Text structure
Stage 2

Learning focus
Students will learn to identify specific structural and language features within types of text. Students will learn to identify genre in a range of imaginative, persuasive and informative texts.

Syllabus outcome
The following teaching and learning strategies will assist in covering elements of the following outcomes:

- EN2-4A: uses an increasing range of skills, strategies and knowledge to fluently read, view and comprehend a range of texts on increasingly challenging topics in different media and technologies
- EN2-8B: identifies and compares different kinds of texts when reading and viewing and shows an understanding of purpose, audience and subject matter.

Year 3 NAPLAN item descriptors

- identifies a central theme in a narrative
- identifies the genre of a sign
- identifies the genre of an information text
- identifies the genre of a text
- identifies the purpose of a rhetorical question in a persuasive text
- identifies the purpose of a rhetorical question in a text
- analyses the effect of modal language in an information text
- identifies the use of persuasive devices in a persuasive text
- identifies persuasive techniques in a text
- analyses the effect of modal language in an information text
- identifies a persuasive device in a persuasive text

Literacy Learning Progression guide
Understanding Texts (UnT6-UnT8)

Key: C=comprehension P=process V=vocabulary

UnT6
- describes the purpose of informative, imaginative and persuasive texts (C)

UnT7
- identifies the purpose of predictable texts and moderately complex texts (C)
- identifies simple language and text features that signal purpose (diagrams, dialogue) (P)

UnT8
- uses knowledge of the features and conventions of the type of text to build meaning (recognises that the beginning of a persuasive text may introduce the topic and the line of argument) (C)
- identifies language features used to present opinions or points of view (P)
Resources

- Identifying text features text examples - Appendix 1
- What am I?: Text structure and features of an informative text - Appendix 2
- Analyse effect of modal language - Appendix 3
- Identifying persuasive devices - Appendix 4
- Newsflash graphic organiser - Appendix 5
- Responding to text - Appendix 6

Background information

Types of Text

Classifications according to the particular purposes texts are designed to achieve. These purposes influence the characteristic features the texts employ. In general, texts can be classified as belonging to one of three types (imaginative, informative or persuasive), although it is acknowledged that these distinctions are neither static nor watertight and particular texts can belong to more than one category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imaginative texts</th>
<th>Informative texts</th>
<th>Persuasive texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These texts include novels, traditional tales, poetry, stories, plays, fiction for young adults and children, including picture books and multimodal texts such as film.</td>
<td>They include texts which are valued for their informative content, as a store of knowledge and for their value as part of everyday life.</td>
<td>They include student essays, debates, arguments, discussions, polemics, advertising, propaganda, influential essays and articles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theme

Refers to the central idea or one of the main underlying ideas or messages of a text.

Genre

The categories into which texts are grouped. The term has a complex history within literary and linguistic theory and is often used to distinguish texts on the basis of, for example, their subject matter (detective fiction, romance, science fiction, fantasy fiction) and form and structure (poetry, novels, short stories).

Text structure

Predicting and recognising structure of text helps students to see the ‘big picture’ of a text, rather than focusing on just the words (Symock, S & Nicholson, T (1999) Reading Comprehension, What is it? How do you teach it?) NCER Press). Recognising text structure enhances a student’s ability to comprehend and recall information (Ambruster, Anderson & Ostertag, 1989 in readingrockets.org article).

The ways information is organised in different types of texts, for example chapter headings, subheadings, tables of contents, indexes and glossaries, overviews, introductory and concluding paragraphs, sequencing, topic sentences, taxonomies, cause and effect. Choices in text structures and language features together define a text type and shape its meaning (see language features).

Textual form

The conventions specific to a particular type of text, often signaling content, purpose and audience, for example letter form, drama script, blog.

Language features

The features of language that support meaning, for example sentence structure, vocabulary, illustrations, diagrams, graphics, punctuation, figurative language. Choices in language features and text structures together define a type of text and shape its meaning (see structures of texts). These choices vary according to the purpose of a text, its subject matter, audience and mode or media of production.

English K-10 Syllabus Glossary (2012) NESA
Where to next?

- Text features
- Audience and purpose
- Author perspective
Teaching strategies

Task 1: Identifying theme in a narrative

Please see ‘Text Features’ for more teaching strategies on genre and theme.

1. Review definition of ‘theme’ as a central message or what the author wants you to learn or know. The theme is usually not stated and is inferred from vocabulary, text structure, purpose, tone and bias.

2. Read or view a range of short texts and model identifying the central theme. Using short films such as ‘miniscule’ (on YouTube) or Pixar shorts (pixar.com) are a great way to see a whole text to identify the theme. Pixar shorts also provide a short overview of the film in the background information section.

3. Students are given a collection of both fiction and non-fiction picture books, short stories or articles to determine their genre (adventure, science fiction, comedy, drama). Apps such as Stan, Netflix and ABC online categorise films into genres and this may help student understanding. Students write on a sticky note what genre they think the text is, supported by evidence. Students rotate around the texts and add tally marks to the genres they agree with and add an ‘I wonder…’ question to any genres they disagree with or would like to add to.

Task 2: Identifying genre

1. Discuss genre as being a ‘type’ or ‘kind’ of text. Some genres stay the same, whilst others grow and change as new media emerges. We can explore genre to see similarities and differences between texts as well as to provide guidelines for structure and features. Genre can vary according to mode and medium of the text delivery.

2. **T-Chart:** Review terms ‘fiction’ and ‘non-fiction’ and brainstorm key features of these texts and examples of texts and authors. Display images in a T-Chart to draw direct comparisons:

Some suggestions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiction</th>
<th>Non-Fiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Created by the author’s imagination.</em></td>
<td><em>Based on real events and real people.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is made up</td>
<td>• Is real and based on facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tells the reader a story</td>
<td>• Tells the reader information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has an orientation, complication, resolution</td>
<td>• Is broken into sections (contents, glossary, index)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has characters</td>
<td>• Uses diagrams, charts and photograms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has a plot</td>
<td>• Uses headings, sub-headings and labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has a setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• May have illustrations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Students use book covers and blurbs from either a collection of books or alternatively, a book club catalogue, and categorise them into ‘fiction’ or ‘non-fiction’. Students might use an online book retailer to select books and read their blurb or extract.

4. In groups of 2-3, students are given a sub-category of a genre and become ‘experts’ through research. Students create a poster illustrating key features of each genre to help identify them. These posters can be used in a gallery walk around the classroom, or, alternatively, students can present to the whole class to ensure everyone has access to the information.
Alternate task: This can be set up as a google doc or other online group construction where ideas can be added and viewed by all class members.

5. Students work in groups to further categorise these texts according to form or subject matter using teacher discretion with choosing appropriate sub-categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiction</th>
<th>Non-Fiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>drama</td>
<td>fable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fairy tale</td>
<td>fantasy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>folklore</td>
<td>adventure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horror</td>
<td>humour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legend</td>
<td>mystery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poetry</td>
<td>mythology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>science fiction</td>
<td>short story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tall tale</td>
<td>dystopian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>autobiography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journal article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>diary entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>recipe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variation: Students add different genres they have explored.

6. Students use a range of texts linked to current unit of learning or use Appendix 1 to identify the genre using evidence from the text. Students use enlarged versions of Appendix 1 and add ideas in a mind map.

**Task 3: Features of narrative texts**

1. Model a think-aloud strategy with students, having students notice different parts of a narrative: *I can see there is a description of a character, this tells me that this is most likely a fiction text. I can also see that the story has a setting which I know is part of a narrative.*

2. How would you best teach someone the structure of a narrative? Have students pictorially represent the structure of a narrative (orientation, complication, resolution, coda). Students may show this as a roller coaster ride, a walk through a forest etc.

3. Review features of a narrative, adding to the pictorial representation (setting, character, plot, description, events, theme, point of view, literary devices, dialogue)

4. **Jigsaw task:** Students create a poster with all the elements of a narrative on it. This is then cut into jigsaw pieces and mixed up for another group to solve.

**Task 4: Features of informative texts**

1. Model reading an information text to students, drawing attention to some of the key elements (headings, sub-headings, diagrams, captions maps, bullet points and so on.) Students are given white boards or sticky notes to write down any elements they hear mentioned during the modelled lesson.

2. Using the information students have gathered during the modelled lesson, design a class anchor chart or poster for identifying parts of an informative text.

3. Students use Appendix 2 ‘What am I?’ to match and sort activities linking examples with their clues and titles.

**Task 5: Features of persuasive texts**

1. **Gone in 60 seconds:** A student is given sixty seconds to verbally persuade others of their point of view on a subject, for example: all plastics must stop being used. To support students, group brainstorming vocabulary for the topic may help to prompt ideas.
Additional task: Students are timed and stop watches stopped when ‘umm’, ‘err’ or ‘like’ (out of context) is used – the goal is to make the longest time without repeating ideas.

2. Discuss as a class what makes an effective argument? Where do we find arguments? Discuss how persuasive texts can take many forms and we need to identify the purpose and audience of the text to be able to make an informed decision.

3. Discuss modal language and the impact it can have on the reader. Teacher scribes a range of modal verbs (must, will, can, might, should, ought to etc.) and have students rate them out of 5 for most urgent to least urgent. Pose scenarios: Which word would you choose to encourage someone to try a new food? Which word would you choose to stop someone from littering?

4. Students work in small teams to explore modal language and place on a continuum from strongest to weakest (see Appendix 3).

5. Students use the persuasive example in Appendix 4 and respond to the questions.

Task 6: Which type of text am I?

1. As with celebrity heads, students are given a type of text structure or feature element. The students in the class answer closed questions to help them to determine what type of text they are part of. Some elements can be, of course, found in a range of types of text, so this will need to be noted when giving students their element.

2. Newsflash: Students use texts from Appendix 1 to identify what type of text each is in a newsflash graphic organiser (see Appendix 5).

3. Students use Appendix 6 to respond to each text answering the following questions:
   - What type of text is this text? How do you know?
   - What question does this text answer?
   - What questions do you have about this text?
   - What is happening in the first paragraph?
   - What is the text about?
   - What genre is this text?
   - Is there a problem in the text? If so what is it?
   - Do you think the end of the text is effective? Why/why not?
Appendix 1

Identifying text features

Do you know why Tuesday, 5 February is special to billions of people this year? It’s the date of Chinese New Year! (And it’s the year of the Pig this year.) Chinese New Year is on a different date every year. Why? Because it’s based on a lunar calendar.

Lunar Calendars and Celebrations

Counting days by the Moon
The calendar used by most countries, including Australia, is based on the position of the Sun in the sky—a solar calendar. Many cultures and societies measure time differently—by the phases of the Moon—a lunar calendar. Some cultures use a mix of the two: a lunisolar calendar.

Lunar and lunisolar calendars are used to work out the dates of many festivals and celebrations around the world. Ramadan, Easter and Rosh Hashanah are examples of these. Perhaps your family celebrates one or more of these festivals.

Holi
The date of the joyful Hindu festival, Holi, is based on a lunar calendar. It celebrates the coming of spring (in the Northern Hemisphere anyway!) and it’s one of the most vivid celebrations in the world. People throw colourful powders at one another. This year, Holi is 21-22 March.

The School Magazine, NSW DoE
Appendix 1

Identifying text features
School Magazine, NSW DoE

Pancake Day!

With a special treat for Pancake Day, you can enjoy a different sort of pancakes at home. You can enjoy them on a weekend or special occasion. Pancakes are also a fun way to involve the whole family in cooking. These simple instructions are a great way to get everyone involved in the kitchen. Pancakes are a great way to introduce new ingredients and flavors to your cooking. You can experiment with different types of pancakes, adding fruits, nuts, or even chocolate chips. Pancakes are also a great way to celebrate birthdays or special occasions. Try making some different types of pancakes, like banana pancakes or even savory pancakes. Whatever you choose, have fun and enjoy your pancake day!

What exactly are they?

- More sweet pancakes
- More savory pancakes
- More fruit pancakes
- More chocolate pancakes

Try a big-stopping food that

A pile of Pancakes

Nurture your imagination
Pictures by Ribbele Lietman
Illustrated by Ribbele Lietman
Printed by D. Rowntree

Reading: text structure Stage 2
Identifying text features

School Magazine, NSW DoE

Characters

Why the Trees Lose Their Leaves

Play by Sue Hardy based on a character found | Illustrated by Amanda Brain
Identifying text features
School Magazine, NSW DoE

Letters Are Tricky

poem by Donna Glick, illustrated by Cheryl Owen

Turn a fish to a wish
Find an ear in a beard
Your hair—shoo—shoo shoo
Just one can turn
Deliciously well.

Turn a fish to a wish
Just one can turn
You’ve got a crow—how absurd.
It really is magic—
Just one can turn
A sort to a sun
or a loo to a zoo.
Letters are tricky.

Letters are tricky.

Letters are tricky.

Letters are tricky.
Identifying text features
School Magazine, NSW DoE

Shasta’s Sensational Pancakes

When I want to give the crew of the SS Webweaver a tasty surprise, I whip up a batch of pancakes. Ask an adult to give you a hand making these treats!

**Ingredients**
- 1 1/4 cups plain flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons canola or sunflower oil

**What you need**
- 2 large bowls
- a sifter
- a fork
- a mixing spoon
- a griddle or a frying pan
- an adult to help

**What you do:**
1. Wash and dry your hands thoroughly.
2. In a large bowl sift together flour, baking powder, sugar and salt.
3. In another bowl gently beat egg with a fork and then mix in milk and canola or sunflower oil.
4. Pour egg, milk and oil into the dry ingredients.
5. Stir the mixture carefully (don’t beat it) until the dry ingredients are mixed in.
6. Ask an adult to help you cook the pancakes on a griddle or in a frying pan. Pancakes should be golden-brown on both sides.
7. Serve with fresh fruit, apple sauce, butter, lemon juice, honey, maple syrup—or whatever you think would be tasty.
8. Most importantly: eat them while they’re hot!
Lions Eat Vegetables

The old lion crossed the stream and jumped. He heard a noise behind him. He turned around. He saw the other lion and started to run. But he was too late. The other lion caught him and ate him.

Reading text structure Stage 2

Identifying text features
Identifying text features

Year 3 Reading Magazine NAPLAN, 2016 ACARA

The best smellers

Bear
A bear has the best sense of smell of any mammal. It has a large nose, and a big part of its brain is used for smelling.

Kiwi
Most birds use their eyes to hunt for food but the kiwi is different. It uses smell to find worms buried underground.

Shark
A shark can smell a drop of blood from over one kilometre away. More than half of its brain is used for smelling.

Snake
A snake uses its tongue to smell. Its tongue is split in two and this helps the snake to detect whether a smell is stronger on the left side of its body or the right side of its body.

Moth
Using its long antennae, a moth can sniff out another moth from over ten kilometres away.

Bloodhound
A bloodhound can follow the smell of a person who left the area two days earlier. It can even trace someone who has walked through crowded streets.
Appendix 2

What am I?: Text structure and features of an informative text

Did you know?

- Bats are the only mammals that can fly.
- Bats have been known to live more than 30 years.
- A group of bats is called a colony.
- There are about 1240 different species of bats in the world.
- Australia is home to over 90 different species of bats.
- The Kitti’s hog-nosed bat is the smallest bat in the world. It weighs up to two grams: about the same as a tea bag!
- The giant golden-crowned flying fox is the biggest bat; it weighs up to 1.6 kilograms with a wingspan of 170 centimetres!

Types of bats

Bats can be subdivided into two main groups: microbats and megabats. This is determined by their diet and the way they navigate when flying.

What am I? Clues to match

| I introduce the topic of the whole text. I use a large font so I am easily noticeable. | I help the reader picture what is being described. I help to add more detail. |
| I sit under the heading and I give more information about a specific thing. | I am the first main heading of the text and introduce the overall concept. |
| I give extra information - I am often interesting and am short and sharp facts. | |

What am I? Labels

| Title | Heading | Sub-heading and information |
| Image and caption | Bullet points/facts | |
Teacher copy: Text structure and features of an informative text

Bats

Types of bats

Bats can be subdivided into two main groups: microbats and megabats. This is determined by their diet and the way they navigate when flying.

Microbats are very small. They are mostly insectivorous, which means their diet consists of flying insects such as beetles, moths and mosquitoes. They usually live beside rivers and creeks, so they have access to fresh water. They also live in parks, reserves and even residential areas. During the day they roost in trees and hollows. They feed at night and although they have good eyesight they use sound waves and echoes to find their prey in the dark. This ‘bat sonar’ is called echolocation.

Megabats tend to be larger than microbats (but not always!). They are frugivorous, which means their diet consists of fruit and nectar from flowering plants. Like microbats, megabats are nocturnal but they rely on their good eyesight and excellent sense of smell to find food.

Some megabats are called flying foxes because of their fox-like faces and the red-coloured fur on their bodies. Although megabats hunt at night, large groups can often be seen during the day hanging from tall trees.

Kitti’s hog-nosed bat

Flying fox mother and baby

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## Appendix 3

### Analyse effect of modal language

Place the following examples of modality on a continuum from weakest to strongest impact on the reader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak Modality</th>
<th>Strong Modality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper planes are a nuisance and must be removed from the school playground!</td>
<td>It is crucial that coffee-lovers bring along their environmental cups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You may like to empty the dishwasher this afternoon.</td>
<td>I might take a break in fifteen minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should clean under your bed at least once a month.</td>
<td>You can move the chess piece when you are ready.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How dare you speak in that tone of voice!</td>
<td>It is clear that things need to change in the playground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am certainly fed up with the rubbish lying around the bushland.</td>
<td>You should visit your dentist each year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tree might die if the drought continues.</td>
<td>We mustn't use informal language in a speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I open the window?</td>
<td>You should stop eating chocolate every meal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She must be told the truth.</td>
<td>I may use plastic bags at the shops.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some students are investigating how pollution affects the environment. They have researched the effects of plastic bags. This is what they have written.

Should we pay for plastic bags?

People should pay for the plastic bags they use for their shopping. According to experts from Clean Up Australia, Australians use over six billion plastic bags a year and many of these are used for carrying shopping home from supermarkets. Making people pay for these plastic bags would encourage them to use reusable bags.

Some plastic bags can last in the environment for up to 1,000 years before they disintegrate (break down). Plastic bags are harmful to wildlife as they can kill animals, especially in the ocean.

Also, when plastic bags are made, dangerous gases are released that pollute the atmosphere. If we use fewer plastic bags there would be less air pollution, as well as less land and water pollution.

We need to reduce the number of plastic bags in the environment. Making people pay will help to stop them using plastic bags and force them to use reusable bags for their shopping!

1. Why does the author use the question ‘Should we pay for plastic bags?’

2. Why do you think the author used the experts from ‘Clean up Australia’ in paragraph 1?

3. What are the two arguments to make people reduce using plastic bags?

4. What words does the author use in paragraph 4 which make it seem urgent?
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Suggested responses:

1. Why does the author use the question ‘Should we pay for plastic bags?’
   This question makes the reader think about their own opinion and shows this article will persuade.

2. Why do you think the author used the experts from ‘Clean up Australia’ in paragraph 1?
   Using experts from Clean up Australia adds weight to the argument – they are the people who know the impact on the environment.

3. What are the arguments to make people reduce using plastic bags?
   Plastic bags take 1000 years to disintegrate, they are harmful to animals and they release dangerous gases.

4. What words does the author use in paragraph 4 which make it seem urgent?
   Suggestions: need, will, force
# Appendix 5

## Newsflash graphic organiser

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headline:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key information:</th>
<th>Visual Representation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 6
### Responding to texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Ideas</th>
<th>This text mostly helps me to…</th>
<th>Ideas: Understand? Explain? Choose? Find out about?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What type of text is this text? How do you know?</td>
<td>Imaginative, informative or persuasive?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The main purpose of this text is to…?</td>
<td>Encourage me to…give interesting facts about…outline where…show me…</td>
<td>What genre is this text?</td>
<td>Adventure? Science-fiction? Letter? Recipe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is happening in the first paragraph?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a problem in the text? If so what is it?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Do you think the end of the text is effective? Why/why not?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>