific participants** (e.g. *the crab, my mom*).

The basic recount consists of **three parts**: setting or orientation, events in chronological order, concluding comments expressing a personal opinion regarding the events described.

Events are described using **past tense of verbs** (*she yelled, she walked*) and **adverbs** to add more detail to the verbs.

Frequent use of words or phrases which link events in time: *next, later, when, then, after, before, first, at the same time, as soon as, late in the afternoon.*

Details are chosen to add interest or humor.

Figurative language may be used (alliteration, onomatopoeia, simile, metaphor, personification).

The **passive voice** may be used (e.g. *the bottle was filled with ink*) in a factual recount.

Suggested Instructional Tools for Recounts

VPRojas, 2009

Cooperative Learning Tools

#3 Circle the Sage
#8 Find the Fib
#25 Paraphrase Passport
#42 Stir the Class
#54 3-Step Interview

Vocabulary Tools

Character Trait Map
Missing Words
Open Word Sort
Semantic Feature Analysis
Verb Walls
Vocabulary Story Map
Word Boxes/ Journals

3-12 Reading Tools
Collaborative Strategic Reading
Kindling
LETS Connect
Narrow Reading
Paired Guided Reading
Question Answer Relationship
Question the Author
RAFT
REAP
Save the Last Word For Me
Scored Discussion
Story Grammar/ Map

Differentiation Tools

Alternative Assignments
Choice Boards
Literature Circles
TIC TAC TOE

Graphic Organizers

sequence organizers
evaluation organizers

K-2 Reading & Writing Tools

Character Home Page
Choral Reading
Do You Hear What I Hear?
Experience Text Relationship
Language Experience Approach
Memory Box
Say Something
Split Screen
Sketch to Stretch
Story Hats
Story Impressions
Talking Drawings
The Instant Storyteller

3-12 Writing Tools

Cubing
Examples
Journals

Pair Talk
Divorce the Draft
Two Column Count
Peer Editing

*** Scaffolding & Extending**

Anticipation Guides
Focused Brainstorming
Prediction Starters
Group Summaries
4 x 4 Jigsaw
Meaning Maps
Mentor Texts
Minilessons
Pass Around Writing
30-30-30 Scaffolding
Circle Shares
Cooperative Constructions
Interpretation Charts
Language Logs
Trash & Treasure
Vocabulary Cohesion Keys
Bilingual Journals

VI. Overview of REPORT Text Features & Instructional Tools

Purpose:

The purpose of a report is to describe and classify information. Reports have a logical sequence of facts that are stated without any personal involvement of the writer.

Informative reports are written about living things like plants and animals and non-living things like cars or oceans. An information report is used when we talk and write about, e.g. *bikes* (description only tells about *My Bike*).

Text Features of Reports

Adapted from www.tki.org.nz/r/esolonline/

Reports usually consist of the following:

an **opening statement** (*The Antarctic is a large continent at the South Pole*).

a **series of facts** about various aspects of the subject (these facts are grouped into paragraphs and each paragraph has a topic sentence).
diagrams, photographs, illustrations, maps may be used to enhance the text.

information is rounded off by some **general statement** about the topic.

Reports have a **logical sequence** of facts.

Present tense verbs are used.

Some reports use **technical or scientific terms**.

Linking verbs are used; e.g. *is, are, has, have, belong to*, to give coherence.

Uses some **action verbs** (*climb, eat*).

Descriptive language that is factual rather than imaginative is used; e.g. *color, shape, size, body parts, habitats, behaviors, functions, uses*.

Nouns and noun phrases are used rather than personal pronouns.

Suggested Instructional Tools for Reports

VPRojas, 2009

Cooperative Learning Tools

#32 Roundtable Review
#35 Sages Share
#47 Team Pair Solo
#50 Mind Map

Vocabulary Tools

Analogies
Concept Definition Mapping
Knowledge Rating Scale
Frayer Model
Magnet Summaries
Missing Words
Semantic Feature Analysis
Verb Walls
Visual Structures
Vocabulary Graphics
Vocabulary Elaboration Strategy

3-12 Reading Tools

Check Those Facts
Cornell Notes
DRTA
4-Way Reporting
Interactive Reading Guide
Infofiction
Key Concepts

Pen-in-Hand
Proposition Support
Question Menu
ReQuest
Skim & Scan
SQR3
T Notes

Graphic Organizers

compare/ contrast organizers
classification organizers
relational organizers
sequence organizers
evaluation organizers

K-2 Reading & Writing Tools

Comprehension Game
Content Related Picture Books
Do You Hear What I Hear?
Literacy Work Centers
PREP
Reader-Generated Questions
Split Screen

3-12 Writing Tools

Brain Writing
Cubing
Examples
4-2-1
Task-Based Rubric
Guided Writing
Hennings Sequence

Conferring
Two Column Count

Differentiation Tools

Centers or Stations

Jigsaw

Group Investigations

Independent Studies

Multiple Materials & References

Web Quests

*Scaffolding & Extension

Ask, Answer, Record

Information Grids

Learning Logs

4 x 4 Jigsaw

Mentor Texts

Reading Guides

Sentence Scaffolds

Supported Note Taking

Think Aloud Interpretations

Academic Sentence Frames

Cooperative Constructions

Know, Do, Write

Language Function Walls

Language Logs

Question Ladder

Rate Statements

Semantic Grids

Sentence Transformations

Text Frameworks

Vocabulary Cohesion Keys

Bilingual Journals

Google Translations

Wide Reading

VII. Overview of ARGUMENT Text Features & Instructional Tools

Purpose:

To support ideas presented in sequence to justify a particular stand or viewpoint that a writer is taking.

on some issue and justify it.

An argument consists of the following:

a statement of position at the beginning

a logical sequence

the argument is put forward in a series of points with back up evidence

a good argument shows cause and effect

this is the connection between an action and what leads to it

a summing up or restating of position at the end

Types of Arguments:

To plead a case

To promote/ sell goods and services

To put forward an argument

Text Features of Argument

Adapted from www.tki.org.nz/r/esolonline/

Words for introducing another point to **support** the argument:

additionally further more

in addition moreover besides

not only also

as well likewise

Words for showing **cause and effect** - connectives:

so
creates results in
generates

consequently
stems from
gives rise to

because
brings about
an upshot of

causes
leads to

Arguments are written in the **timeless present tense**.

Passive verbs are used (*e.g. The oceans are over-fished*).

The writer uses **repetition** of words, phrases, and concepts deliberate, for effect.

Strong effective adjectives are used.

Figurative language is used to add beauty, force, etc.

Sound devices are used for impact and effect (*e.g. alliteration*).

Thought provoking questions are used. These may be asked as rhetorical questions (*i.e. effect, not information*).

Generalized participants are used which are sometimes human but often abstract (ideas, issues, opinions) unless the issue centers on a particular event or incident (*e.g. we all know that smoking causes cancer*).

Inclusive and exclusive pronouns (*I, we, us*) are used to manipulate the reader to agree with the position argued.

The writer uses **emotive language** (*i.e. words that appeal to the*

The writer uses **passive voices** to help structure the text (*e.g. we would like to suggest that an investigation be conducted*).

Actions are nominalized to allow the writer to condense the information and deal with abstract issues. Actions become things (e.g. *Toxic waste discharged from factories causes pollution*).

Modality is used in arguing to position the writer and the reader (e.g. *should, must, ought*).

Verbs are used when expressing opinions (e.g. *we believe students should not have to*).

Imperatives are used to express a command, request, warning (e.g. *act now!*).

The writer uses **connectives** (linking words - conjunctions) associated with reason:

Temporal conjunctions - *firstly, secondly*

Causal, conditional conjunctions - *because*

Comparative conjunctions - *however, on the other hand*

Appeals to authority may be done in a variety of ways to give weight to an argument:

Using research, facts, statistics

Using expert opinions

Using testimony

Concluding phrases are used (*We would like to persuade you that Therefore I think that I have shown that In summary*)

Suggested Instructional Tools for Arguments

VPRojas, 2009

Cooperative Learning Tools

#2 Blind Sequencing
#3 Circle the Sage
#14 Jigsaw Problem Solving
#23 Pairs Check
#24 Pairs Compare
#25 Paraphrase Passport
#28 Question Spinner
#30 Rally Table
#38 Showdown
#45 Team Interview
#47 Team Pair Solo
#49 Team Statements
#50 Team Mind Map

K-2 Reading & Writing Tools

Content-Related Books
Do You Hear What I Hear?
PREP
Reader-Generated Questions
Talking Drawings

3-12 Writing Tools

Discussion Continuum
Examples for Prewriting
4-2-1
Looping
Pair Talking
Divorcing the Draft
Two-
Rewording
Surprise!

Graphic Organizers

compare contrast organizers
concept development organizers
classification organizers
relational organizers
evaluation organizers

Vocabulary Tools

Analogies
Click and Clunk
Concept Definition Mapping
Four Dimensional Word Study
Magnet Summaries
Missing Words
Vocab Marks
Vocab Graphics
Vocabulary Journals & Logs

Differentiation Tools

Agendas
Centers
Flexible groupings
Group Investigations
Jigsaw
Multiple Texts & References
Projects
Socratic Seminar
Web Quests

3-12 Reading Tools

Anticipation Guides
Check Those Facts!
Coding
Cornell Note Taking
Elaborative Interrogation
Ethical Choice
Four Way Reporting
Interactive Reading Guide
Investigative Teams
Listservs & Message Boards
Learning Logs
Narrow Reading
Opinion Guide
Pen-in-Hand
Proposition Support
Questioning the Author
REAP
Reciprocal Reading
ROW
Save The Last Word For Me
Scintillating Sentences & Quizzical Quotes
Scored Discussion
Skimming & Scanning
SMART
SPAWN
T-Notes
Two Minute Preview
X Marks the Spot

*Scaffolding & Extending

Ask, Answer, Record
Focused Brainstorming
Question Consensus
4 x 4 Jigsaw
Mentor Texts
Minilessons
Pass Around Writing
Scaffolded Note Taking
Academic Sentence Frames
Circle Shares
Interactive Clozes
Know, Do, Write
Language Function Walls
Rate the Statements
Semantic Grids
Trash & Treasure
Vocabulary Cohesion Keys
Point of View Discussion
Quotes of the Day