

TEXT STRUCTURES
AND **FABLES**

GRADES
3-12

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To my parents, who embody fairness, humility, and wisdom

—Gretchen

To my grandma, who embodied generosity, acceptance, and strength

—Jayne

TEXT STRUCTURES AND FABLES

GRADES
3-12

Teaching Students to Write
About What They Read

Gretchen Bernabei
Jayne Hover



CORWIN Literacy

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resources.corwin.com/textstructuresandfables
for downloadable text structures, fables, and other
resources related to *Text Structures and Fables*.

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Part I

Building Strong Readers and Writers

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There's no substitute for direct, explicit, clear instruction.

Before we ask students to answer questions on a test—before we ask them to analyze on demand the effect of an author's choices on their audience of readers—our students must have some of those experiences as readers. **They must be the reader being affected.** They must be the person who said, "Ah! This character is a scoundrel!" or "This part brought a lump to my throat."

Our students need to wear the hat of the reader and the writer as often as we can build it into our days. They might wear the hat of the writer for a few short minutes as the class looks at one of their sentences to admire its power or for longer when they share their writing.

The three lessons in this part help build a routine for using language to respond to reading. Moreover, these three lessons all put a person in contact with another person. They build relationships. And isn't that what reading and writing are really for?

On the '90s TV series *Northern Exposure*, the poet/DJ Chris Stevens said, "If music is the pathway to the soul as Voltaire suggested, then speech is the pathway to other people. Live in silence and you live alone" (Smolan, 1991).

Topic _____

Structure

My Kernel Essay

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

I heard this. 1. ___ 2. ___ 3. ___ 37

LESSON 1. RESPONDING TO READING

1

Your students have read a story; then the discussion goes something like this:

You: What did you think about that story?

A third of them: It was okay.

Another third: It was boring.

Another third: It was good.

With too little guidance, students don't have much to say, while too much guidance looks like test prep worksheets with correct answers built in. And do they need practice test questions for every single thing they read?

In fact, they don't need a question at all in order to make a comment, but they do need to know what they're being asked to do. This lesson gets them into the habit of generating a text-based, in-depth response from their swirling brainwork.

Text Structures for Basic Reader Response			
Story of my Thinking			
I used to think	But this happened	So now I know	
Character Feelings			
_____ felt _____	I know because they _____	I also know because they said _____	
Making a Connection			
When I read _____	I made a connection to (self, text, world)	Because _____	
Summary			
Somebody wanted _____	But _____	So _____	Then _____
The Effect of an Author's Choice			
The author uses... (choose one) <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory Images <input type="checkbox"/> Figurative language <input type="checkbox"/> Something else (name it) _____	An example	Another example	This creates... (choose one) <input type="checkbox"/> A _____ mood <input type="checkbox"/> A _____ feeling <input type="checkbox"/> An understating of _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Something else _____

Step 1. Read a fable.

- Read or listen to a fable.
 - You could read more than one fable grouped in the same theme.
 - You could read or listen to a partner read a fable.
- These fables are short; reread the fable again and again to pick up hidden details.
- You may want to consider acting out the fable to internalize the story.

Step 2. Choose and use a text structure.

- Choose a text structure from the basic response structures.
- Let the structure help you write down what you noticed as you were reading.
- When you have written something to go with each box, you have written a kernel essay.

My Response to The Two Pots

Character Feelings

felt they did they said

Kernel Essay

The Brass pot felt confident.
He took his fragile friend
on the road, and he
promised to protect him.

43

Step 3. Share.

- Read your kernel essay aloud to a partner or group.
- Listen to a couple of kernel essays written by others.

Text Structures for Basic Reader Response

Story of my Thinking		
I used to think _____	But this happened _____	So now I know _____

Character Feelings		
_____ felt _____	I know because they _____	I also know because they said _____

Making a Connection		
When I read _____	I made a connection to (self, text, world) _____	Because _____

Summary			
Somebody wanted _____	But _____	So _____	Then _____

The Effect of an Author's Choice			
The author uses... (choose one) <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory Images <input type="checkbox"/> Figurative language <input type="checkbox"/> Something else (name it) _____	An example	Another example	This creates... (choose one) <input type="checkbox"/> A _____ mood <input type="checkbox"/> A _____ feeling <input type="checkbox"/> An understating of _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Something else _____

Examples:

About "The Two Pots"

Structure: The effect of an author's choice

The author uses personification when they have the two pots speak to each other. The two pots "had not gone ten paces before the earthen pot cracked." The author did this in order to give the reader an understanding of how friends sometimes hurt each other like the pots did.

Andrew Beem, teacher

My Response to "The Two Pots"

Character Feelings

_____ felt

I know because
they did

I also know
because they said

Earthen pot felt scared when brass pot told him about his plan. I know because he was not quick to accept the offer. I also know because he said "You know how fragile I am."

Leia Parker Garcia
Grade 3

Response to "The One-Eyed Doe"

Character Feelings

— felt —

I know
because
they —

I also
know because
she said —

The doe felt defeated. As she was dying, she said "you cannot escape your fate," showing that she was aware that protecting her blind side did not save her. Her best strategy didn't work, making her sad and defeated.

My Response to the Wolf & the Crane

Story of My Thinking

I used to think [] But this happened [] So now I think []

I thought the wolf was untrustworthy but then he let the crane go. Now I think he was a liar about the reward but surprisingly trustworthy about letting the crane live.

Basic Reading Responses

The Effect of an Author's Choice

The author uses (choose one):
 Vocabulary
 Sensory language
 Figurative language
 Something else (name it)

An example

Another example

Summary

Somebody wanted

But

The Wolf and the Crane

A Wolf had been feasting too greedily, and a bone had stuck crosswise in his throat. He could not get it down, and of course he could not eat a thing. Naturally that was an awful state of affairs for a greedy wolf. He hurried to the Crane. He was sure that she, with her long neck and bill, would easily be able to pull it out. "I will reward you very handsomely," said the Wolf, "if you pull that bone out for me, you can imagine, was very uneasy about putting her head in a Wolf's throat. But she was trusting in what the Wolf asked her to do. When the Wolf felt that the bone was gone, he started to walk away. "my reward!" called the Crane anxiously. "What!" snarled the Wolf, whirling around. "Haven't you seen enough that I let you take your head out of my mouth without snapping it off?"

Moral: Nobody should expect a reward for serving the untrustworthy.

Response to "Diamonds and Toads"

Structure: Effect of an Author's Choice

The author uses [] [] [] The Effect []

The author uses figurative language to reveal character.

The toad "grumbled all the way," showing ^{dislike} her bad attitude and resentment.

The narrator also called her an "ill-bred mixx."
 We saw her as worse than rude.

Tip: Use this process with any text in any genre.

TEACHING NOTE

Our friend Lisa Taiclet shared her process. She introduced one structure each week to her fourth graders. The students taped a copy of the structure to the top of a page. At the end of silent reading time, her fourth graders used one structure each week. After five weeks, they had used all five. From that point on, she let them choose which structure they wanted to use. She said, “It’s making for good book discussions since they never all choose the same structure—or even if they do, they notice something different.”

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STUDENT SAMPLES

The Story of My Thinking: about *Don't Call Me Pruneface!*

Adyn, Grade 4

I used to think Paul was good as gold but he called Prudence Pruneface so now I know that Paul can be a little mean.

The Story of My Thinking: about *Don't Call Me Pruneface!*

Braelyn, Grade 4

I used to think that Prudence would never change her ways but once Paul called her Pruneface she realized what it was like to be called names. So now I know that she did change and now Paul and Prudence are friends.

Making a Connection: about *Wonder*

Kamila, Grade 4

When I read about no one wanting to touch Auggie, I made a connection to the world because in real life, corona [COVID-19 is happening] right now and we can't touch anybody.

Making a Connection: about *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*

Kamila, Grade 4

When I read about the Big Bad Pig and how cranky he was I made a text-to-self connection because sometimes I'm in a bad mood and do things that seem mean when I should stop and take some deep breaths like the pig did in the end.

Character Feelings: about *Grace for President*

Mel, Grade 4

Grace felt confused when she heard that there had never been a girl president. I know because she asked the teacher why and made posters for people to vote for her and because she said, "Go vote for a change."

The Effect of an Author's Choice: about *Wonder*

Mel, Grade 4

The author uses figurative language like when Mr. Tushman said that August "carried up the most hearts." This creates an understanding of how August helped people not judge a book by its cover.

Making a Connection

When I read _____	I made a connection to (self, text, world) _____	Because _____
-----------------------------	--	-------------------------

When I read about the kids trying to not touch Auggie, I made a connection to the diary of a wimpy kid because the kids in that do the "cheese touch".

When I read about no one wanting to touch Auggie, I made a connection to the world because in real life there is corona right now and we can't touch anybody.

When I read about the big bad pig and how cranky he was I made a text to self connection because sometimes I'm in a bad mood and do things that seem mean when I should stop and take a deep breath like the pig did in the end.

Story of my Thinking

I used to think _____	But (this happened) _____	So now I know _____
---------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-------------------------------

I used to think that everyone was excited to go to school but then the boy had a nightmare about school so now I know that some people are nervous about the first day of school.

I used to think Jack was a good friend but then he joined in with the other boys talking about Auggie behind his back so now I know that Jack is not a very good friend.

I used to think kids running the world was a terrible idea but then I read all of the kids good ideas so now I think kids make the world better.

Summary

Somebody wanted _____	But _____	So _____	Then _____
---------------------------------	---------------------	--------------------	----------------------

Auggie wanted his mom to come and make him feel better about Via not wanting him at the play but Daisy got sick so mom had to take Daisy to the vet. Then Daisy died so Auggie forgot about his hurt feelings.

Via didn't want Auggie to go to the play but Daisy died and they were so mad at each other any more so they all went to the play. Then Via took Miranda's place in the play and got a standing ovation.

Via was supposed to be the under study but Miranda faked being sick so Via had to go on stage. Then Via got the standing ovation and Miranda felt better about herself.

Character Feelings

felt _____	I know because they did _____	I also know because they said _____
----------------------	---	---

Jack felt confused. I know because he kept trying to sit with different groups but people kept moving away from him. I also know because he said "Who is no one sitting with me?"

Jack felt nervous when he went to Auggie's house for the first time. I know because he asked Auggie if he had told Via about the awful things Jack said. I also know because he said he was afraid Auggie told.

Justin felt surprised when he met Auggie because he lied about it to Via. I also know because he said that he tried to fake his expression to hide his surprise.

Jack felt sad when the three boys picked on him. I know because he had it in the expression on his face. I also know because he showed Justin the paper that had made to see who was on his side.

The Effect of an Author's Choice

The author uses
(choose one)

- Vocabulary
- Sensory images
- Figurative language
- Something else
(name it)

an
example

another
example

This creates
(choose one)

- A _____ mood
- A _____ feeling
- An understanding of

- Something else
(name it)

The author uses sensory images like Auggie feeling like he was under water and crying the "waterworks." These created an understanding of how scary that night was for Auggie and how poor his hearing is.

The author uses vocabulary like backtracked and single file, this creates a visual in my mind of how they searched for the hearing aids.

The author figurative language like a monumental shift and a cosmic shift to give the reader an understanding how big the

VARIATION

- Let students choose (and copy) a striking line or phrase from their reading.
- Choose a structure from the great lines page.
- Let the structure help you write about your thoughts as you read.
- Read your kernel essay to a partner or group.
- Listen to several other kernel essays.

Text Structures for Writing About Literature

How I Figured It Out
I knew that!
Disagreeing with the Author
When I read... I thought...
Passage: Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down
Talking Back to the Author
Sharing My Reaction With the Author
When I read...
How I Figured It Out
I knew that!
Disagreeing with the Author
When I read... I thought...
Passage: Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down
Talking Back to the Author
Sharing My Reaction With the Author
When I read...
How I Figured It Out
I knew that!
Disagreeing with the Author
When I read... I thought...
Passage: Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down
Talking Back to the Author
Sharing My Reaction With the Author
When I read...

Efrata Mola - Grade 4 8

I was at my Granpa's lush farm, and that summer day was as hot as a furnace. I was so bored, and the only option I had left was to play with Lottie, my German Sheperd. "Here, girl," I called. Soon enough, Lottie lazily trotted out of the barn, with a few sticks of hay in her silky fur. "You want to explore?" I inquired to the panting dog. Taking slobber drooling down Lottie's mouth as a yes, I skipped down the road, past the black and white cows, towards the forest.

As soon as we reached the outskirts of my grandfather's land, my stomach lurched. But with Lottie at my heels, I ventured into the forest. The forest was dark and damp. I felt as if millions of eyes were watching my every move. A twig snapped, followed by a faint neigh. In disbelief, I thought, It's just Moonlight and Midnight (horses) in the pasture. Suddenly Lottie growled towards the shadows. "What is it, girl?" I tensely asked. I was answered with a whimper.

I soon decided whatever it was, it was pretty scary. Mustering my bravery, I headed towards the trees. A loud clutter of crows snapped my mind to attention, as I trudged through thorn bushes. As I approached a clearing, what I saw made my eyes as wide as tomatoes.

There right in the clearing, lay a colt. A few rays of sun made the leather brown skin of the colt glow. But what amazed me the most was the large, swollen, right hind leg of the horse. When the horse glanced up, I saw a twisted, pained, expression. Suddenly I saw my grandfather with his horse trailer. Quickly we hauled the injured colt, and made our way back to the farm.

When we got to the farm, me and Lottie impatiently paced outside the barn door. She'll be okay, I constantly told myself. I was astounded when my grandfather's wrinkled face appeared, and then said "She'll be okay." I heaved a sigh of relief, and headed towards the colt that I had found. I learned that any day can start out dull, but turn out to be the most exciting time of your life. Just like me and my colt. ☆

Line "I felt as if millions of eyes were watching my every move."

structure: Clarifier

At first
I thought

then I
read

Which
means

So now
I think
this part is really
saying

Kernel Essay:

1. At first I thought this would be a story with elements of horror, because it gave me the creeps.
2. Then I read about the cult,
3. which means there would not be dead bodies or bloody monsters.
4. So now I think the creepy part was pretty mild, and ^{set us up} gave us a sense of relief quickly.

Clarifier - Aha

At first I thought this was saying _____	Then I heard/read _____	Which means _____	So now I think this part is really saying _____
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