

1 Nonfiction: Learning from the Features in a Text + MAIN IDEA

What: Readers know that informational texts have lots of features we need to pay attention to and learn from as we read. Examples of *features* that help you locate information are titles, contents pages, and headings. Examples of *features* that help you add to or support your learning (after or while you read the text) include maps, photographs, diagrams, charts and graphs.

Why: (Choose one or more)

- Paying attention to some features like titles and headings can help you locate particular information in a source or *make informed predictions** about what you will be learning about.
- Carefully reading or looking at features like photographs, maps and diagrams can support or extend our understanding of the text.
- Thinking about the connections between features and the words in the text can help us identify bigger or main ideas in the text as well.

How:

Learning from Text Features

1) IDENTIFY PURPOSE	2) LEARN	3) SYNTHESIZE
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the purpose of this feature?• Why would an author include this feature?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does this feature teach me about the topic of the text?• How does this support or extend the ideas in the text?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are the details in the feature and in the text connected?• What have you learned that is important?

Link to [sample anchor chart](#)

Link to [blog entry with](#)

TIP: The lessons below focus on learning content from a supporting or extending text feature (e.g., *maps, photos, captions, sidebars, diagrams, charts, graphs*) and connecting that content to the running text or content in other features. If your students need to focus instead on making predictions with text features, then at the beginning of Phase 1, teach them a quick mnemonic to support this endeavor; continue to review regularly (but briefly) until they master. For more information, check out these [mnemonics for teaching previewing & predicting \(using text features\)](#) – **HIP, TELL, THIEVES**

For the INTRO LESSON - Explicitly intro, model, guide.

Prepare:

- **Identify & prime text.** In the text, identify 3-4 features that add to or support a reader's learning (e.g., *maps, photos, captions, sidebars, diagrams, charts, graphs*). (The text should be read and discussed as a whole during Phase 1.) Then decide which of the features will be analyzed for the I DO, WE DO, YOU DO TOGETHER, YOU DO.
- **Plan the WHAT, WHY, HOW lesson introduction.** Read through the gray column (to the left). How will you convey these ideas? You might read verbatim or paraphrase in your own words. Tip: Present the anchor chart for the HOW.
- **Plan the I DO.** Plan how you will think aloud about making sense of a text feature (or a combination of features like a photograph & caption) and how you will make notes about what you learned from the feature as well. Use the questions on the anchor chart as a guide for what you might say during this think-aloud. (See sample think aloud language in #3 below.)
- **Think through WE DO, YOU DO TOGETHER, YOU DO.** Which features will you ask students to look at for each? What do you want them to notice? What notes might they take?
- **Plan the MAIN IDEA DISCUSSION.** Write out the main idea in your lesson plan for yourself. *How does the content in the features you and the students analyzed reveal a main idea?* [Link to list of common main idea vocabulary.](#)
- **Create or print -**
 - [HOW anchor chart](#)
 - [list of text features with visuals](#) (for each student)
- **Design a way for you or students to annotate their thinking** on sticky notes or on the article; students need to take notes about what they learn from the features analyzed; these notes will be used to support writing a response during Phase 3.

Teach:

1. **INTRO THE STRATEGIES:**
 - a. Share the *WHAT* and *WHY* of monitoring for meaning using the coding strategy.
 - b. Display the *HOW* anchor chart and discuss.
2. **REREAD EXCERPT:** Ask students to reread the excerpt and features you've chosen to re-familiarize themselves with the details and the features.
3. **I DO:** Read aloud and think aloud about one text feature (or a

sample lesson

Features that Support & Extend Learning		
Feature	Purpose	Example
Photographs, illustrations	A picture that shows an example of what the author is describing in the text.	
Caption	Words placed closely to a photo or illustration or graphic that provide more information.	
Diagram	A drawing with labels that helps the reader visualize what is being described in the source.	
Map	A drawing of a location or place that gives the reader important information about that place.	

Link to [Feature-Purpose-Example handout for students](#)

Vocabulary Students Might Use to Explain Main Ideas in Nonfiction (This list is a resource for teachers and is not exhaustive)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perseverance, tenacity humanitarianism cooperation compassion, benevolence, empathy displacement empowerment, rebirth, renewal, restoration nourish collective wisdom, capacity complexity, diversity adaptation inspiration, agitation, disturbance, perurbation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community global citizenship friendship, alliance, harmony, solidarity cooperation, endurance, determination hope survival faith, tradition, reverence, equation, oppression, tyranny peaceful, nonviolence, placid, amicable obstacles vulnerability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discovery, curiosity change, circle of life, metamorphosis, transformation innovation communication dangers of ignorance, ignorance knowledge vs. progress, breadth/through, momentum essential role of of _____ in the system of similarities and differences between and unique, distinct

Link to [list of common main idea vocabulary](#)

Raise the Rigor:

- Pose questions like the following:
 - *How does this feature contribute to the development of the main idea?*
 - *How does the layout and design of this particular text feature support meaning making?*
- Analyze a short **video** that includes visual images (moving images, graphs, diagrams, etc.) & accompanying audio worthy.

combination of features) using the anchor chart as your guide; also refer to the text features list as needed. Your think aloud might sound like:

- [Model Step 1: Identify Purpose] *When I look at this map entitled, “World Hunger Gap,” I remember that the purpose of a map reveals the location of particular places so I knew that the author would want me to pay attention to particular locations on the map for a reason. See how I used step one “Identify Purpose” on the anchor chart?*
- [Model Step 2: Learn] *Now I’m going to follow the next step on the anchor chart “Learn”; I’m going to look closely at this map and think about what’s important about the places on this map and other details the author wants me to understand... I also need to think about how what I’ve learned connects to what I read in the text (or another feature) so let me look back and...*
- [Model Step 3: Synthesize] *Now that I’ve thought about what I’ve learned and how it connects to the text (or another feature), I need to take the last step - synthesize. I think what I’ve learned from the feature and the text together is important because... I want to wrap up by jotting down a few words to help me remember what I’ve been thinking about...*

- 4. WE DO:** Ask students to analyze another feature(s) that you pre-selected. Engage them in using the anchor chart and list of features to help them. Coach them on how to annotate their thinking. As needed, offer sentence stems to support:
 - *The purpose of this feature is....*
 - *In this feature, the author is showing me...so I’m thinking...*
 - *I think what I learned from the text and the feature is important because...*
- 5. YOU DO TOGETHER & YOU DO:** Follow a similar routine with additional features; ask partners to share their thinking, referring to the anchor chart and list of features as needed.
- 6. CLOSE:**
 - Discuss big takeaways from the source that are the result of carefully analyzing multiple features in this source; tie into a MAIN IDEA conversation.
 - Review the anchor chart and explain *when* students should engage in this type of thinking on their own.

LESSON WITH FOLLOW-UP TEXT(s) Gradually release responsibility to partners and then individuals for noticing and analyzing important text features. Provide opportunities for students to identify and analyze (pre-selected or not) text features. Continue coaching them to use the anchor chart as a guide.

Some Prompts for Phase 3 Writing in Response

1. *What did you learn about the topic from a particular feature or group of features?*
2. *Why was a particular feature you analyzed important? What did you learn because you slowed down and paid attention to the information in that feature?*
3. *What was the difference between the information in the feature and the information in the text? Why read both?*
4. *What was one main idea revealed in the features (and the text)? Why is that main idea important to think about?*
5. *How did a particular feature (or two) add to your understanding of the text?*

