



Tools for Determining Importance

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BEFORE READING

- Scan the text, notice text features and structure
- Use background knowledge
- Make predictions
- Set a purpose for reading



DURING READING

- Look for a main idea statement
- Look for repeated words or phrases
- Use text features:
 - Table of Contents
 - Titles, headings and subheadings
 - Font (**colored**, italics, **bold**)
 - Graphics (e.g. photos, diagrams, maps, etc.)
 - Captions and labels
 - Definitions and pronunciation guide
- Chunk the text
- Use text structure



AFTER READING

- Reread, discuss and identify main ideas





Look for a Main Idea Statement

- Main ideas can be directly stated in the text or inferred.
- “Baumann (1986) found that only about 15% of paragraphs in adult expository material have the topic sentence in the initial position. He also found that only 30% of the paragraphs have the main idea explicitly stated anywhere in the paragraph. These findings strongly suggest that we must teach students to overcome the lack of an explicitly stated main idea.”

(Zwiers, 2010, p. 36)





Look for a Main Idea Statement

- When students don't encounter an explicit main idea in the first sentence, they form a guess about the main idea of the passage and then check later sentences against this guess.”
(Kissner, 2006, p. 42)
- When main ideas are implicit, readers rely on other “tools” to help them formulate and check their main idea inferences.





Look for Repeated Words or Phrases

Important information is often repeated. Good readers look for repeated words or phrases that carry similar meaning. If authors are repeating ideas or concepts in various ways, then likely that information is important.





Use Text Features

- Table of Contents
- Titles, headings, and subheadings
- Font (**colored**, *italics*, **bold**)
- Graphics (e.g., photos, diagrams, maps, timelines, etc.)
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- Definitions and pronunciation guide





Chunk the Text

“...readers who are unaware of text structure do not approach text with any particular plan of action. Consequently, they tend to retrieve information from the text in a seemingly random way. Students aware of text structure on the other hand, tend to “chunk” or organize the text as they read.”

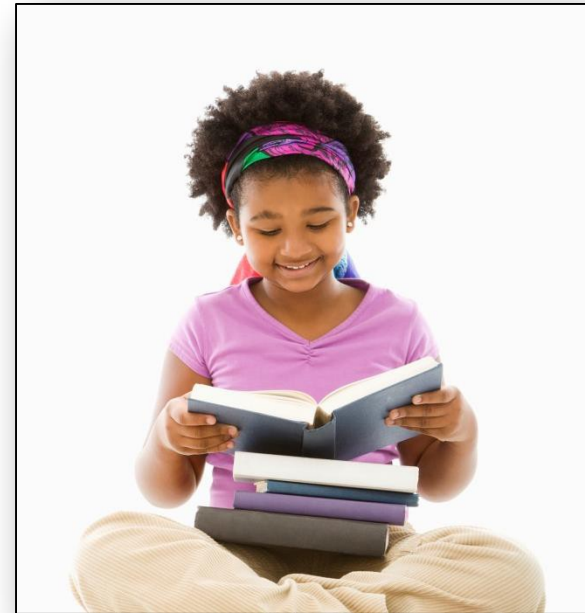
(Snow, 2002, p.40)





Five Main Text Structures

- Descriptive
- Sequential/Chronological
- Cause and Effect
- Compare and Contrast
- Problem and Solution





Descriptive Text Structure

- Descriptive texts are written to describe an object, person, place, event or idea.
- The topic is described by listing or explaining its features or characteristics; often examples are provided.
- Descriptive writing is filled with details; some details are interesting and some details are important. Just because a detail is interesting doesn't make it most important.
- The main idea in descriptive text is may be implicitly stated.
- Creating mental images while reading descriptive text helps to more effectively identify the main idea.

(Kissner, 2006, p. 56-57)





Signs of Descriptive Text Structure

- Specific characteristics or features are described or explained (size, shape, location, color, etc.).
- Descriptive adjectives are used throughout the text.
- Details are provided to help the reader visualize the topic.
- Examples are often provided (for instance, such as, an example, to illustrate, to demonstrate).
- The topic word or a synonym for the topic is often repeated.





Descriptive Text Structure

Guiding Questions

- **Topic:** What specific topic, person, idea, or thing is being described or explained? (One-two words.)
- **Important Details:** How is the topic being described or explained? (What is it, what does it look like, what does it do, what happens, etc.)
- **Main Idea:** What features or characteristics are important to remember or understand about the topic being described? (One sentence or less.)
- **Summary:** What are the main ideas and important details that are necessary to include? How will you state them in your own words following the structure of the text? (As concisely as possible.)





Descriptive Text Structure Using a Graphic Organizer

Descriptive Text Organizer				
Title:		Topic:		
Important Details:	Important Details:	Important Details:	Important Details:	
Main Idea:	Main Idea:	Main Idea:	Main Idea:	
Summary:				

Descriptive Texts

Descriptive texts are written to describe an object, person, place, event or idea.

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Modeling With Think-Alouds (Step 5)


Ecosystem Changes

Slow Changes

An ecosystem usually has *stability*, or balance. There are many changes occurring all the time, but they cancel each other out. For example, organisms live, die, and decompose, returning the materials they were made of to the soil. New plants grow and use the materials. Water evaporates from a pond, but rain adds more water. Because these changes balance each other, they do not cause the overall ecosystem to change.

Over time, however, changes in climate, rate of erosion, and populations can cause big changes in an ecosystem. New communities can form within it. **Succession** (suhk-sesh-uhn) is the process that gradually changes an existing ecosystem into another ecosystem.

Succession can change an area that has little life into one that has many living things. For example, during Earth's ice ages, widespread glaciers scooped large holes in rock. When the climate got warmer, the ice melted. Water was left in the holes forming ponds. As in the investigation, at first the ponds had no soil, and no plants grew in them.



▲ When this pond first formed, nothing lived in it. As soil dropped to the bottom and wind blew seeds and spores into the pond, many organisms began to live there.

▲ Over time, more soil was washed into the pond. It became shallower and narrower.

FIND OUT

- how ecosystems change
- how changes affect ecosystems

VOCABULARY

succession

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Text Organizer

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Important Details:	Important Details:
Main Idea:	Main Idea:

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Informational Text

aps, etc.)

Houston

9-10





What changes
occur in an
ecosystem?

Ecosystem Changes

Slow Changes

An ecosystem usually has *stability*, or balance. There are many changes occurring all the time, but they cancel each other out.

For example, organisms live, materials they were made of the materials. Water evaporates, water. Because these changes cause the overall ecosystem to

Over time, however, changes in populations can cause big changes in communities can form within it. the process that gradually changes another ecosystem.

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Ecosystem Changes

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An ecosystem usually has *stability*, or balance. There are many changes occurring all the time, but they cancel each other out. For example, organisms live, die, and decompose, returning the materials they were made of to the soil. New plants grow and use the materials. Water evaporates from a pond, but rain adds more water. Because these changes balance each other, they do not cause the overall ecosystem to change.

Over time, however, changes in climate, rate of erosion, and populations can cause big changes in an ecosystem. New communities can form within it. **Succession** (suhk•SESH•uhn) is the process that gradually changes an existing ecosystem into another ecosystem.

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Descriptive Text

Topic Ecosystem Changes

Important Details

Small

Changes balance each other out

- Organisms live/die
- Evaporation/rain

They cause no change in the overall ecosystem

Important Details

Big changes affect the ecosystem

- Erosion
- Population change

Succession is the process of an ecosystem changing into a different ecosystem

Main Idea

~~Small changes constantly occur in the ecosystem but these have no affect on the ecosystem.~~

Small changes in an ecosystem balance out causing no affect to the overall ecosystem.

Main Idea

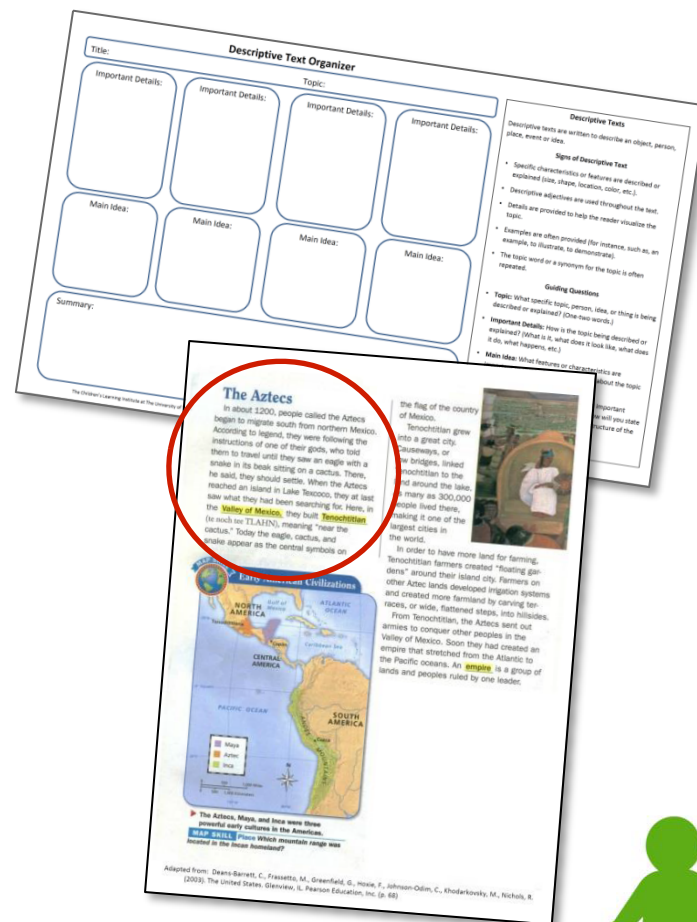
Succession occurs when big changes cause an ecosystem to change into a different ecosystem.



Planning Your Think-Aloud (Step 5)

Your Turn:

- Read paragraph one of *The Aztecs*.
- On a blank graphic organizer, record the **topic, important details, and main idea**.
- Think about how you will explain your thinking to the class.
- Practice your think-aloud with your partner.





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Reread and Discuss to Clarify and Identify Main Ideas in the Text

- Reread to clarify and confirm the main idea.
- Discuss to consolidate understanding and remember the text better.





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