

LESSON PLAN

Understanding text structure

Reading · Year 4 · 60 min

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Aligns to The New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho. English, Phase 2 (Years 4 to 6), Year 4 teaching sequence.
Reading: understanding how text structure shapes meaning in informational texts.

[Te Mātaiaho: English 4](#)**LEARNING INTENTION**

Identify and use text structure to understand how an informational text is organised

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can name at least two common text structures (for example, problem and solution, compare and contrast).
- I can find signal words that show which structure a writer is using.
- I can explain how the structure helps me understand what the text is about.
- I can match a short passage to its text structure and give a reason why.

Lesson Structure

HOOK

- Two short passages on the board. One compares kererū and tūi. One describes a problem with predators and a solution.
- What is different about how these two texts are set up?
- Take 60 seconds. Talk to your partner about what you notice.

TEACHING

- Text structure is the skeleton of a piece of writing.
- Writers choose a structure to match their purpose.
- Two structures today: compare and contrast, problem and solution.
- Signal words are clues. However and but signal compare and contrast. Because and so signal problem and solution.

PRACTICE

- New short passage on the board about kākā losing forest habitat.
- Which structure is this? Find one signal word as your evidence.
- Thumbs up for problem and solution, thumbs sideways for not sure.

CLOSURE

- Name one signal word from today's reading.
- Which structure did the kākā passage use? How do you know?
- Success criteria check: thumbs up if you can match a passage to its structure.

Differentiated Groups

EMERGING

TASK

- Sort signal word cards onto a two-column mat.
- Match each signal word to its structure name.
- Read one short passage aloud with the teacher.

MATERIALS

Signal word cards (8 per student, pre-cut), two-column sorting mat labelled "Compare and Contrast" and "Problem and Solution" (1 per student), 3 short passages printed at Year 3 reading level (1 set per student), pencils

TEACHER ROLE

- Sit with this group for the first 10 minutes.
- Read the first passage together. Find one signal word.
- Check each student can name the matching structure.

DEVELOPING

TASK

- Read two short passages independently.
- Circle signal words. Write the structure name beside each.
- Write one sentence explaining how the structure helps your understanding.

MATERIALS

Two printed passages at Year 4 level (1 set per student), highlighters or coloured pencils, response sheet with sentence starter "This text uses ... structure because ..." (1 per student), pencils

TEACHER ROLE

- Check in briefly at the start. Clarify the task.
- Return at the 10-minute mark to read responses.
- Note who struggles to name signal words for follow-up.

EXTENDING

TASK

- Read two unfamiliar passages. Name the structure and signal words.
- Write a new short passage using one structure of your choice.
- Swap with a partner. Can they identify your structure?

MATERIALS

Two printed passages at Year 5 to 6 level (1 set per student), blank writing paper (2 sheets per student), signal word reference card (1 per student), pencils

TEACHER ROLE

- Give a brief task orientation. Then release the group.
- Check in at the 12-minute mark. Read one written passage.
- Ask: how did your structure choice shape what you wrote?

ASSESSMENT NOTES

- Criteria 1 and 2: can students name both structures and point to a signal word?
- Criterion 3: listen for students explaining how structure aids understanding.
- Criterion 4: check written responses match the passage to the correct structure.
- Emerging students who cannot sort signal words need follow-up tomorrow.

RESOURCES

[YouTube](#) [understanding text structure video](#)

[Pinterest](#) [understanding text structure activities](#)

RELIEF TEACHER NOTES

- All printed materials are in the labelled reading group tray on the side table.
- Signal word cards for the emerging group are pre-cut and in a small zip bag.
- The emerging group needs the most support. Sit with them first.
- The whole-class passages from the board are also printed in the tray.