

Text Structure & Author's Purpose



TEKS 4.10(B) Explain how the use of text structure contributes to the author's purpose.

Objective:

I can name the structure an author used to organize a text, prove it with signal words, and explain how that structure helps the author accomplish their purpose.

The anchor strategy students will repeat all lesson:

What structure? How do I know? Why did the author choose it? (Name the structure → find the signal words that prove it → explain how the structure helps the author's purpose.)

TEACHER NOTES

Students should know the five structures: description, sequence, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and problem and solution. This lesson targets three specific misconceptions, named here so you can listen for them:

- 1. Naming the structure and stopping** — students correctly identify "compare and contrast" but cannot explain why the author chose it. Identifying the structure is the beginning of this standard, not the end — 4.10(B) asks how the structure contributes to the purpose.
- 2. Guessing structure from the topic instead of signal words** — students see a text about two animals and guess "compare and contrast" without evidence. The proof is in the signal words and organization: first/next/then (sequence); because/as a result (cause and effect); both/however/unlike (compare and contrast); problem/solve (problem and solution).
- 3. Treating structure and purpose as unrelated** — students can state the purpose ("to inform") and the structure ("sequence") but cannot connect them. The structure is the author's tool: the author chose it on purpose because it does a job the purpose needs done.

The Structure & Purpose Map (next page) is the fix: it places "Structure," "Signal Words," and "How It Helps" in a visible left-to-right flow with arrows. Students cannot name a structure without proving it (middle box), and they cannot stop at naming without explaining the job the structure does for the author's purpose (last box).

Teacher language to keep repeating:

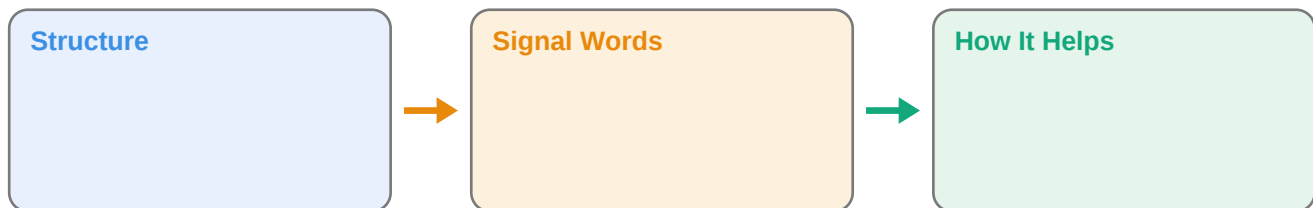
"You named the structure — now tell me why the author chose it." • "Prove it with signal words, not the topic." • "The structure is the author's tool — what job is it doing?" • "What would be lost if the author organized it differently?" • "What structure? How do you know? Why?"

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Graphic Organizer — Structure & Purpose Map

Figure out how the author organized the text and why. The Structure box names the structure: description, sequence, compare and contrast, cause and effect, or problem and solution. The Signal Words box lists the words from the text that prove it. The How It Helps box explains the job the structure does for the author's purpose.



Sentence stems for explaining structure and purpose:

"The author organized this text by... I know because of the signal words..."

"The author chose this structure because it helps readers..."

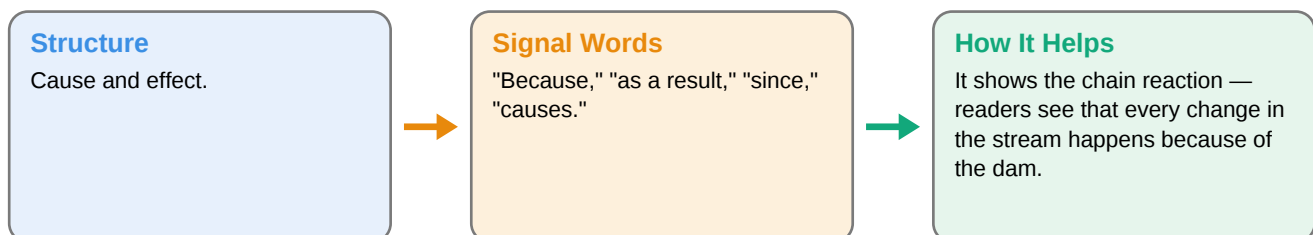
"This structure helps the author's purpose by..."

I DO (Modeled — teacher thinks aloud)

Read this short passage aloud:

When a beaver drags branches and mud across a stream, the water behind the dam has nowhere to go. Because the stream is blocked, a deep, quiet pond spreads out behind it. As a result, fish, ducks, and turtles move in, since the still water gives them food and shelter. The dam causes changes on land, too. Since the pond soaks the soil, water-loving plants like cattails begin to grow along the edges. One busy beaver can change an entire stream into a wetland — all because of a wall of sticks and mud.

Say: "What structure? I see the signal words 'because,' 'as a result,' 'since,' and 'causes' — this is cause and effect. Why did the author choose it? The purpose is to inform readers how one beaver dam changes a whole stream. Cause and effect is the perfect tool for that job: it lets the author show the chain reaction — the dam causes the pond, the pond causes the animals and plants to arrive. A list of facts couldn't show why each change happens."



← *The structure is the author's tool — it does a job the purpose needs done*

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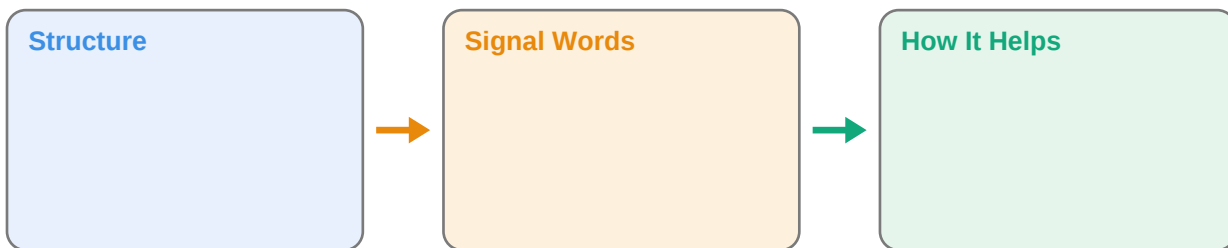


I DO

- 1 Read the passage. Then complete the map.

When a beaver drags branches and mud across a stream, the water behind the dam has nowhere to go. Because the stream is blocked, a deep, quiet pond spreads out behind it. As a result, fish, ducks, and turtles move in, since the still water gives them food and shelter. The dam causes changes on land, too. Since the pond soaks the soil, water-loving plants like cattails begin to grow along the edges. One busy beaver can change an entire stream into a wetland — all because of a wall of sticks and mud.

Structure & Purpose Map for: _____



- 2 Explain the structure and purpose in complete sentences:

The author organized this text by... _____

I know because of the signal words... _____

The author's purpose is... _____

This structure helps the purpose because... _____

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WE DO (Guided — students prompt the steps)

Read the passage below together. Then work through the three prompts — each one targets a misconception. Have students tell you each move: "What structure?... How do you know?... Why?"

Guided passage — "Frog or Toad?":

Frogs and toads look so much alike that many people mix them up, but a close look shows the differences. Both are amphibians that hatch from eggs in water. However, frogs have smooth, wet skin, while toads have dry, bumpy skin. Frogs have long legs built for leaping, but toads have shorter legs made for walking and small hops. Unlike frogs, which stay near ponds and streams, toads can live in drier places like gardens and forests. The next time you spot one, check its skin and legs — you'll know exactly which one you've found.

Prompt 1 — Prove it with signal words: Ask "What structure is this?" Students may guess "compare and contrast" just because there are two animals. Reply: "Maybe — but prove it. Find the signal words." Guide them to both, however, while, but, and unlike, and to how the text flips back and forth between frogs and toads. (Misconception 2)

Prompt 2 — Don't stop at naming: Once students name the structure, ask "So what? Why did the author choose it? What is the author's purpose here?" Push them to state the purpose first — to inform readers how to tell frogs and toads apart — before connecting it to the structure. (Misconception 1)

Prompt 3 — Connect structure to purpose: Fill in the map together. Point to the How It Helps box and ask "How does putting frogs and toads side by side, feature by feature, do the job this purpose needs? What would be lost if the author told a story about one frog instead?" (Misconception 3)

Find the Error

Show students this sample response about "Frog or Toad?" and ask: "What is wrong here? How do we fix it?"

"The text structure is frogs and toads. The author used this structure to make the text longer and more interesting."

What to listen for: "frogs and toads" is the topic, not a structure — a structure is how the text is organized. And "to make it longer" is not a job a structure does for a purpose. A strong fix: "The structure is compare and contrast — I know because of the signal words both, however, and unlike. The author chose it because the purpose is to help readers tell frogs and toads apart, and comparing them side by side makes the differences easy to see."

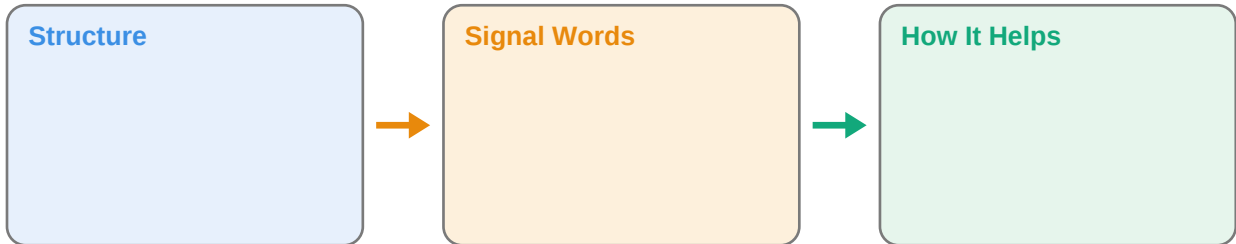
Exit Ticket: Assign the quick check from the teacher dashboard.

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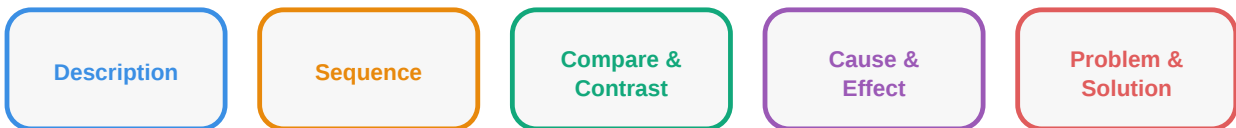


WE DO

- 1 Complete the Structure & Purpose Map for "Frog or Toad?":



- 2 Text Structure — circle one, then prove it:



Signal words from the text that prove it: _____

- 3 Explain: How does this structure help the author's purpose?

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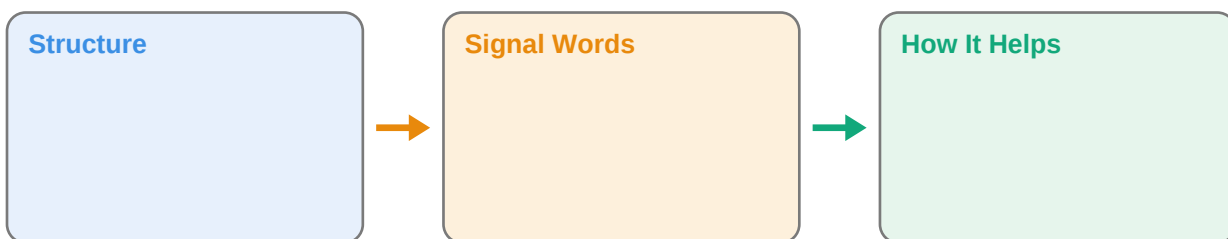


YOU DO (Independent)

Read "From Tree to Table: Making Maple Syrup" on your own. Then complete every part below.

Real maple syrup starts long before breakfast. First, in late winter, farmers drill a small hole into a maple tree and hang a bucket or a tube. Next, the sap drips slowly out of the tree — clear and thin, like water. Then the farmers collect the sap and pour it into a huge pan called an evaporator. After hours over the fire, most of the water boils away, and the sap thickens and turns golden brown. Finally, the syrup is filtered and poured into bottles. It takes about forty gallons of sap to make just one gallon of syrup — and every step must happen in the right order.

1 Complete the Structure & Purpose Map:



2 Explain the structure and purpose using the sentence starters:

The author organized this text by... I know because... This structure helps the author's purpose by...

3 What would happen to the author's purpose if the steps were written out of order?

ANSWER KEY (Teacher Reference)

Student wording will vary. Accept any structure proven with signal words and any clear link between the structure and the purpose.

I DO — "The Beaver's Dam"

Structure: cause and effect.

Signal words: "because," "as a result," "since," "causes."

How it helps: the author's purpose is to inform readers how a beaver dam changes a stream; cause and effect shows the chain reaction so readers see why each change happens.

WE DO — "Frog or Toad?"

Structure (circle one): compare and contrast.

Signal words: "both," "however," "while," "but," "unlike."

How it helps: the purpose is to help readers tell frogs and toads apart; comparing them side by side, feature by feature, makes the differences easy to see and remember.

Find the Error fix: "frogs and toads" is the topic, not a structure, and "to make it longer" is not a job a structure does. Corrected: structure = compare and contrast, proven by the signal words, chosen because side-by-side comparison serves the purpose of telling the two apart.

YOU DO — "From Tree to Table: Making Maple Syrup"

Structure: sequence (chronological order).

Signal words: "first," "next," "then," "after," "finally."

How it helps: the purpose is to inform readers how maple syrup is made; sequence presents the steps in order because the process only works in that order — the text itself says "every step must happen in the right order."

Question 3: out of order, readers could not follow or repeat the process — the purpose (explaining how syrup is made) would fail. The order of the text matches the order of the real process.