Analyze the Features of an Informational Report

1. Focus

Explain Genre Features

Say: Each genre has typical key features. These features help authors write effectively. And they serve as a sort of map for readers because then readers know what to expect from the genre. Today we’re going to identify and analyze the key features you can expect to find in informational reports.

Build a Class Genre Features Anchor Chart

Display a blank chart like the one shown here on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Also distribute copies of the chart to students on BLM 1. Work with students to record features of informational reports in the left column. (The right side of the chart will be completed later in the lesson.) If necessary, use the following prompts to guide students:
- How does a good informational report begin?
- How should a writer organize ideas so that readers can follow them easily?
- In addition to the text itself, what other features might a report include?
- What must the writer do regarding facts in an informational report?
- What kinds of sources can a writer use so that readers hear from people with great knowledge or direct experiences related to a report topic?
- What can a report writer include to let readers learn different opinions?
- How should an informational report end?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informational Report Features</th>
<th>Examples from the Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong lead that hooks readers</td>
<td>page 22: Writer tells story of a stroke victim; it grabs readers’ attention and makes them want to find out more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer uses a logical organization of concepts</td>
<td>page 23: Writer explains concepts that were introduced earlier in the stories of Luis Alvarez and Marge Chan. pages 24–25: First the writer describes ways to protect the brain. Then she tells ways to make the brain healthier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic features (photographs, labeled images) that support the text</td>
<td>page 24: Illustration of brain cross sections allows readers to compare a healthy brain to a brain affected by Alzheimer’s. pages 24–25: Photographs support text by showing one way to protect brain (helmet) and one healthy food (strawberries).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer researches topic and checks facts to provide accurate information</td>
<td>page 26: Writer quotes the Franklin Institute, “a leading science learning center” to show facts are supported by research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May use primary sources</td>
<td>page 26: Writer includes quote from psychology professor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text contains multiple perspectives</td>
<td>page 26: Writer discusses two views on brain stimulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong nonfiction ending that makes readers think</td>
<td>page 27: Writer leaves readers with something to think about: what we might learn about brains in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Informational Report Features Anchor Chart (BLM 1)
Read Aloud an Informational Report

Before you read, point out the right-hand column on your chart and on students’ BLMs. Explain that you are going to read aloud (or reread) an informational report and that students should listen carefully. Explain that after the reading, students will work in small groups to complete the chart by recording examples of each genre feature from the text. Read aloud (or reread) “Keeping Your Brain Healthy and Strong” from *The Brain*. Note: You may wish to project the text using the interactive whiteboard resources so students can follow along and see the graphic features for themselves.

2. Rehearse

Analyze the Mentor Text

Form small groups of students to complete the second column of the graphic organizer on BLM 1. If you are using the interactive whiteboard resources, invite students to revisit parts of the text at the whiteboard as they look for the examples they need.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Share Ideas

Bring students together and invite volunteers to share the examples they found in the text. Record their findings on your anchor chart. Post this anchor chart for students to refer to throughout the unit as they think about the common informational report features they should include in their reports.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Remember that informational reports have key features that readers expect to see. These features include a strong beginning and ending, facts that have been checked for accuracy, concepts presented in a logical order, and graphics that support the text.

As students continue to brainstorm report ideas, encourage them to think about how they will use informational report features in their drafts.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite two or three students who have completed their brainstorming to share their ideas with the class.

Strategies to Support ELs

**Beginning**

Pair beginning ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group “Analyze the Mentor Text” activity. Keep in mind that they will not be able to contribute many ideas orally. You will want to work with them individually to reinforce concepts while other students write independently. Encourage students to share their ideas about the brain through words, gestures, or drawings. Use self-stick notes to label drawings with appropriate content vocabulary.

**Intermediate**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group activity. Write the following simple sentence frames on chart paper and model how students can use them to contribute ideas in the group. For example:

- An informational report begins ______.
- An informational report has ______.
- Writers get their facts from ______.

**Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group activity.