

Lesson Plan: The Junior Journalist's Guide to Text Structures

Materials Needed:

- Computer with internet access
- Printer
- A selection of online or print newspapers/magazines (e.g., local newspaper, Sports Illustrated for Kids, National Geographic Kids, science magazines)
- Notebook or journal for Aira Marie
- Colored pens or highlighters (at least 3 different colors)
- Scissors and glue stick
- Large construction paper or a blank template for a mini-newspaper
- "Journalist's Toolkit" Graphic Organizer (can be pre-printed or drawn during the lesson)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Aira Marie will be able to:

1. **(Cognitive) Analyze** journalistic texts (opinion, sports, and science articles) to identify their text structures and explain how these structures clarify the author's purpose.
2. **(Psychomotor) Create** a mini-publication featuring three short articles on a single topic, with each article demonstrating a different text structure (news, feature, editorial).
3. **(Affective) Express appreciation** for a writer's craft by explaining how the choice of text structure can influence a reader's feelings and perspective on a topic.

Lesson Procedure

Part 1: Explore (15 minutes) - The Headline Detective

Goal: To spark curiosity about how different articles are written for different purposes.

Activity Steps:

1. **Present the Case:** Tell Aira Marie, "Today, you're a Headline Detective! Your mission is to look at these headlines and predict what kind of story is waiting for us."
2. **Examine the Clues:** Show her 3-5 different headlines collected from various sources. Make sure they clearly represent news, features, and opinion editorials. For example:
 - **News:** "Local Team Wins Championship Game 5-2" or "Scientists Discover Water on Mars"
 - **Feature:** "The Long Road to Victory: An Interview with the Team Captain" or "A Day in the Life of a Mars Rover"
 - **Opinion:** "Why Our Team Deserves More Funding" or "We Must Invest More in Space Exploration Now"
3. **Make a Prediction:** For each headline, ask Aira Marie:
 - "What do you think this article will be about?"
 - "What is the writer trying to do? Inform you with facts? Tell you an interesting story? Or convince you of their opinion?"
 - "What words in the headline gave you that clue?"

4. **Opening Discussion:** Conclude by saying, "Great detective work! You've noticed that writers use different styles for different reasons. Today, we're going to uncover the secret structures they use to make their writing clear and powerful."

Part 2: Firm-Up (30 minutes) - Building the Journalist's Toolkit

Goal: To explicitly teach the different text structures and their purposes.

Activity Steps:

1. **Introduce the Toolkit:** On a large piece of paper or in her notebook, create a graphic organizer called the "Journalist's Toolkit." It will have three sections: News Report, Feature Article, and Opinion Editorial.
2. **Define Each Tool:** Go through each text type one by one, filling in the toolkit together.
 - **News Report (The Inverted Pyramid):**
 - **Purpose:** To inform quickly and efficiently.
 - **Structure:** The most important facts (Who, What, Where, When, Why) go right at the top. Less important details follow. Draw an upside-down triangle to illustrate this.
 - **Tone:** Objective, factual, and to the point.
 - **Feature Article (The Storyteller):**
 - **Purpose:** To entertain, explore a topic in-depth, and connect with the reader on an emotional level.
 - **Structure:** Often starts with a hook (an anecdote or interesting scene), develops the topic with details, quotes, and descriptions, and has a thoughtful conclusion.
 - **Tone:** More personal, descriptive, and creative.
 - **Opinion Editorial (The Persuader):**
 - **Purpose:** To persuade the reader to agree with a specific viewpoint.
 - **Structure:** Starts with a strong claim or thesis, supports it with evidence (facts, examples, expert opinions), addresses counterarguments, and ends with a call to action or strong concluding statement.
 - **Tone:** Subjective, passionate, and argumentative.
3. **Structure Sort Challenge:** Give Aira Marie a few short, pre-selected articles (e.g., a sports game summary, a profile of an athlete, and an editorial about new team rules). Ask her to read each one and sort it into the correct category in her toolkit, explaining her reasoning based on the structure and purpose.

Part 3: Deepen (45 minutes) - Article Autopsy

Goal: To apply the new knowledge by analyzing real-world articles on a topic of personal interest.

Activity Steps:

1. **Choose a Topic:** Ask Aira Marie to pick one topic she is really interested in (e.g., her favorite video game, a recent space launch, a particular sport, or a new technology).
2. **Gather the Specimens:** Together, find three articles online about that single topic: one news report, one feature, and one opinion piece. Print them out.
3. **Perform the Autopsy:** Give her three different colored highlighters. Her task is to perform an "autopsy" on each article to find its structural parts.
 - For the **News Report**, highlight the "Who, What, Where, When, Why" in one color.
 - For the **Feature Article**, highlight descriptive language, anecdotes, and direct quotes in a second color.

- For the **Opinion Editorial**, highlight the author's main claim in a third color, and underline the evidence they use to support it.
4. **File the Report:** After analyzing the articles, have her write a short "Autopsy Report" in her journal. For each article, she should answer:
- "What was the author's main purpose?"
 - "What text structure did they use to achieve it?"
 - "How did reading this article make you **feel** or **think** about the topic? Did the news report make you feel informed? Did the feature make you feel curious? Did the opinion piece make you agree or disagree?" (This connects to the affective objective).
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Part 4: Transfer (60 minutes) - Editor-in-Chief for a Day!

Goal: To demonstrate mastery by creating original content using the different text structures.

Activity Steps:

1. **The Assignment:** Announce, "Congratulations, Aira Marie! You've been promoted to Editor-in-Chief. Your final assignment is to create your own one-page newspaper (or blog post) about any topic you choose!"
2. **The Content Plan:** Explain that her publication must include three short pieces about her chosen topic, each written in a different style:
 - **A News Flash:** A short, factual paragraph that quickly reports the most important information (the inverted pyramid).
 - **A Feature Story:** Two or three paragraphs that tell a more personal or in-depth story about the topic, using descriptive language.
 - **An Opinion Column:** A paragraph where she argues her opinion on the topic, stating her claim and giving one or two reasons to support it.
3. **Create and Design:** Aira Marie now gets to write her pieces. Encourage her to have fun with it! She can use the construction paper, scissors, and glue to lay out her newspaper, give it a title, draw pictures, and make it look official. This hands-on, creative process is key to the psychomotor objective.
4. **The Editor's Presentation (Assessment):** When she is finished, have her present her work. Ask her to read her three pieces aloud and explain why she chose each structure for each piece of information. Ask her, "How does your feature story change the reader's experience compared to your news flash?" This final reflection will solidify her understanding and meet the affective objective.