



CHAPTER 2

# Laying the Foundation for the Metacognitive Teaching Framework

*Powerful silence envelops the classroom as students read and try to identify the different ways they are predicting. No one has ever asked them to be this specific before. They must focus intently on their thinking. In a few weeks, there will be an excited chatter as kids volunteer to share loquaciously their prediction strategies. They will be transformed into mighty metacognitive readers—able to notice each nuance of thought as they process what they read. It isn't magic that transforms them. It is the careful planning and gentle leadership of a reflective teacher who guides them.*

## The Importance of Planning Instruction

Although you can employ strategy-based lessons in your reading block without much long-range planning, you will need to plan ahead for success if you want to use appropriate scaffolding every step of the way. Effective teachers prioritize instruction by providing students with consistency and organization (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993) and establishing procedures and routines early in the year. Furthermore, effective teachers systematically develop objectives and activities that “reflect higher-level and lower-level cognitive skills as appropriate for the content and the students” (Stronge, 2002, p. 39).

In this chapter we share sample daily, weekly, and yearly schedules for implementation and suggestions to prime students for success during the first six weeks of the school year. This chapter will also describe how to create a caring classroom environment that nurtures thoughtful discussion and metacognitive awareness.

### ***Yearly and Monthly Plan***

Although we provide a suggested yearly plan for those who wish to teach all the strategy units in a school year, by no means is this the only approach. Also keep in mind that while we highlight the strategies of predicting, questioning, visualizing, connecting, and summarizing, the Metacognitive Teaching Framework (MTF) can be used to improve the teaching of any other strategy units you wish to teach.

Take a look at Figure 8, which shows our suggested yearly plan for the MTF. Notice the school year is broken into six units of study, each lasting about six weeks. The first six weeks are spent building a community of readers and writers and teaching the learning

**FIGURE 8**  
**Sample Yearly Plan for Metacognitive Teaching Framework: Cognitive Units of Study**

Six-Week Period	Unit Focus
September–Mid-October	<p><i>Laying the Foundation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define: Self-Monitoring, metacognition</li> <li>• Identify: Strategies (names and general understanding of the five strategies)</li> <li>• Whole- and small-group lessons: Text features, genre, general text structures (narrative vs. expository)</li> <li>• Establish: Community, class rules, daily routines, R<sup>5</sup>, literature circles, writer’s workshop</li> <li>• Assess: Reading interests, habits, abilities</li> </ul> <p>Reading conference focus: Intervention (choosing the right level of text based on personal interests, extracting students who are stuck in a genre or series)</p>
Mid-October–End of November	<p><i>Prediction Unit</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define: Prediction components using tally sheets</li> <li>• Identify: Strategy use by teacher, students</li> <li>• Whole- and small-group lessons: Text features, vocabulary activities, genre, expository text structures, anticipation guides</li> <li>• Reconfirm: Purposes and processes for think-aloud and small-group work</li> <li>• Refining: R<sup>5</sup>, literature circles</li> <li>• Assess: Students self-assess and set goals for prediction at the end of this unit</li> <li>• Reading conference focus: Refining prediction goal plans, monitoring independent reading</li> </ul>
December–Mid-January	<p><i>Questioning Unit</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define: Questioning components using tally sheets</li> <li>• Identify: Strategy use by teacher, students</li> <li>• Whole- and small-group lessons: Categorizing questions, using text features to question, questioning the textbook</li> <li>• Refining: R<sup>5</sup>, literature circles</li> <li>• Assess: Students self-assess and set goals for questioning at the end of this unit</li> <li>• Reading conference focus: Checking to see if students are using prediction plans, refining questioning goal plans, monitoring independent reading</li> </ul>
Mid-January–February	<p><i>Summarizing Unit</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define: Summarizing components using tally sheets</li> <li>• Identify: Strategy use by teacher, students</li> <li>• Whole- and small-group lessons: Concept-definition sort, write a better heading, summing up by chunking and rereading, vocabulary lessons, anticipation guides</li> <li>• Refining: R<sup>5</sup>, literature circles</li> <li>• Assess: Students self-assess and set goals for summarizing at the end of this unit</li> <li>• Reading conference focus: Checking to see if students are using questioning plans, refining summarizing goal plans, monitoring independent reading</li> </ul>

*(continued)*

**FIGURE 8**  
**Sample Yearly Plan for Metacognitive Teaching Framework: Cognitive Units of Study**  
**(continued)**

Six-Week Period	Unit Focus
March–Mid-April	<p><i>Making Connections Unit</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define: Connecting components using tally sheets</li> <li>• Identify: Strategy use by teacher, students</li> <li>• Whole- and small-group lessons: Connections continuum, story map</li> <li>• Refining: R<sup>5</sup>, literature circles</li> <li>• Assess: Students self-assess and set goals for connecting at the end of this unit</li> <li>• Reading conference focus: Checking to see if students are using summarizing plans, refining connecting goal plans, monitoring independent reading</li> </ul>
Mid-April–End of May	<p><i>Visualizing Unit</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define: Visualizing components using tally sheets</li> <li>• Identify: Strategy use by teacher, students</li> <li>• Whole- and small-group lessons: Visualizing think-pair-share, visualization continuum, anticipation guide extension, character quilt, draw to remember</li> <li>• Refining: R<sup>5</sup>, literature circles</li> <li>Assess: Students self-assess and goal set for visualizing at the end of this unit</li> <li>• Reading conference focus: Checking to see if students are using connecting plans, refining visualizing goal plans, monitoring independent reading, helping students generate individual reading lists for summer</li> </ul>

structures associated with the MTF. Introduce students to the concept of metacognition at this time by having them notice how and why they clarify.

After setting the stage through the introductory unit, the order of implementation is not set in stone, but, because the prediction unit front-loads a lot of the skills and processes needed for the other units, prediction should be the first strategy unit presented. Other than that, you can differentiate the progression of units based on your students’ needs and your specific goals for instruction. Figure 9 shows a completed integrated month-by-month planning sheet, and Appendix B contains a reproducible planning sheet (see page 184) to assist you in implementation and to allow you to adapt the schedule based on your students’ needs.

### ***Daily Schedules***

The MTF addresses all areas of literacy instruction, with the exception of writer’s workshop, fluency and spelling/phonics. The first sample daily schedule shows how these things fit in with the MTF to provide a comprehensive reading program. Specific skills

**FIGURE 9**  
**MTF Integrated Month-by-Month Planning Sheet**

<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Metacognitive Focus</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Texts for Think-Aloud, Shared Reading, Read-Aloud, and Small-Group Instruction</b>	<b>Writing Project</b>
August– Mid-September	Define metacognition, self-monitoring, clarifying	Establish routines for R <sup>5</sup> , literature circles, Words Their Way, Soar to Success, writer’s workshop, common language	<i>Night in the County, The Writer’s Notebook</i> , iOpeners, basals, science and social studies texts	Personal narrative
Mid-September– End of October	Prediction, with a special focus on text structure and features	Introduce metacognitive tally sheet, prediction indicators, prediction self-assessment and goal-setting sheet	Q-and-A books, animal rescue heroes, cut-apart books, basals, science and social studies texts	Q-and-A books
November– Mid-December	Making connections	Introduce metacognitive tally sheet, making connections indicators, making connections self-assessment and goal-setting sheet	Bermuda Triangle, Donner Party, Sally Ride biography, basals, science and social studies texts	Biography of Florida explorer
January– Mid-February	Questioning	Introduce metacognitive tally sheet, questioning indicators, questioning self-assessment and goal-setting sheet	Weekly readers, student essay samples, science and social studies texts	Expository and narrative essays
Mid-February– End of March	Visualizing	Introduce metacognitive tally sheet, visualizing indicators, visualizing self-assessment and goal-setting sheet	<i>The Seventh Tower: The Fall</i> , basals, Joy chapters, science and social studies texts	Fantasy/science fiction story with common theme: We have used up one of our vital natural resources
April– Mid-May	Summarizing	Introduce metacognitive tally sheet, summarizing indicators, summarizing self-assessment and goal-setting sheet	<i>A Guide to Rocks and Gems</i> , science and social studies texts.	Whole-class reference book on rocks

like inferring, determining author’s purpose, and cause and effect are embedded within the framework, as is vocabulary development.

It should be noted that in the literacy block schedule shown in Figure 10, science and social studies are completely integrated, with the exception of an inquiry lab each Wednesday. Whole-group lessons on fluency are alternated weekly with whole-group lessons on word study. Word study is also taught in small, developmentally leveled groups on a weekly basis. Whole- and small-group lessons on metacognition are taught during the morning 10:00–10:30 and 10:30–11:15 time blocks, with some flexibility to expand either and retract the other, as the need arises.

The second daily schedule (see Figure 11) reflects a 90-minute reading block. Fluency is taught in minilessons during whole- or small-group lessons, depending on student needs. Word study is taught during small-group time. Both fluency and word study are reinforced in centers and with homework. Writer’s workshop is done later in the day. As in the daily schedule in Figure 10, the time allotted to whole-group and small-group lessons can be reconfigured as needed on a day-by-day basis.

In both models, strategy instruction with an emphasis on metacognition is woven throughout the instructional block, sometimes through clearly articulated planning and sometimes through unscheduled teachable moments.

**FIGURE 10**  
**Sample Daily Schedule A: Literacy Block**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:45 a.m.–9:15 a.m. Writer’s Workshop					
9:15 a.m.–9:30 a.m. Fluency/Word Study					
9:30 a.m.–10:00 a.m. Choice Reading	R <sup>5</sup>	Literature Circles	Literature Circles	R <sup>5</sup>	R <sup>5</sup>
10:00 a.m.–10:30 a.m. Whole-Group Lesson					
10:30 a.m.–11:15 a.m. Small-Group Lessons					
10:30 a.m.–11:15 a.m. Literacy Centers	Fluency	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Words Their Way (Word Study)	Make-Up Day
Special Areas: Art, Music, P.E., Computers					
Noon–12:20 p.m. Read-Aloud					

**FIGURE 11**  
**90-Minute Reading Block Daily Schedule**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:45 a.m.–10:15 a.m. Whole-Group Lesson					
10:15 a.m.–10:45 a.m. Small-Group Lessons					
10:15 a.m.–10:45 a.m. Literacy Centers	Fluency	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Words Their Way (Word Study)	Make-Up Day
10:45 a.m.–11:15 a.m. Choice Reading	R <sup>5</sup>	Literature Circles	Literature Circles	R <sup>5</sup>	R <sup>5</sup>
Special Areas: Art, Music, P.E., Computers					
Noon–12:20 p.m. Read-Aloud					

## Introductory Unit—A Week-by-Week Guide to Establishing the MTF

In the next section we explicitly describe the six-week introductory unit, which you can use to build your students’ comfort with the MTF. Activities are organized by week. We indicate where activities with corresponding lesson plans appear within the chapter.

### *Activities for Week 1*

- Establish an emotionally safe, discussion-rich environment through cooperative learning and other activities (class meetings, interview a friend, etc.).
- Have students work in cooperative groups to develop class rules.
- Set aside an unstructured time for students to read independently so you can observe and note students who can and cannot engage with a text, and identify fake or disengaged readers (see page 28).
- Assess reading comprehension, metacognitive awareness, and students’ ability to self-assess and set goals (see page 29).
- Assess students’ interests and reading preferences using an inventory (see page 29).
- Begin a read-aloud.
- Brainstorm what it means to have a discussion, practice discussing a topic of interest (this is elaborated on in chapter 3).

The first week of school is challenging enough, but these activities will help you begin to get to know your students and will help you establish the norms and expectations you have for your classroom.

## ***Identifying Fake or Disengaged Readers***

Before you launch Read, Relax, Reflect, Respond, Rap (R<sup>5</sup>) you want to find those readers in your classroom who are having difficulty engaging. In addition, you want to begin talking to your students about why independent reading is important and to say that you take this time seriously.

**Activity.** During the first week observe your students reading. The Silent Reading Behaviors Observation Checklist (see Appendix B, page 185) is used to note off-task behaviors students are exhibiting during independent reading. Once you identify a student not reading, write down the student’s name on the form. This checklist can help as you identify those readers who have difficulty engaging. Use the columns to the right to tally each off-task behavior for each student. The three categories we focus on during this time are “out of seat,” “looking around, flipping pages, not reading,” and “talking.” Use the notes section for any specific observations. Total the number of off-task behaviors to give you a quick snapshot of each student’s ability to engage.

After one session you will quickly begin to identify fake or disengaged readers. And no matter how hard it is for you to delay interventions, wait a few sessions before you say something to each student. When you have collected enough data from observations you might want to try a series of questions with your whole class such as these:

- What do you think I was doing while you were reading?
- If I were looking for kids not reading what would I notice?

When we have asked these questions of our students, we have been amazed to learn that not only did they know what we were doing, they could also identify what behaviors we were looking for. Ironically, many of the disengaged readers were the students who told us what they were doing that constituted disengagement. The italicized text below shows a few of these students’ responses:

Teacher: What do you think I was doing while you were reading?

Students: *Talking.*

*Watching us to see what we were doing.*

*Maybe thinking about a video you could create for teachers to decide who was reading and who was not reading.*

Teacher: If I were looking for kids not reading what would I notice?

Students: *Just flipping pages of the book.*

*Not looking at the book, just looking around.*

*Talking.*

*Staring at the book.*

Students: *Walking around the classroom.*  
*Getting different books.*  
*Just looking at the pictures.*

**Wrapping it up.** Kids are smart. They know what a disengaged reader is, and yet many of them still cannot or do not engage in silent reading time. A follow-up question could be, Who had trouble focusing? And although not many students will be honest right then, you will be surprised by some of the hands that go up. Some students have gotten so good at faking it that in your observations they appeared to be reading yet they self-report they have a hard time engaging. Chapter 4 offers you further support on working with fake or disengaged readers.

## ***Assessing Students' Comprehension and Metacognitive Awareness***

During the first few weeks of school you will want to determine your students' independent and instructional reading levels. This assessment can take more than a week but in order to match students to text they can read, this is crucial (Allington, 2006). Knowing students' comprehension level will also help you determine texts for small-group instruction.

**Activity.** The instrument we use to determine levels is the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), grades 4–8, published by Pearson Learning (Beaver & Carter, 2000). This assessment gives us individual data on wide reading, self-assessment and goal-setting, fluency, prediction, summary writing, literal comprehension, interpretation, reflection, and metacognitive awareness. But, any informal reading inventory can help you determine a student's reading level. We have developed an Attitude and Metacognitive Survey (see Appendix B, page 186) to assist those of you who do not have access to the DRA 4–8. Depending upon students' writing skills you may want to do this as an interview to ensure that their responses were not cut short because they did not want to write.

**Wrapping it up.** This is something you will want to use at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year in order to evaluate your effectiveness and determine student growth in these areas. After establishing students' reading levels and the degree to which they metacognate you will next want to find out about their interests.

## ***Inventorizing to Learn Interests and Find Out What Students Know***

Matching children to books is critical to having a successful independent reading block. We developed an Interest and Wide Reading Inventory (Clausen-Grace & Kelley, 2007) to help us guide students in choosing appropriate books based on their interests (see Figure 12 and Appendix B, page 187, for a reproducible). The survey assesses students' outside interests, reading tastes, awareness of genre, and the breadth of their reading experiences, and it

**FIGURE 12**  
Interest and Wide Reading Inventory—Student Sample

1. If you could be anything in the world when you grow up, what would you be? Why? A vet. I like animals a lot.
2. What are your hobbies? Soccer
3. If you could travel anywhere at all, where would you go? California
4. What do you like to do with your friends? Play with dogs
5. What is your favorite television show? Why? Fear Factor, looks fun.
6. What is your favorite animal? Horse
7. What do you do when you have time to do what you want? Phone
8. What subject or subjects do you like best in school? Reading
9. What is the title of the last book you read? Black Beauty
10. What are you reading right now? Mary Kate and Ashley
11. Put an X in the box that tells how you feel about reading each of the following:

Type of Text	I like it a lot.	I like it a little.	I don't like it.	I haven't tried it yet but would like to.	I don't know what it is.
Magazines			X		
Biography			X		
Science		X			
History			X		
Historical Fiction			X		
Adventure					
Romance					X
Sports	X				
Comic Books			X		
Mysteries			X		
Science Fiction/Fantasy		X			
Realistic Fiction		X			
Horror	X				
Poetry			X		
Short Stories		X			
Picture Books	X				

should be given during the first week of school, or at least sometime at the beginning of the school year. The survey helps you bond and connect with your students, and their responses can help you plan appropriate minilessons related to genre study. Many students have misconceptions about genre. There can be a heavy emphasis on narrative text in the primary grades, and some children are not aware that other types of books exist (Duke, 2004). This survey gives you some idea of what students know and don't know about different genres. Furthermore, it can guide you in selecting books for students to read.

McCall's teacher used her inventory to make book suggestions and to broaden her reading experience. Because McCall likes animals a lot and had previously read *Black Beauty*, her teacher's first suggestion was *Dog to the Rescue II: Seventeen More True Tales of Dog Heroism* (Sanderson, 1995). Next, her teacher suggested a nonfiction

book on horses. Another suggestion was *A Dog's Life: Autobiography of a Stray* (Martin, 2005). In this way, her teacher was able to gently move McCall into short stories, non-fiction, and a fictionalized autobiography, expanding her genre circle with topics that appealed to her.

## ***Activities for Week 2***

- Set up writer's workshop or the writing program you use.
- Define metacognition and introduce the metacognitive flags (see Figure 2, page 8) and the strategies they list: predicting, connecting, questioning, visualizing, and summarizing.
- Teach the structure and set expectations for R<sup>5</sup> and begin implementation (see chapter 4 for more specific guidance).
- Introduce think-aloud by explicitly telling students what you are doing (modeling your thinking) and what you want them to get from it.
- Use think-aloud to introduce the concept of clarifying when reading (see below).
- Have students notice and share when they clarify, such as when they pause to repair meaning when it breaks down.

During week 2 you will be introducing a lot of vocabulary terms. This is just the beginning of the students' journey through the MTF, but this may be the most important week as they begin to realize they are metacognitive or they need to be metacognitive.

## ***Introducing the Concept of Clarifying Using Think-Aloud***

The relationship between metacognition and clarifying is significant. One of the reasons we want students to develop metacognitive awareness is so they will have a repertoire of strategies they can use when they need to clarify something they are reading and that they will actually use those strategies to clear up confusions. Many disengaged readers are not aware that they (not the teacher) must do something when they do not understand a text. They will either keep reading and ignore their confusions or appeal to the teacher to help them. The goal when teaching clarification is to get students to contemplate and then correct confusions while they are reading (Beers, 2003).

**Activity.** One way to introduce students to the concept of clarifying is through think-aloud, and it's especially important to familiarize students with think-aloud because this is a structure used frequently in the MTF. You will want to identify a text to read and intentionally identify with sticky notes or highlighting tape placed in the text where you will share your confusions out loud. Consider demonstrating the following:

- Rereading
- Reading ahead
- Using text features or picture supports

- Breaking down a word into parts
- Accessing background knowledge

These demonstrations should be done so students can see the text. You may want to use a big book, an overhead projector, or provide students with a copy of the text you will be sharing. The transcription below shows the teacher introducing clarifying through think-aloud using the big book *Wild Weather* (Berger, 1993). It is early in the year and her class is still developing the stamina for a teacher-directed lesson, so she has selected only two pages of text for today's lesson:

Teacher: I am going to model my thinking when I read something and I need to clarify. Your responsibility is to know what it means to clarify and to notice today when you do it. So notice when you are reading if you have to go back and clarify. Who knows what it means to clarify?

Student: To predict.

Teacher: It does not exactly mean that...can you share what you were thinking?

Student: Like if a storm was just about over I would clarify.

Teacher: OK, you are talking about modifying your prediction, or confirming your prediction. What does clarifying mean in general?

Student: When you don't know a word and you figure it out.

Teacher: Yes, that is one thing you might want to clear up, a word. So if you do not know how to pronounce a word or you do not know what a word means you want to figure that out. What else?

Student: Sometimes it can mean predicting.

Teacher: Not exactly. Let me go ahead and tell you. And after I tell you I want you to be able to tell it back to me. I want you to listen. Clarifying is when something doesn't make sense and you pause to make it make sense. You can clarify in a conversation if you feel like you do not understand what someone is saying or you think you understand them but it doesn't make sense. Or you can clarify when you read. Today we are focusing on clarifying when we read. [Begins reading the text] "Hurricanes are hug, swirling storms that can form over the ocean." I am going to stop there. That does not make sense. Hug. I am going to reread that word. Oh, I see, h-u-g-e, I didn't see the e. Now I need to go back and read the entire sentence. It says, "Hurricanes are huge, swirling storms that can form over the ocean. The entire hurricane may cover an area as big as the state of Georgia."

Teacher: Wait! I have been to Georgia. That doesn't make sense to me, it is a big state. I need to reread. [She reads the text again] Yes, it says that and now I see a picture. It does look really big. What did I do?

Student: You reread and looked at the picture.

- Teacher: [Continues to read] “When such storms form in the Pacific Ocean, they are called typhoons.” I’ve never heard of a “typhoon.” I need look at the word more closely. *Typhoons*. I am going to break this word into chunks: “oons” like in the word *loon* or *moon*; “ty” like in the word *type*, and “ph,” like *phone*, the “ph” makes an “f” sound. Typhoons. I’ve heard of typhoons and I have been to Typhoon Lagoon. That makes sense now. [She finishes reading the text] OK, how did I clarify today?
- Student: You fixed words.
- Teacher: What else?
- Student: You always reread.
- Teacher: Yes, when you fix up your mistake or confusion you need to reread the part where you had a problem. Did I do anything else?
- Student: You used pictures and what you know about Typhoon Lagoon.
- Teacher: Today when you read during R<sup>5</sup> I want you to notice when you need to clarify and what you do to clarify. This is what you will discuss with your partner after reading.

**Wrapping it up.** After the think-aloud, have students read and practice noticing when they clarify. Next have them share with a partner while you walk around the room to listen in on conversations. If you notice students did not clarify while reading or recognize when they clarified, you will need to do some follow-up lessons on clarifying, including creating a class chart with how to clarify something when reading. Some classes will catch on very quickly, while others will require more patience and repeated lessons. It is best not to begin a strategy unit until your students understand why and how to clarify.

### ***Activities for Week 3***

- Continue writer’s workshop, read-aloud, and R<sup>5</sup>.
- Have students notice and share when they clarify during R<sup>5</sup> and direct reading instruction (both whole and small group).
- Establish literacy centers and expectations for all during small-group work.
- Review the difference between fiction and nonfiction texts.
- Teach students to distinguish between narrative and expository genres (see page 34).
- Begin noticing and identifying nonfiction text features (see page 35).

Now that students have been introduced to the vocabulary of metacognition and they have begun to explore when and how they clarify when reading, it is time to add the language of literacy to their repertoire; specifically you will explore genre and text features.

The following activities will provide a strong foundation for your students as they progress into each strategy unit. You will use the scaffolding model of the MTF with each activity, begin the whole-group lesson with guided practice, and then do a similar activity using a different text in small, leveled groups. Some groups may need more than one session before being ready to move into peer-supported use and monitored independence.

## ***Distinguishing Between Narrative and Expository Texts***

Most children are taught to distinguish between fiction and nonfiction early in their school careers. As kids progress through school those genre lessons expand to include fairy tales, folk tales, realistic fiction, mystery, biography, and informational text. All of these are valuable lessons, but children need to know more about the various ways these genres are organized. In chapter 5, we'll really dig into the organizational characteristics of the various texts through expository text investigations. In this particular lesson, however, you will lay the groundwork by helping students understand the two major forms of writing they will first encounter in school: narrative and expository.

It is important to remember that the terms *narrative* and *expository* refer to the format and other organizational characteristics of text, not to whether a piece is fiction or nonfiction. Narrative texts refer to stories, or a set of events and experiences (Harris & Hodges, 1995) written to entertain or provide a literary experience. They can be true or untrue and, typically, have a beginning, middle, and end. They are always meant to be read from beginning to end. Expository texts are those that present information, intended to inform, explain, describe, or persuade (Harris & Hodges, 1995). Again they can be true or untrue, but the organizational format often enables the reader to find specific information without reading the entire text. They rely heavily on text features and can have multiple jump-in points, or places where the reader can enter the text to ascertain information. While many expository texts also have a beginning, middle, and end, these take the form of an introduction, the promised information, and sometimes a conclusion. Others, such as dictionaries or encyclopedias, are meant to be accessed as needed, with a limited context.

**Activity.** For this lesson you need a stack of texts that span both narrative and expository structures, as well as fiction and nonfiction. Well-known stories such as *The Three Little Pigs* and *Little Red Riding Hood* are excellent choices for modeling narrative text structure. For expository text you can pull alphabet books, question-and-answer books, newspapers, and just about any Dorling Kindersley (DK) publication. Make sure your stacks include nonfiction narratives, such as biographies, and fictional expository texts, such as *The Dragonology Handbook: A Practical Course in Dragons* (Drake, 2005) or the *Disney Princess Essential Guide* (Bray-Moffatt, 2003). After defining *narrative* and *expository* and posting the definitions on chart paper or the chalkboard, show students examples of each type of text. Focus on the difference in format, not content.

After sharing some examples of narrative and expository texts, put students in groups and give each group a few narrative and expository titles. Have groups flip through each book to determine whether it is narrative or expository. Students can di-

vide titles into two stacks (narrative and expository) or they can place a sticky note on the text and write whether it is narrative or expository. Be sure to walk around, as students might have some questions and disagreements at this point.

**Wrapping it up.** Have groups share each title, whether they determined it was narrative or expository, and why. Let the other groups comment and give a thumbs-up or thumbs-down to indicate whether they agree or disagree. Once the class has agreed on where a title fits, have a student write the title under the appropriate heading on the class chart. Next, ask students to describe the characteristics of each type of book. Summarize for them by pointing out that narrative books tend to have different characteristics than expository books.

Use this structure in small groups for kids who need extra support. Be sure to allow students access to these titles after the lesson, as you have already sneakily introduced a collection of books they might want to read.

### ***Noticing and Identifying Nonfiction Text Features***

So many of the texts we ask our older learners to read rely heavily on text features to support comprehension, yet many students either ignore text features entirely or skim over without ever noticing what the features contribute to the main idea of a piece (Spencer, 2003). If we want kids to be wide readers we must teach them how to read a variety of text types. Start the process here with an introductory lesson on text features.

This week you have reviewed the difference between fiction and nonfiction with your students and helped them further distinguish between the narrative and expository structures these two types of texts take. Remind your students that expository texts have many more graphic elements such as pictures and captions, cross-sections, tables, timelines, inset photos, and maps, and show them examples of these. It is not necessary to show an example of every possible text feature—they'll soon begin asking you to define a wide variety of features they encounter.

**Activity.** Group students into pairs, and give each pair a Text Feature Hunt handout (see Figure 13 and Appendix B, page 188) and two different expository texts such as a science or social studies textbook, a trade book, or periodical such as *Weekly Reader*. Have the partners hunt through each text to find an example of the various features, then record the page number where they found each feature. They need to record only one or two examples for each. Be sure to circulate to help pairs identify what they find.

**Wrapping it up.** Ask pairs to share some of the features they found and ask if students have questions about any of the features. Invite students to share something they learned from one of the text features. Because this is the first lesson on features, you do not need to go into great depth here. The focus is on getting students to notice and recognize text features. We will get more in depth in subsequent lessons. At the end of the lesson, challenge students to notice text features in all they read. Use this structure in small, guided-reading groups this week. It will give the kids more practice and help you see where they might need help.

**FIGURE 13**  
**Text Feature Hunt—Student Sample**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date 5/3/04

Directions: Using the texts you have been given, identify which text features your books have and which text features they do not have. Place a "no" in a box if the text feature is not in the book. Write a page number if the book has the text feature. You need to give only one page number for each text feature. For example, if there are several photos in a book just put one of the page numbers (where the photo appears) in the box.

Title of Text	Table of Contents	Page Numbers	Pictures/Captions	Cutaways/Cross Sections	Maps	Diagrams	Glossary	Boldface	Index
Peculiar Plants	#1	#1-21	#3	No	No	#13	#20	#74	Back cover #21
Scientists at Work	#1	#1-21	#2	No	No	No	#20	#2	Back cover #21

### *Activities for Week 4*

- Continue writer’s workshop, read-aloud, and R<sup>5</sup>.
- Create an interactive text feature wall (see below).
- Broaden lessons on text features to include using them to aid comprehension (previewing, predicting, and learning from text features) (see page 38).
- Begin small-group work (guided reading) to help students better understand what has been taught in think-aloud and other whole-group lessons.

### *Creating an Interactive Text Feature Wall*

As students become more familiar with text features, they will begin to see them everywhere they look—and they will want to show others the interesting and unique features they find. The interactive text feature wall gives students a forum for sharing their finds and exposes them to new text features. Once the categories are established, it becomes a low-maintenance independent literacy center that serves as a visual support to students as they begin to write their own nonfiction.

**Activity.** Tell students that they are going to make a large mural of all the different types of text features. Have them brainstorm an exhaustive list of all of the features they know. You may want to let them flip through a variety of texts to jog their memories. As students share, record each feature on a sentence strip.

**FIGURE 14**  
**Interactive Text Feature Wall**



Once they have run out of ideas, ask students which features will take up the most room on the chart. The amount of space needed is influenced by both how common the feature is and how much space it takes up. For example, pictures and captions are very commonly found in a variety of texts, and they can be relatively large so the section for that heading would need to be big. Although italic print is common in certain types of texts, it isn't as widely used and it doesn't take up much space so the section for italics would be smaller.

After the group has decided which headings need the most room, make a chart (the bigger, the better) with boxes drawn for each type of text feature (see Figure 14). You can tape the sentence-strip headings at the top of each box.

Provide a stack of magazines, student newspapers, and other consumable print sources along with scissors, glue sticks, and tape. If you have access to a scanner, let kids scan pages from their textbooks to be used. Instruct students to search for various features and then cut them out and affix them to the mural. This center can stay in place for at least a few weeks, but display it for as long thereafter as you like—kids will refer to it throughout the year for support as they use more text features in their own nonfiction writing.

**Wrapping it up.** As students place text features on the wall, they will often seek verification or clarification from classmates or from you. Your role at this point is just to help them clear up any confusion and to provide encouragement.

## ***Previewing, Predicting, and Learning From Text Features***

Last week you awakened your students to the world of text features around them. It is likely that they are excitedly raising their hands or coming up to you to share interesting features they have found as they read. This is a good start, but we don't want students to get stuck in the identifying stage. We want to quickly move them into reading and using text features to support comprehension. In this learning sequence, students start on the cover of a book or periodical and read each feature, then pause to summarize what they learned from reading the feature. These summaries will help students make strong predictions about the content they will read.

**Activity.** Use a shared nonfiction text to model this strategy through think-aloud. With a copy of the Previewing, Predicting, and Learning From Text Features worksheet (see Figure 15 and Appendix B, page 189) on the overhead projector, write the text's title in the appropriate space. Next, explain that the title usually tells us what a text is about and write that in the column headed "What this text feature does." In the column headed "What I learned from reading this feature," you will write something like "Based on the title, I think this text will be about..." Continue through the first few pages, including the table of contents, to model how the learning structure works.

Now have students work in pairs using the Previewing, Predicting, and Learning From Text Features worksheet to preview a nonfiction text. They need only to look through a few pages to get the idea. Make sure you walk around and help clear up any confusion students may have as they work. It is not uncommon for kids to mistakenly assume the second and third columns are asking for the same information, so be sure to monitor.

**Wrapping it up.** After pairs complete their work, pull everyone back together for a whole-group share. Go through the features students recorded and what they learned from each. Next, ask what they believe this section of text will be about. Point out that they have already read and thought about nearly half of the selection, just by reading the text features. Allow students to read the section of text they previewed, then discuss as a whole group to confirm, refine, or reject predictions they made.

Be sure to take this learning structure to small groups and use again where you can closely monitor and guide. Some groups may need to use it a couple of times.

## ***Activities for Week 5***

- Continue writer's workshop, read-aloud, and R<sup>5</sup>.
- Introduce the text feature walk structure (see page 40).
- Begin formal literature circles training (see chapter 3 for further guidance).
- Continue to add to the interactive text feature wall.

FIGURE 15  
 Previewing, Predicting, and Learning From Text Features—  
 Student Sample

Text Feature & Page	What does the text feature do?	What I learned from reading the text feature...
Bold #6	The word is important/glossary	forest is important
Sub title #6	Tells what it is about	It tells us about the forest.
Photo and caption #6	Tells what the picture is.	Ponderosa pines are in the forest.
Label diagram #6	Tells parts of a picture.	It tells the <sup>forest</sup> layers in the g.c.
Picture and caption #7	Tells what the picture is.	flowers in the forest.
bold #8	Tells d important word.	Shelter is important.
Photo and caption #8,9	Tells what a picture is.	A Jay and deer are in the forest.
picture and caption #10,11,12,13	Tells what a picture is.	horses, cactus, flowers, mouse, Snake, Sheep live in the Desert.

Text Feature & Page	What does the text feature do?	What I learned from reading the text feature...
Bold #10,11	important words/glossary	desert, moisture and evaporates.
Label diagram #10	Tells parts of the picture	Shows desert layer
Sub heading #10	Tells what it is about	Tells about the desert.

## ***Text Feature Walk***

Just as a primary teacher uses a picture walk to preview and predict a story with students, so should teachers of older kids use the text feature walk to help students set a purpose for what they will read. If students get in the habit of previewing their selection's text features before they read the main body of text, they will automatically obtain background information, including important vocabulary. Once proficient, students will use this structure before they read during content area studies as well as literature circles, textbook circles, and R<sup>s</sup>.

The text feature walk can be an extremely powerful structure for English-language learners (ELL) if you strategically pair students of varying levels together. Text that may have been inaccessible to an ELL student can become accessible because of the rich discussion that occurs during the text feature walk.

**Activity.** You may want to have a big book or transparencies of the text you are using in this think-aloud so that you can point to the features you are referring to as you model. Begin as you did with the last lesson by reading the title and looking at the cover to make predictions. Next, read the back cover and predict/confirm/revise what the text is about. Continue this process with the table of contents and first few pages. Let students jump in and help you predict as they are ready, but be sure not to overdo this lesson by covering too much text. You simply want students to understand how a text feature walk works.

Have students work in pairs to do a text feature walk. Point out that the goal is not only to preview, but also to discuss any background knowledge they may have about the topics they see in the text features. Have students walk through the front and back cover, table of contents, and a small section of text. If you are using a vocabulary-rich and feature-rich text, such as a science textbook, it is enough to have them walk through just a few pages. Roam the room to monitor students' conversations and clear up confusions.

You don't need to have students read the body of the text on this day—if time or student focus does not permit, let them read it the next day. This will make the reading go more quickly and you will have provided a lot of support to your lower readers, which will make it easier for them to read the text.

**Wrapping it up.** Bring students back for a whole-group sharing session. Ask if they had any interesting discussions about the text and what they learned about the topic from the activity. Ask them to estimate how much of the information in the text they think they read during the text feature walk.

Continue to use this structure in your small-reading groups for a few weeks. After that, have students use it with peers during literature circles and textbook circles. Make sure you continue to monitor and help polish this teaching tool. Students will need a few reminders and minilessons to help them refine the process and get the most out of it. Your time is worth it—of all the lessons introduced in the past few weeks, this one has the most potential to support you students long after they leave your classroom.

## ***Activities for Week 6***

Wow! You have been busy establishing rules and procedures, getting to know your students, and laying the foundation for the MTF. Take a week to polish the rough spots on the following structures, which should be in place: writer’s workshop, read-aloud, think-aloud, R<sup>5</sup>, literature circles, small-group reading, and independent literacy centers. And take a moment to celebrate—the most difficult work is behind you!

## **Final Thoughts**

Through unit 1, laying the foundation, you have introduced and begun to implement most of the structures in the MTF. You have established routines for success and have engaged students in many lessons that will give them the background knowledge to be successful in the strategy units. The first six weeks take a lot of energy and planning, but the payoff is well worth your effort: Students are transformed from passive readers into active readers who willingly and skillfully discuss what they have read and how they read it.

Chapter 3 describes how to promote discussion throughout the school day, especially during literature circles and textbook circles.

