Include Text and Graphic Features

1. Focus

Explain Including Text and Graphic Features

Ask: If I showed you text, and only text, about the brain, you’d probably get bored pretty quickly, right? What might authors do to make a text about the brain more interesting? Encourage students to discuss text and graphic features that they like to see in informational reports.

Say: Most informational reports include some type of text or graphic features. Text features change the text and how it looks. These include bold letters, letters that are in various colors, words in italics, bullets, and section or chapter heads. Graphic features help explain the text in the form of charts, graphs, labeled diagrams, illustrations, and photographs. Authors include text and graphic features to make their writing more interesting and to provide additional information to help readers understand the text.

Model Including Text and Graphic Features

Show students examples of nonfiction texts with text and graphic features. Include the mentor text “The Amazing Human Brain.” Use the interactive whiteboard resources if available. Discuss text features.

Say: The title of this text is in two different colors and font sizes. The words human brain stand out because these are the key words that pertain to this text. The color, style, and size of the font attract my attention right away. The introduction is in a yellow font, while the rest of the text is in a black font against a blue background. I see several words in the text that are bold. This tells me that these words are important content words and they can be found in the glossary. Let’s look at some of the different ways text features are presented in these nonfiction books.

Explore the different examples of text features in the sample texts with students. Then talk about graphic features.

Say: The writer wanted to provide her readers with visual information that supported her discussion of a neuron, or brain cell, so she included this labeled diagram. On pages 8 and 9, the writer is describing the three sections of the brain. Again she uses the graphic feature of a labeled diagram to help readers visually understand the information. Then, to summarize the main points of her information on page 8, she provides a table so that readers can have the information in a table. This writer knows how to help her readers understand her message by using graphic features. Let’s look at some other types of graphic features that the writers of these books have used. Explore the examples of graphic features in the sample texts with students.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn differences between text features and graphic features in nonfiction text.
• Learn what different types of text and graphic features are.
• Generate ideas for text and graphic features with a partner or group.
• Discuss how to apply the strategies to their own informational reports.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Mentor text: “The Amazing Human Brain” from The Brain
• Selection of nonfiction books
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

Gather nonfiction books that contain a variety of text features and graphic features.
2. Rehearse

Practice Including Text and Graphic Features

Invite students to look at their informational reports and come up with an idea for a text feature and an idea for a graphic feature.

Share and Discuss

Invite students to share their ideas for text and graphic features. As a class, discuss whether each of the ideas will provide support for readers.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that authors include text and graphic features in their informational reports to help support the text and provide additional information to their readers. Keep this in mind as you choose which text and graphic features to include in your informational reports.

Encourage students to add text and graphic features when they prepare to publish their own informational reports. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to share their ideas for text and graphic features they will add to their informational reports.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Work one on one with beginning ELs to take a piece of their writing and help them add text features and a graphic feature.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the practice activity.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: graphic arts/artistas gráficas; informational/informativo(a).