

# What Are Informational Texts?

Informational texts include the following media examples: news; magazines; advertisements/commercials; documentaries; and movies. Are you up-to-speed on how to teach with and about them? Having your students analyze and deconstruct these types of texts is increasingly important and relevant in a 21st century classroom. In addition, you will find more resources on my [Close Reading of Media Texts](#) web page. [Contact me](#) for information about professional development workshops.

Here are the pages on the Media Literacy Clearinghouse which deal with informational texts:

[Journalism/News](#); [Advertising](#); [Commercials](#); [Visual literacy](#); [Motion Pictures](#); [Documentaries](#)

## Informational Text Features

*Informational text features help the reader more easily navigate the text and often provide additional information to help students comprehend the content.*

Print Features <i>Guide readers through the patterns of organization</i>		Organizational Aids <i>Help readers find important information</i>		Graphic Aids <i>Represent information in some specific way</i>	
Feature	Helps the Reader...	Feature	Helps the Reader...	Feature	Helps the Reader...
Table of Contents	Identify key topics in the book and the order they are presented in	Bold Print	By signaling the word is important and/or found in the glossary	Diagrams	Understand a more detailed or simplified view of information.
Index	See everything in the text listed alphabetically, with page numbers	Colored Print	Understand the word is important	Flow Diagram	Understand a complex sequence of movements or actions
Glossary	Define words contained in the text	Italics	Understand the word is important	Sketches	Visualize an important concept
Preface	Set a purpose for reading, get an overview of the content	Bullets	Emphasize key points/concepts	Comparisons	Understand the size of one thing by comparing it to the size of something familiar
Pronunciation Guide	Say the words	Titles	Locate different categories in the text	Graphs	Understand relativity between elements
Appendix	By offering additional information	Headings	Identify topics throughout the book as they skim and scan	Figures	Combine text information with graphical aids
<b>Illustrations</b> <i>Expand the meaning of the text</i>		Subheadings	Navigate through sections of text	Maps	Understand where things are in the world
Feature	Helps the Reader...	Captions	Understand a picture or photograph	Charts/Tables	Summarize/Compare information
Photos	Understand exactly what something looks like	Labels	Identify a picture or photograph and/or its parts	Cross-Sections	Understand something by looking at it from the inside
Drawings	Understand what something could or might have looked like	Sidebars	Gather additional or explanatory information.	Overlays	Understand additional information
Magnification	See details in something small			Time-lines	Understand the sequence of time

Source: <http://t4.jordan.k12.ut.us/cbl/images/litfac/binfo.pdf>

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“Informational Texts” by Dr. Brenda Parkes,

(Note: hyperlink embedded below added by media educator Frank Baker)

To become effective readers of informational texts, students need to understand:

- the features that identify nonfiction writing;
- the selective way nonfiction is read according to the reader’s purpose;
- the ways organizational features such as indexes, content pages, glossaries and headings help the reader access the text;
- the specialized language and language structures used to convey information;
- how [visual literacy](#) such as photographs, diagrams, maps and charts combine with written text to convey information;
- how information in captions and labels combines with running text to convey information; and
- strategies for using prior knowledge and experience to engage in inquiry.

Source: <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/parents/resources/makingthegrade/2004fall.pdf>

Other recommendations:

[Features of Informational Texts](#)

[Using Text Features to Locate Essential Information from Texts](#)

[Informational Text Features](#)

[Talking About Visual Texts With Students](#)

