Nonfiction Text Structure Worksheets

What is text structure?

Text structure is how a writer arranges ideas. A passage can use more than one structure. Look for the structure that best explains how **most** of its details fit together. Signal words can help, but one word does not decide the answer.

- **Description:** What is the topic like? What features or details explain it?
- **Sequence:** What happens in what order, or which step comes before the next?
- **Compare and contrast:** How are two subjects alike or different on the same point?
- **Cause and effect:** What leads to a result? How are the cause and result connected?
- **Problem and solution:** What gets in the way? What response tries to fix it?

For each passage, name the structure, fill the matching organizer, and write a sentence that connects at least two details. You can write, type, or explain your answer aloud. The section titles name the passage, not its structure.

A. The courtyard reading cart

The courtyard reading cart is a small library on wheels. Its top shelf holds shallow trays for paperbacks, with labels that readers can see without lifting a book. A clear pocket on the side displays student book picks. The lower shelf is deep enough for magazines and holds a bin for returns. A handle at each end gives staff a place to grip the cart, and two wheel locks keep it steady when students browse. Taken together, the shelves, pockets, and handles make the cart a place where readers can find and return books on their own.

1. What structure best fits the passage?

2. In the organizer, name the topic and list three features.

3. How do the trays and the lower shelf help the writer explain what the cart is like?

B. Preparing a seed tray

The garden club has a routine for planting bean seeds. First, students label the row with the bean type and the date, while the tray is still dry and easy to handle. They fill each cup with soil and use a craft stick to make a shallow hole. Next, they place a seed in each hole and cover it loosely. They mist the soil until it feels damp, not flooded. Last, they move the tray to a bright spot and note where it sits on the classroom garden chart. The chart tells the next group which tray to check.

1. What structure best fits the passage?

2. Record five stages in order. You may combine actions that belong together, such as filling the cups and making holes.

3. What happens just before misting? What is the last thing students record?

C. Two ways to borrow a book

At one school, students can borrow a book at a library desk or at a self-checkout station. Both options record the same due date. At the desk, a librarian scans the book and can help a student find a title or check a return. At the station, the student scans the book and checks the screen without waiting for a librarian. Either option works for a student who has already chosen a book. A student who needs help searching may prefer the desk, while a student who knows the routine can use the station on their own.

1. What structure best fits the passage?

2. Name one similarity and one difference. Compare both choices on a shared point, such as who scans the book or where the student gets help.

3. Why does the matching due date matter to this structure?

D. Two trays after the rain

After afternoon rain, two trays outside a classroom held the same amount of water. One tray stood in a breezy opening. The other sat behind a low wall where the air was nearly still. The next day, less water remained in the exposed tray. Moving air carried away some of the moist air just above the water, which helped more water evaporate. The wall sheltered the other tray, so the air above it moved less. In this example, the difference in airflow helped explain why one tray dried faster.

1. What is the main structure? What other structure appears briefly?

2. Fill an organizer with the chain from **moving air** to **less water in the exposed tray**.

3. Why does the writer compare the trays? Use two details to explain what the comparison shows about airflow and evaporation.

E. Making dismissal signs easier to read

During dismissal, two pickup lines meet near the gym doors. Some families could not tell which line to join because the signs used small letters and named only the teachers. Staff moved the signs to the place where the lines split. They also added large words showing the pickup group and used symbols with the labels so that each sign still made sense in black and white. Staff planned to watch the next dismissal and note where families hesitated. If families still stopped at the split, staff would try placing a second sign before the doors.

1. What is the main structure?

2. Name the problem, two changes staff made, and the evidence they planned to collect.

3. Do we know whether the changes worked? Use a detail to explain.

Mixed review: The swap shelf

At first, the class offered one shelf for swapping books. Large picture books often lay across the front, hiding smaller books behind them. Students asked about titles that were already on the shelf because they did not see them. The class tried placing an upright bin beside the shelf for large books. They added a label showing where to place each size. The class plans to track how often a reader asks about a book that is already there. The new bin is one possible fix, not proof that the problem has gone away.

1. Pick the main structure: cause and effect or problem and solution. Record two details that support your choice.

2. Rewrite the passage in two sentences so its main focus is cause and effect. Describe why readers could not find books; leave out the fix.

3. Write one clue from the original that would be too weak to decide its structure by itself. Explain why.