WHAT YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE SAYING . . .

"In *Text Structures From Nonfiction Picture Books*, Kayla Briseño and Gretchen Bernabei unlock one of the secrets to teaching students to write well: make text structures visible and invite students to try them. This practical book is jam-packed with lively, high-engagement lessons that use beautiful and powerful picture books as a launchpad for excellent, well-crafted writing."

—Carl Anderson, writing consultant K–12, and author of *Teaching Fantasy Writing: Lessons That Inspire Student Engagement and Creativity K–6* and *How to Become a Better Writing Teacher*, Brooklyn, NY

"Finally!! Teachers finally have more tools at their fingertips to tackle nonfiction. *Text Structures From Nonfiction Picture Books* is a must-have resource for teachers. The book's approach seamlessly integrates reading and writing instruction into a cohesive framework and should be a staple in teachers' lessons."

—Lesley Sallee, 5th-grade ELA, San Antonio Academy

"My ninth-graders had so much fun working with these texts. Bringing picture books into my secondary classroom allows us to examine craft moves and the organization of less complex texts as a way to prepare students to do more complex tasks. Using these lessons allows me to see who gets it and who needs more support before we move on. The Craft Moves prompted them to write insightfully and the Kernel Essays guided them to write structured yet personal pieces. What a powerful tool for high schoolers!"

—Amy Watkins, English teacher, Novi, Michigan

"Briseño and Bernabei eschew the sage-on-the-page approach and invite educators of all grade levels to choose our own adventure in this compendium of non-fiction picture books and strategies. They provide structure and then encourage us to change their lessons to meet classroom needs. By empowering educators to take ownership of lessons, Briseño and Bernabei remind us to empower students to take ownership of their writing."

—Kathrine Sullivan, English teacher, Essex High School, Essex Jct., VT

"A good professional book should feel fresh and inspiring—this one is both! I learned about an array of nonfiction picture books, snappy approaches to jump starting essays, and clear, organized lessons to help students grow. Right from the first page the book gave me a good check-in with the principles of excellent literacy instruction at any level."

—Brett Vogelsinger, English teacher and author of *Poetry Pauses: Teaching With Poems to Elevate Student Writing in All Genres*, Sellersville, PA

"Not only does this book introduce its readers to powerful nonfiction picture books, but it also offers practical and engaging strategies to help our students better understand the abundant craft opportunities available in the world of nonfiction. This book invites us all to engage more deeply and intentionally with nonfiction picture books so that we can better understand our world and add our own stories to the rich tapestry of experience that nonfiction helps us weave."

—Erin Vogler, English teacher and literacy coach, Keshequa Central School, NY

"Teach nonfiction like never before! Kayla Briseño and Gretchen Bernabei have packed *Text Structures From Nonfiction Picture Books* with innovative techniques that transform picture books into springboards for quick writes, kernel essays, and theme exploration—all while uncovering the craft and structure of informational texts. With this resource in hand, your students will be inspired to write alongside talented creators while deepening their understanding and sparking curiosity about the world around them."

—Maria Walther, traveling teacher, literacy consultant,
and author of More *Ramped-Up Read Alouds:*
Building Knowledge and Boosting Comprehension, Aurora IL

TEXT STRUCTURES FROM NONFICTION PICTURE BOOKS

Dedications

*For the loves of my life, Stephen and Zinnia. You are my treasures, and I love you a bushel and a peck. And for Gran—*ana behebik khollis*, and I miss you terribly.*

—Kayla

For the Pumphrey girls, especially Mary Lois.

—Gretchen

TEXT STRUCTURES FROM NONFICTION PICTURE BOOKS

Lessons to Ease Students Into Text Analysis, Reading Response, and Writing With Craft

KAYLA BRISEÑO and GRETCHEN BERNABEI

Foreword by Kate Messner

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Visit the companion website at
https://companion.corwin.com/courses/TS-nonfictionpicturebooks
for downloadable resources.

Note From the Publisher: The authors have provided video and web content throughout the book that is available to you through QR (quick response) codes. To read a QR code, you must have a smartphone or tablet with a camera. We recommend that you download a QR code reader app that is made specifically for your phone or tablet brand.

Videos may also be accessed at
https://companion.corwin.com/courses/TS-nonfictionpicturebooks.

Reference Chart

For a visual list of the books, visit https://bookshop.org/lists/coming-soon-text-structures-from-nonfiction-picture-books.

BOOKS ABOUT PEOPLE						
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT CHALLENGE**
1	*Building an Orchestra of Hope*	Carmen Oliver, with illustrations by Luisa Uribe	**A Problem Solver's Journey**	trash, landfills, Paraguay, South America, the environment, recycling, music, orchestras, musical instruments, music programs, people working in landfills, village life, subsistence living	hope, determination, problem solving, dreaming for a better life, resourcefulness, caring for others, trash to treasure, teaching others, the power of music, lifting others, poverty, hope for the future, the power of performance	**Noun + Verb Pitchfork** **Catalog** **Anaphork (Anaphora + Pitchfork)**
2	*Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah*	Laurie Ann Thompson, with illustrations by Sean Qualls	**Outpowering a Challenge**	Ghana, West Africa, cyclists, bicycles, bike riding, Challenged Athletes Foundation, people with health conditions or impairments	perseverance, resilience, tough love, supporting your family, working hard, overcoming obstacles, poverty, journey, raising awareness, breaking stereotypes, ability, strength, hope	**Anaphork (Anaphora + Pitchfork)** **Anaphork With an Antithetwist**

BOOKS ABOUT PEOPLE						
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT CHALLENGE**
3	*Finding My Dance*	Ria Thundercloud, with illustrations by Kalila J. Fuller	**Doing What You Love**	memoirs, Ria Thundercloud, Indigenous dancers, Indigenous women, jingle dance, jingle dress, Native Americans, "powwow trail," dance, powwow circle, travel, dance teams, professional dancers	finding your place, identity, language, culture, tribes, ceremony, cultural inheritance, using art for expression, overcoming difficulties, following your passion, passing down traditions, commitment to celebration of heritage, becoming who you were meant to be, freedom through the arts	**Isn't/Is Simile** **Ba-Da-Bing** **Antithesis** **Translanguaging**
4	*Fish for Jimmy*	Katie Yamasaki	**Coping With a Bad Time**	World War II, Japanese Americans, Japanese internment, bombing of Pearl Harbor, imprisonment, internment camps, family separation, war, fish, food, American citizenship	doing for others, survival, taking a risk, broken spirit, protecting your family	**Polysyndeton** **Ba-Da-Bing**
5	*Free as a Bird: The Story of Malala*	Lina Maslo	**A Hero's Journey**	Malala Yousafzai, Pakistan, girls' education, Middle East, heroes, role models, parent–child relationships, education, terrorism, authoritarianism, propaganda, human rights	courage, struggle, violence, persistence, oppression, suppression, human rights, gender inequality, equality, speaking up, standing for what is right	**Anaphork (Anaphora + Pitchfork)** **Personified Reasons**

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BOOKS ABOUT PEOPLE						
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT CHALLENGE**
6	*Hidden Hope: How a Toy and a Hero Saved Lives During the Holocaust*	Elisa Boxer, with illustrations by Amy June Bates	**Risky Solution**	World War II, the Holocaust, Nazis, German occupation of France, Jews, Jews in hiding, false papers, the French Resistance, anti-Semitism, young heroes	hidden identity, fear, resistance, bravery, risking one's life for others, saving lives, caring for others, taking risks, overthrowing evil, heroism, resilience, freedom	**Exclamations + Absolutes + Fragments** **Onomatopoeia + Simple Sentence + Participial Phrases**
7	*Joan Procter, Dragon Doctor*	Patricia Valdez, with illustrations by Felicita Sala	**A Curiosity That Changed the World**	reptiles, Komodo dragons, science, scientists, female scientists, zoos, national history museum, observation, animal study, lifelong passion, habitats, war, wartime conditions, how war changes the world	lifelong passion, following your interests/passions, being different, being yourself, pursuing your passion, sharing knowledge, world-changing	**Alliterative Pitchfork** **Antithesis** **Myth Explosion**
8	*José Feeds the World: How a Famous Chef Feeds Millions of People in Need Around the World*	David Unger, with illustrations by Marta Álvarez Miguéns	**A Hero's Journey**	food, chefs, cooking, food activists, humanitarianism, disaster relief, natural disasters, Haiti earthquake, Hurricane Maria (Puerto Rico), Hurricane Dorian (Bahamas), Fire Volcano (Guatemala), Navajo Nation, COVID-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine, World Central Kitchen	community, caring for others, volunteering, finding a need and meeting it, feeding people, acts of service, the power of food to nourish and heal, relief, humanitarian aid, persistence, problem solving, sharing your passion, people in crisis, not hesitating to help	**Anaphork (Anaphora + Pitchfork)** **Translanguaging** **Antithesis**

BOOKS ABOUT PEOPLE						
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT CHALLENGE**
9	*Magic Ramen: The Story of Momofuku Ando*	Andrea Wang, with illustrations by Kana Urbanowicz	**Cooking Up a New Idea**	ramen, inventions, inventors, Japan, poverty, post–World War II, Japanese food, experiments, nutrition, cooking, processes	innovation, feeding the hungry, meeting the needs of others, observation, experimentation, trial and error, perseverance, serving others, helping, balance, food insecurity	**Translanguaging** **Anaphork (Anaphora + Pitchfork)** **When–What Pattern**
10	*Martin & Anne: The Kindred Spirits of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Anne Frank*	Nancy Churnin, with illustrations by Yevgenia Nayberg	**A Powerful Life**	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Anne Frank, World War II, Holocaust, Hitler, Jews, Jews in hiding, civil rights movement, racism, history, historical figures, segregation, Rosa Parks, the "I Have a Dream" speech, Gandhi, nonviolent protest, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs)	kindness, equality, the power of words, the power of writing, inequality, prejudice, anti-Semitism, mistreatment, hate (the effects of), human rights, inspiring others, speaking out against hate, racism, genocide, using one's voice in the face of injustice, character	**Different–Different–Alike Pattern**
11	*Mr. Crum's Potato Predicament*	Anne Renaud, with illustrations by Felicita Sala	**Cooking Up a New Idea**	food, potatoes, potato chips, cooking, restaurants, inventions, inventors, African American inventors, Native American inventors, George "Crum" Speck	trial and error, creating something new, persistence, creativity, unexpected discoveries, pushing through setbacks, failure leads to success	**Alliterative Pitchfork** **Polysyndeton** **Anaphork (Anaphora + Pitchfork)**

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BOOKS ABOUT PEOPLE						
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT CHALLENGE**
12	*One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia*	Miranda Paul, with illustrations by Elizabeth Zunon	**A Growing Problem and a Solution**	Gambia, West Africa, women creators, women entrepreneurs, plastic, trash, recycling, reusing, plastic bags, litter, harm to animals, the dangers of litter	seeing a need and meeting it, caring for one's community, ingenuity, community, creativity, working together, resourcefulness, entrepreneurship, taking action as a group	**Personification** **Translanguaging** **Beg-to-Differ Sentence Pattern Personification** **Translanguaging** **Beg-to-Differ Sentence Pattern**
13	*Queen of Leaves: The Story of Botanist Ynes Mexia*	Stephen Briseño, with illustrations by Isabel Muñoz	**Discovering a Life Purpose**	women in STEM, female scientists, the environment, science, botany, plants, plant specimens, specimen collecting, wax palm, endangered plants, nature, Mexican Americans, travel, California, Texas, Mexico, Ecuador, Alaska, Brazil, Colombia	curiosity, exploration, nature's beauty, appreciating nature, adventure, blooming later in life, finding your passion, forging a new path, preservation, study, risk-taking	**Personification** **Extended Simile + a Pitchforked Description** **Metaphor** **Antithesis**
14	*Sweet Justice: Georgia Gilmore and the Montgomery Bus Boycott*	Mara Rockliff, with illustrations by R. Gregory Christie	**Making a Change**	Georgia Gilmore, Montgomery bus boycott, Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., incarceration, civil rights movement, segregation, protests, Montgomery, Alabama	racial inequality, justice, equality, racism, taking a stand, oppression, working together, change, persistence, teamwork, courage, nonviolent protest	**Pitchforked Metaphor**

BOOKS ABOUT PEOPLE						
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT CHALLENGE**
15	*Swimming With Sharks: The Daring Discoveries of Eugenie Clark*	Heather Lang, with illustrations by Jordi Solano	**A Curiosity That Changed the World**	sharks, marine life, scientists, zoology, oceanography, ichthyology, ocean fish, women in science	passion, discovery, exploration, curiosity, study, misunderstood creatures, misconceptions, advocacy	**Antithesis** **Catalog** **Refrain** **Anaphork (anaphora + pitchfork)**
16	*Tamales for Christmas*	Stephen Briseño, with illustrations by Sonia Sánchez	**Accomplishing a Big Task**	tamales, Christmas, cooking, Mexican Americans, grandparents, homemade food	family/*familia*, Hispanic culture, serving others, helping others, making sacrifices, hard work, working together, generosity, resourcefulness, tenacity	**Metaphor With a Pitchforked Description** **Varied Refrain** **AAAWWUBBIS Opener**
17	*The Boo-Boos That Changed the World: A True Story About an Accidental Invention (Really!)*	Barry Wittenstein, with illustrations by Chris Hsu	**An Inventor and the Invention**	Band-Aids, inventions, inventors, accidents, problem and solution, first aid, Boy Scouts, injuries, World War II	trial and error, problem solving, ideas becoming popular, meeting a need	**Hyphenated Adjectives** **Geographic Pitchfork**
18	*The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*	William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer, with illustrations by Elizabeth Zunon	**An Inventor and the Invention**	William Kamkwamba, wind power, electricity, Malawi, Africa, farming, drought, famine, village life, science, engineering, inventions, inventors, windmills, water, water scarcity, food scarcity	resourcefulness, seeing a need and meeting it, serving your community, poverty, helping others, creativity, determination, hard work, challenge, problem solving, wonder, hunger, perseverance, impact, self-teaching	**Ba-Da-Boom** **More-Than Metaphor** **Beg-to-Differ Sentence Pattern**

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BOOKS ABOUT PEOPLE						
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT CHALLENGE**
19	*The Crayon Man: The True Story of the Invention of Crayola Crayons*	Natascha Biebow, with illustrations by Steven Salerno	**An Inventor and the Invention**	crayons, Crayola, color, inventors, inventions, experiments	history, discovery, invention, ingenuity, curiosity, creativity, seeing a need and meeting it, listening to others, problem solving, seeing beyond	**Microscope Sentence** **Hypophora** **Hyphenated Adjectives**
20	*Whoosh!: Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions*	Chris Barton, with illustrations by Don Tate	**Doing What You Love**	inventions, inventors, African American inventors, failed inventions, accidental inventions, scientists, science fairs, engineers, NASA, Super Soaker, toy companies, building things, STEM, technology	failure, success, grit, ingenuity, tenacity, curiosity, trial and error, problem solving, facing challenges, setbacks, creating, perseverance, overcoming obstacles, pursuing passion	**Shaka-Laka-Boom** **Pitchforked Verbs** **Wasn't–Wasn't–Was Pattern**
	BOOKS ABOUT PLACES					
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT LESSON**
21	*Caves*	Nell Cross Beckerman, with illustrations by Kalen Chock	**All About a Place**	caves, ecosystems, speleology, spelunkers, limestone, rock formations, stalactites, stalagmites, crystals, fossils, underwater cave systems, bats, cave paintings, bioluminescence, lava, volcanic rock	exploration, curiosity, wonders of the earth, discovery	**Noun + Verb Pitchfork**
22	*I Am Made of Mountains: An Ode to National Parks—the Landscapes of Us*	Alexandra S. D. Hinrichs, with illustrations by Vivian Mineker	**A Place Personified**	national parks, geography, the United States, nature, landforms, landscapes, weather, wildlife, plants, animals, forests, oceans	exploration, nature's beauty, appreciating nature, travel	**Personification Rhyming** **Couplets**

	BOOKS ABOUT PLACES					
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT LESSON**
23	*Over and Under the Rainforest*	Kate Messner, with illustrations by Christopher Silas Neal	**Birdwalk**	rainforests, rainforest canopy, hiking, trees, rivers, flora and fauna, ecosystem, wildlife, Costa Rica	exploration, exploring nature, discovery, the wonder of nature, being in the wild, appreciating nature, outdoor adventure, the natural world	**Alliteration** **Strong Verbs** **Hyphenated Adjectives** **Directional Echoes**
24	*The Brilliant Deep: Rebuilding the World's Coral Reefs*	Kate Messner, with illustrations by Matthew Forsythe	**Saving Something You Love**	coral reefs, conservation, environmental science, scientists, coral reef restoration, Ken Nedimyer, Coral Restoration Foundation, pioneers, oceans, sea life, Florida Keys, scuba, diving, rock farms, coral colonies, experiments, climate change	wonder of nature, human ingenuity, caring for the earth, problem solving, observation, regrowth, hope, volunteering, making a difference, reversing climate change	**Anaphork (Anaphora + Pitchfork)** **Metaphor** **Echo Ending**
25	*The Floating Field: How a Group of Thai Boys Built Their Own Soccer Field*	Scott Riley, with illustrations by Nguyen Quang and Kim Lien	**An Inventor and the Invention**	Thailand, Koh Panyee, village life, island life, high tide, low tide, full moon, sandbar, buildings on stilts, soccer, sports, 1986 World Cup, soccer teams, engineering, STEM, history	overcoming obstacles, overcoming the odds, working together, resourcefulness, ingenuity, solving a problem, creative solutions, determination, grit, passion, teamwork, community, going after your dreams, forging new ground, blazing a new path	**Two-Word Sentences** **Pitchforked Participial Phrases** **Directional Echoes**

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	BOOKS ABOUT PLACES					
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT LESSON**
26	*The Secret Kingdom: Nek Chand, a Changing India, and a Hidden World of Art*	Barb Rosenstock, with illustrations by Claire A. Nivola	**A Problem Solver's Journey**	Nek Chand, India, the partition of India and Pakistan, art, folk art, recycling, nature, secret gardens, art gardens, sculptures, mosaics, the Rock Garden of Chandigarh, reusing trash, governments, gardens, village life, city life, reconstruction, building	creativity, imagination, ingenuity, beautifying your environment, trash to treasure, perseverance, working hard, grit, overcoming obstacles, change, progress, going against the grain, breaking the rules, activism, speaking up for others, sharing your gift with others	**Microscope Sentence** **Anaphora + Participles**
	BOOKS ABOUT THINGS					
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT LESSON**
27	*A Garden in Your Belly: Meet the Microbes in Your Gut*	Masha D'yans	**Zooming In on a System**	gut health, human body, stomach, intestines, microbiome, microorganisms, microbes, taking care of one's body, healthy food, junk food, digestion, mood	health, your incredible body, taking care of yourself, going outside, nourishment, cause and effect	**Prepositional Phrase Catalog** **Metaphor**
28	*Blue: A History of the Color as Deep as the Sea and as Wide as the Sky*	Nana Ekua Brew-Hammond, with illustrations by Daniel Minter	**Origin Story**	colors, blue, the history of color, slavery, myths, farming, textiles, royalty, idioms	history, deception, difficult past, journey, suffering, discovery, invention	**Parallel Paradox**

	BOOKS ABOUT THINGS					
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT LESSON**
29	*Branches of Hope: The 9/11 Survivor Tree*	Ann Magee, with illustrations by Nicole Wong	**A Memory**	9/11, trees, 9/11 Survivor Tree, 9/11 memorial, New York, terrorist attacks, Ground Zero, Twin Towers, first responders, seasons	survival, memorials, hope, life after destruction, resilience, the healing power of nature, devastation, rebuilding, hope amidst hardship, recovery, how nature depends on people, community, coming together through tragedy, working together	**Personification** **Sensory Details**
30	*Fire Shapes the World*	Joanna Cooke, with illustrations by Cornelia Li and Diāna Renžina	**The Whole Story of Something**	fire, wildfires, adaptation, plants, animals, campfires, earth's history, the environment	destruction, creation, change, effects on our planet, survival, power, rebirth	**Participles and Participial Phrases** **Fragmented Metaphor**
31	*Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story*	Kevin Noble Maillard, with illustrations by Juana Martinez-Neal	**Extended Metaphors**	fry bread, Native American culture, Native American history, food, cooking, North American tribes, Indigenous peoples	culture, community, family, friends, heritage, bringing people together, tradition, legacy, Native identity, passing down traditions, the cultural importance of food	**Similes** **Metaphors**
32	*Fungi Grow*	Maria Gianferrari, with illustrations by Diana Sudyka	**How Something Grows**	plants, mushrooms, fungi, spores, the growing process, mycelium, roots, trees, forests, life cycles, mycology, nature, ecosystems	growth, new life, appreciating nature, symbiosis in nature	**Two-Word Sentences** **Onomatopoeia** **Pitchforked Verbs**

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	BOOKS ABOUT THINGS					
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT LESSON**
33	*The Only Way to Make Bread*	Cristina Quintero, with illustrations by Sarah Gonzales	**Steps for Doing Something: A How-To Structure (Plus a Truism)**	bread, making bread, how-tos (procedures), baking, ingredients, baking tools, food preparation, food literacy, recipes	making things your way, making things together, diversity, culture building, traditions, different ways to do things, community, togetherness, spending time together	**Anaphork (Anaphora + Pitchfork)** **Similes** **Pitchforked Contrasts**
34	*The Secret Code Inside You: All About Your DNA*	Rajani LaRocca, MD, with illustrations by Steven Salerno	**All About Something (With Infoshots)**	DNA, genetics, genes, the human body, cells, family traits, proteins, chromosomes, biology, double helix, STEM	identity, uniqueness, personal choice, being one of a kind, parts of a whole, science	**Anaphork of Questions** **Rhyming Pattern** **Polysyndeton + Catalog**
35	*Your One and Only Heart*	Rajani LaRocca, MD, with illustrations by Lauren Paige Conrad	**Extended Adjectives**	the heart, the human body, the circulatory system, vital organs, anatomy, physiology, blood, the body's functions, muscles, arteries, STEM	our wonderful bodies, uniqueness, contrasts, resilience, strength, parts of a whole, science	**Parallel Paradox** **Personification** **Catalog of Gerunds**
36	*Zap! Clap! Boom! The Story of a Thunderstorm*	Laura Purdie Salas, with illustrations by Elly MacKay	**A Weather Event**	weather, thunderstorms, clouds, rain, lighting, thunder, forces of nature, atmospheric elements, atmospheric change	change, universal experiences, cycles	**Rhyming Pattern** **Onomatopoeia Refrain** **Personification**

	BOOKS ABOUT ANIMALS					
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT LESSON**
37	*Bee Dance*	Rick Chrustowski	**Steps for Doing Something: A How-To Structure**	bees, honeybees, forager bees, honeybee behavior, beehives, hive behavior, pollination, honey, nature, insects	communication, working together, teamwork, listening to others, following directions	**AAAWWUBBIS Opener** **Imperative Pitchfork**
38	*Ivan: The Remarkable True Story of the Shopping Mall Gorilla*	Katherine Applegate, with illustrations by Brian Karas	**A Memory Reflection**	gorillas, *The One and Only Ivan*, animal trapping, poaching, zoos, animal care, wild animals, Africa, nature, the mistreatment of animals, animal advocacy, habitats, treatment of animals in the wild	loneliness, animal cruelty, caring for nature, activism, fighting for others, speaking up, taking action, respect for life	**Anadiplosis** **Simile Pair**
39	*Sergeant Reckless: The True Story of the Little Horse Who Became a Hero*	Patricia McCormick, with illustrations by Iacopo Bruno	**A Memory (Plus a Truism)**	horses, racehorses, pack horses, warhorses, military, military ranks, Marine Corps, soldiers, training animals, Korean War, history, combat, war, ammunition, Purple Heart	serving your country, unlikely hero, underdog, taking a chance, bravery, wartime camaraderie, heroism, earning respect	**Renaming** **Catalog of Fragments** **AAAWWUBBIS Sandwich**
40	*Whale Fall: Exploring an Ocean-Floor Ecosystem*	Melissa Stewart, with illustrations by Rob Dunlavey	**An Ending That Causes a Cycle**	whales, ocean life, life cycles, variety of species, symbiotic relationships, food chain	new beginnings, end of life, community, interconnectedness, interdependence, hidden worlds	**Antithesis**

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	BOOKS ABOUT ANIMALS					
	TITLE	**AUTHOR**	**TEXT STRUCTURE**	**TOPICS**	**BIG IDEAS**	**CRAFT LESSON**
41	*Winged Wonders: Solving the Monarch Migration Mystery*	Meeg Pincus, with illustrations by Yas Imamura	**Solving a Mystery**	monarch butterflies, migration, North America, Mexico, Canada, scientists, research, endangered animals	curiosity, exploration, discovery, nature's beauty, appreciating nature, working together, teamwork, long-term study, finding answers, scientific discovery, helping nature, experimenting in the field	**Anaphork of Questions** **Character Anaphork**

Foreword

Beverly Cleary taught me how to write.

She wasn't a mentor in the formal sense of the word—we never met for lunch or talked over tea—but growing up, I borrowed her books from my hometown library almost every week. Embedded in the pages were master classes in everything from character development to pacing to dialogue, and I soaked up every word.

But I never left the library with just one book. I had two great loves—Ramona and nonfiction, especially if the cover featured natural disasters or dangerous animals. Bring on the tornadoes! The earthquakes, sharks, and venomous snakes! These titles were my teachers, too, offering lessons in research, organization, and text structure.

I still love Ramona and rattlesnakes, and now, as an author who visits schools and libraries all over the world, I'm often asked what advice I have for young writers. My answer to that question is always the same.

Read.

Read everything you can get your hands on. And especially, read in the genres in which you'd like to write. A teetering pile of books from the library or bookstore offers a treasure trove of mini lessons.

In this user-friendly volume, Kayla Briseño and Gretchen Bernabei have taken the guesswork out of choosing mentor texts and shining a light on the diverse strategies authors use in crafting nonfiction. When students read widely—and read like writers, analyzing the choices authors make and the tools they use in their work—they're empowered to take risks with their own writing as well, experimenting with out-of-the-box text structures and storytelling techniques that make their informational writing shine.

One of our most important jobs as teachers of young writers is to help them realize they can always find resources to learn more, and that mentors abound. They're always waiting on the library shelves.

Yours in curiosity,
Kate Messner
Author of the *Over and Under* nature books, *The Next Scientist*, and *The Brilliant Deep*

Acknowledgments

Thank you to the *many* people who have supported us along the way:

Everyone who used, passed along, promoted, shared, and loved our first book, *Text Structures From Picture Books*. Your heart and enthusiasm touched us so deeply, and we are honored to be a part of your classrooms!

Our Trail of Breadcrumbs team: Judi Reimer, Stacy Lewis, Dottie Hall, Heather Fletes, Maureen Ucles, Shona Rose, Jenny Martin, Alana Morris, Marie Cleary, Selina Jimenez, P. Tim Martindell, and Stephen Briseño.

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The fabulous faculty, staff, and families at San Antonio Academy: Your support is priceless, and I am honored. —Kayla

Holden Dewar: Thank you for thinking of a name for the "Beg-to-Differ" sentence pattern we first discovered in the *One Plastic Bag* lesson!

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We're indebted to the following people who helped us pilot the lessons and gather student examples:

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Tami Blythe

Vanessa Sanchez

Sarah Ledwig

Shannon Miller

Mo Shipp and family

Caitlyn Kirkpatrick and family

Debbie Oblitas and family

Samantha Foster and family

About the Authors

Kayla Briseño has taught English all over the world and to nearly every age, from elementary through adults. She has conducted professional development workshops with Gretchen Bernabei for over a decade, sharing and generating impactful writing instruction while being a longtime contributor to Trail of Breadcrumbs publications. *Text Structures From Picture Books* was her debut book. She and her husband, Stephen, are both self-declared book nerds, coffee aficionados, and national park fanatics. When she's not teaching or helping teachers, you can find her creating art with her daughter, Zinnia, reading a good book, or enjoying a stroll along the San Antonio River Walk, where she lives with her family. Follow her on Instagram @brisenos_teach.

Gretchen Bernabei was a teacher for over thirty years and a workshop presenter for over twenty-five years. She has written many books and articles with innovative instructional strategies for teaching reading and writing.

Introduction

According to *The New York Times*,[1] James Holzhauer "dominated 'Jeopardy!' like no one else." In 2019, he played a perfect game and had $2.4 million sitting coolly in his bank account. Surely someone of this caliber must have multiple degrees, speak several languages, or spend his free time reading college textbooks for fun. But to what does he accredit his immense knowledge? Children's books. He calls them his "secret weapon" and spent many hours in his local public library where he could "get books tailored to make things interesting for uninterested readers."

We have a confession to make. We have been unfair to nonfiction. Nonfiction, like poetry, has a bad reputation among many teachers. It seems boring. It seems like the dark corner of the library with dusty shelves where nobody browses for fun. It's a part of the library with the reputation that you only go there when you need to research something. Otherwise, why bother? After all, who makes movies about potatoes, a quick way to make soup, or the water cycle?

But we've discovered, like James Holzhauer (and many reluctant readers), how lively, animated, and compelling nonfiction has become in the hands of picture book authors and illustrators, completely reshaping our view. And even more wonderful is that these compelling stories about people, places, and things are actually true, so they fill us with even more wonder and hope about our own world.

The calling card of good nonfiction is how it awakens our wonder, driving us to know more about something. And there is something magical and deep and real and true about thumbing through a picture book to learn something that starts that itch of curiosity.

Our world has evolved since the days of dry and boring film strips or public television delivered in monotones. Nonfiction has become a spectator sport with people inspiring new inventors, innovators, and problem solvers from among our own very young people.

We hope the pages of these picture books inspire you and your students as they have us, moving us all to know that we can overcome hardships. Problems can be solved. People are basically good.

And by the way, Ron Howard *has* made a movie about one of the nonfiction stories in this book.

---

[1]Mather, V. (2019, April 24). How did James Holzhauer turn "Jeopardy!" into his own A.T.M.? We asked him. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/24/arts/jeopardy-james-holzhauer-interview.html

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

For any grade level, you can start with reading a story or with writing. Either way is fine, as one leads to the other.

Let's say you want to begin with writing:

Begin with a quick write. Show students the quick write prompt and let them write for about 3 minutes. Or use it as a discussion starter or a topic for your morning meeting. Put aside the quick writes and launch into reading and discussing the story.

OR

Begin with a kernel essay. Show students the quick write prompt and the text structure and have them write a kernel essay (demonstrated on the next pages). Put aside the kernel essay and launch into reading and discussing the story. Bonus—they can even look for the parts of the structure *as* you read.

OR

Begin with the big idea. Show the students a few of the big ideas listed in the lesson and ask them to write what they know about each big idea or a memory that they associate with it. Put aside the writing and launch into reading and discussing the story.

Let's say you want to begin with reading:

Read the story aloud as a whole group, stopping to discuss noticings, make predictions and inferences, and highlight skills or a craft you've taught in class.

To move to writing, read the quick write prompt on the lesson page. Invite students to use the text structure to write kernel essays (either to retell the story or to craft their own stories). Move on to some of the lessons for going deeper in order to highlight the author's craft, analysis (using big ideas and truisms), and even reading response (using the reading response question stems and text structures in the appendix).

Rules you are invited to break:

1. Use every aspect of the lesson.
   No way! These lessons are full of great things for you to try, so pick and choose what works for you. Make it yours!
2. Stick to the quick writes and text structure offered on the page.
   You don't have to. Choice is essential for good writing. Some situations require freewriting, without a structure at all.

3. Use all the picture books or read them all in order.
   Who cares? Use the ones you want, when you want!

4. Don't change the words in the text structure boxes.
   Keep it real. Change anything about them you need to (verb tense, point of view, their order, anything).

Ideas to embrace (our soap box moments):

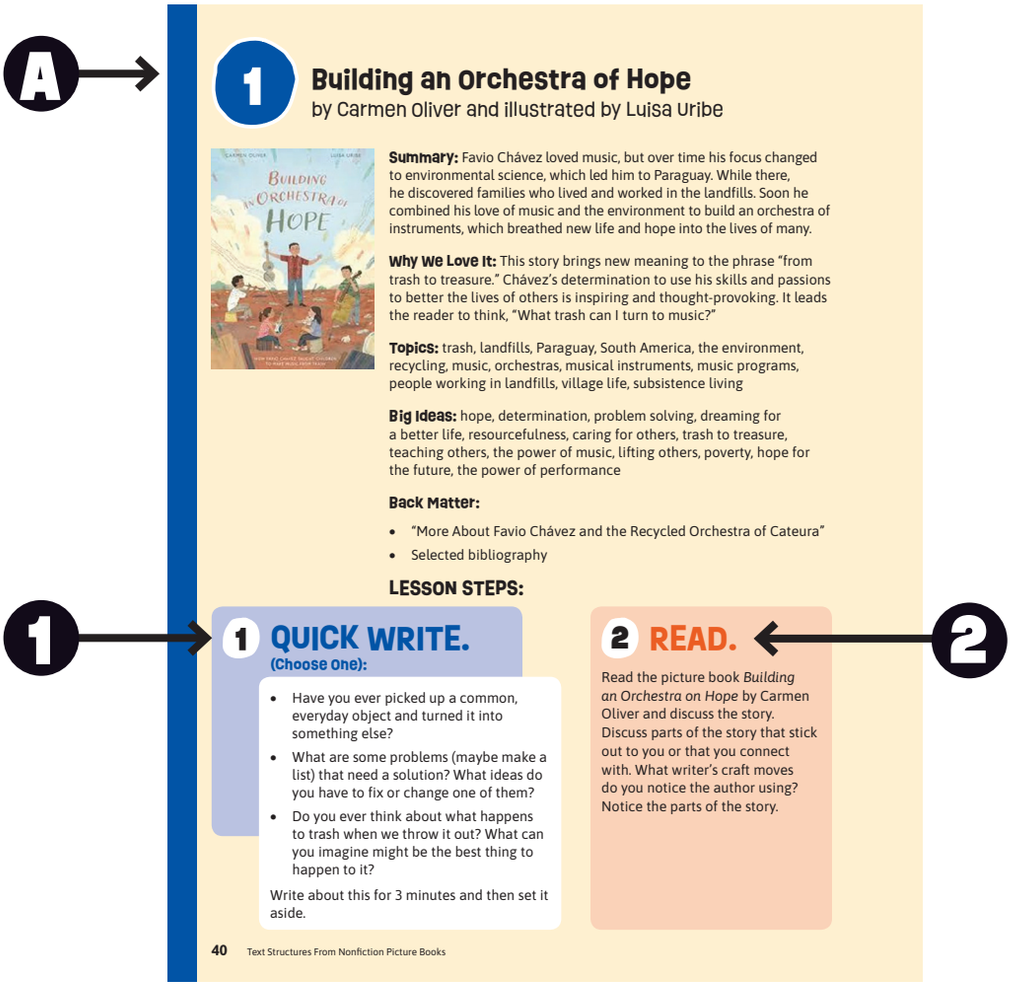
1. Writing should be social, and sharing is the main course, not the dessert, in the process.
   Don't skip the sharing.

2. Good teachers write with their students. It is incredibly powerful, as it acts as a model, a community builder, a heart-stitcher. It builds empathy. As teacher and author Rebekah O'Dell tweeted, "Modeling and writing alongside our kids keeps *us* engaged and curious."
   Write with your students.

3. Students want to learn and improve, not just repeat exercises. Give them the gift of great stories and wonderful craft. The lessons for going deeper ("Want to Go Deeper?") and the appendix are full of tools to help with this.
   Variety is both refreshing and necessary.

4. Writers should have as much choice as we can figure out how to give them: to choose their topics, their beliefs, their structures, their craft. If all of the essays seem alike, we need to reexamine what we're asking.
   Let writers make choices.

5. Picture books can be paired with any other genre. Feel free to pair any of these books with nonfiction texts, class novels, articles, poems, student writing, or even other picture books.
   Don't put yourself in a box.



AN OVERVIEW OF THE LESSONS

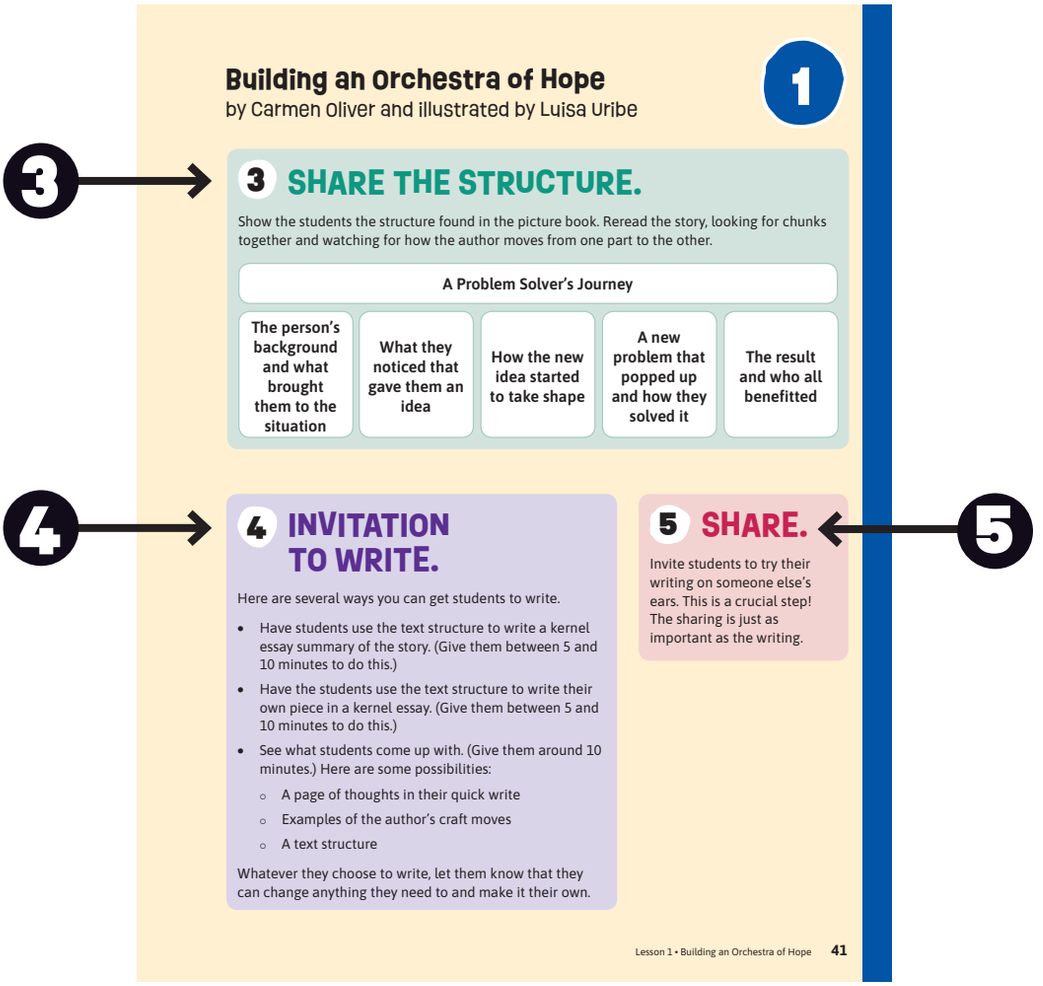
What follows is a snapshot of a lesson—at least one way to do it. Keep in mind all the options detailed previously.

A **Choose your book.** Browse the reference chart in the front of this book for a text structure you'd like to use, a big idea, a craft move, or even a title or author you love. (See page x.)

1 **Do a quick write.** Use the quick write prompt to get students writing or talking about a topic and/or big idea found in the book. Write for 3 minutes. If the prompt we have provided doesn't quite work for your students, feel free to change it to suit your needs.

2 **Read** and discuss the story using the questions provided. After you read, point out the craft moves the author used. These can be explored and utilized in students' writing later in the "Want to Go Deeper?" section.

3 **Share with students the text structure (harvested from the nonfiction book).** Use the text structure to have students retell the story (orally or in writing), or have them use it to create their own written pieces. They can use it to write a kernel essay or to guide their longer writing.



Building an Orchestra of Hope
by Carmen Oliver and illustrated by Luisa Uribe

1

3

3 SHARE THE STRUCTURE.

Show the students the structure found in the picture book. Reread the story, looking for chunks together and watching for how the author moves from one part to the other.

A Problem Solver's Journey				
The person's background and what brought them to the situation	What they noticed that gave them an idea	How the new idea started to take shape	A new problem that popped up and how they solved it	The result and who all benefitted

4

4 INVITATION TO WRITE.

Here are several ways you can get students to write.

- Have students use the text structure to write a kernel essay summary of the story. (Give them between 5 and 10 minutes to do this.)
- Have the students use the text structure to write their own piece in a kernel essay. (Give them between 5 and 10 minutes to do this.)
- See what students come up with. (Give them around 10 minutes.) Here are some possibilities:
  - A page of thoughts in their quick write
  - Examples of the author's craft moves
  - A text structure

Whatever they choose to write, let them know that they can change anything they need to and make it their own.

5

5 SHARE.

Invite students to try their writing on someone else's ears. This is a crucial step! The sharing is just as important as the writing.

Lesson 1 • Building an Orchestra of Hope 41

4 **Give students time to write.** There are several ways you can get students to write. Let students choose one of these:

Summary: Have your students use the text structure to write a kernel essay summarizing the story. (Give them between 5 and 10 minutes to do this.)

OR

Kernel essay: Have your students use the text structure to write their own piece in a kernel essay. (Give them between 5 and 10 minutes to do this.)

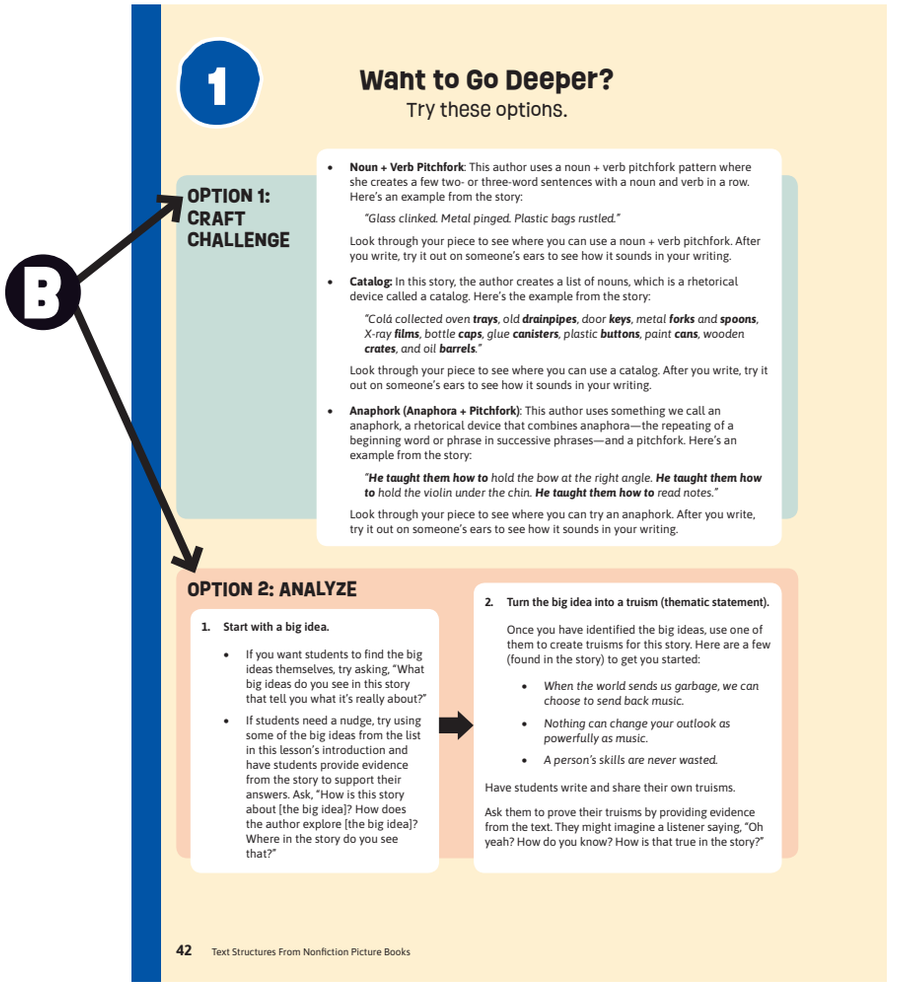
OR

Free choice: See what students come up with. (Give them around 10 minutes.) Here are some possibilities:

- A page of thoughts in their quick write
- Examples of the author's craft moves
- A text structure

Whatever they choose to write, let students know that they can change anything they need to and make it their own.

5 **Let students share what they wrote.** *Remember, don't skip this step!*



BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE!

B Try one or all of the options labeled "Want to Go Deeper?"

These lessons will help students to take the writing further. Choose from a writer's craft lesson or an analysis lesson, using big ideas and truisms.

Check out the online companion for even *more* ideas about analyzing using truisms.

Students can also choose to compose short or extended responses to demonstrate understanding by answering any of the questions for reading response. Other options are included in the extension ideas to take the subject further.

WHAT IF YOU WANT TO SHAKE UP THE LESSON ORDER?

While this sequence provides a solid experience weaving writing and reading together, there are plenty of variations that could also prove useful. Here are some things you might try:

1. Do a quick write.
2. Look at the text structure.
3. Create an original piece of writing using the text structure.
4. Share the picture book.
5. Identify some writer's craft (using one of the options for going deeper) and try that same craft in writing.

OR

Use the text structure to write a poem, a letter, a skit, an essay, or a speech.

OR

Use the text structure to write a response to the book.

OR

Read the picture book and write a one-sentence summary of each box in the text structure, as a way to summarize or kernelize the story.

OR

Use the question stems and text structures in the appendix to do some reading responses, writing, discussing, and even preparing for a standardized test.

Questions and Text Structures for Constructed Reading Responses

Questions and Answers About Understanding the Reading

GENERIC QUESTION STEMS	TEXT STRUCTURES TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS
1. What happens in the story? (Retell the story.) 2. What is the story mostly about right now? 3. How do you think _____ feels at the beginning and/or end of the story? 4. What is the conflict or problem of the story so far? 5. Who is more _____(helpful, nicer), _____(a character) or _____(another character)? 6. How does _____ change during the story? 7. Why does _____ do/think/say/ believe/ want? 8. What's one word you would use to describe _____(character)? 9. What lesson does _____ learn in the story? 10. What is the moral of the story? 11. In sentence _____, what does the word or phrase _____ suggest? 12. How are _____ and _____ alike/ different? 13. Why does _____ become _____ (upset, happy) when _____? 14. What does _____(character) mean when he/she says _____? 15. What can the reader tell (conclude) from the action in sentence(s) _____? 16. What is _____'s reaction when she/ he learns _____ show about her/his character? 17. How do the actions of _____ and/or _____ support the theme or moral? 18. What causes _____ to realize _____? 19. Why does _____ agree to _____? 20. What is _____'s attitude about_____? 21. What argument does _____ (a character) make to support _____'s (that character's) behavior/opinion? 22. What challenge(s) does _____ face? 23. What does _____ represent in the story?	**QA12345** Question | Answer | How do you know? | What does that mean? | How else do you know? | So . . . your answer is . . . what? **RACE** Restate the question | Answer | Cite evidence from the text | Explain what the evidence means **BA-DA-BINGING THE EVIDENCE** Answer to the question | What the character does, says, and/or thinks that proves my answer | What that shows **FIGURING OUT THE READING** I read the words "_____." | Which told me _____ | Then I read "_____." | Which told me _____ | And then I knew _____ **EXPLAINING A CHANGE** How ___ changes in the story | At the beginning, . . . (with evidence) | At the end, . . . (with evidence) | Another way to describe the change

Source: Briseño, S., Briseño, K. & Bernabei, G. (2023).

See p. 322 for the full-sized versions of these templates.

Questions About Author's Choices

GENERIC QUESTION STEMS	TEXT STRUCTURES TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS
1. Why is_____ (an event or character) important? 2. Why does the author_____? 3. How does the author show that _____ (character) is _____ (characteristic)? 4. Why did the author write this story? 5. What does the author show us by including a description of _____? 6. How did the author help visualize _____? 7. What is the main reason the author included the sentence(s)_____? 8. Why does the author choose this setting for the story? 9. In sentence _____, the author uses the word(s)/phrase(s) _____ to suggest what? 10. What does the sensory language in the sentence _____ illustrate? 11. How does the description in the sentence(s) _____ affect the reader's understanding of the setting/ character? 12. The author includes the information in the sentence(s) _____ to help the reader do what? 13. What is the author's purpose in writing this story? 14. How does the author's description of _____ help the reader understand _____? 15. What effect does the word/phrase _____ have in the sentence _____? 16. How does _____ contribute to the development of the author's ideas? 17. _____ is important in the story because it shows what? 18. How does the setting influence the plot of the story? 19. What is the effect of the author's use of _____?	**RACE** Restate the question | Answer | Cite evidence from the text | Explain what the evidence means **NOTICING THE AUTHOR'S MOVES** I read the words "_____." | Which told me _____ | Then I read "_____." | Which told me _____ | And then I knew the author did _____ to create _____ **THE EFFECT ON A READER** When I read "_____." | It made me feel/ picture/ think _____ | Which created _____. | If the author had used a different word/ phrase, such as _____ | It would have had this effect | So I think the author was trying to create _____. **THE EFFECT OF AN AUTHOR'S CHOICE** The author uses (pick one) ☐ Vocabulary ☐ Sensory images ☐ Figurative language ☐ Device: _____ ☐ Something else | An example | Another example | This creates (pick one) ☐ A mood of _____ ☐ A feeling of _____ ☐ A _____ tone ☐ A character who _____ ☐ Interest in _____ ☐ Understanding in _____ ☐ Something else

Source: Bernabei & Hover (2022).

Basic Reading Response Text Structures

STORY OF MY THINKING

I used to think . . .	But this happened	So now I know . . .

CHARACTER FEELINGS

_____ felt _____	I know because they did _____	I also know because they said _____	What this shows

MAKING A CONNECTION

When I read _____	I made a connection to (self, text, world)	Because _____

SUMMARY

Somebody wanted _____	But _____	So _____	Then _____

THE EFFECT OF AN AUTHOR'S CHOICE

The author uses (pick one) ☐ Vocabulary ☐ Sensory images ☐ Figurative language ☐ Device: _____ ☐ Something else	An example	Another example	This creates (pick one) ☐ A mood of _____ ☐ A feeling of _____ ☐ A _____ tone ☐ A character who _____ ☐ Interest in _____ ☐ Understanding of _____ ☐ Something else

Source: Bernabei & Hover (2022).

Timing the Lesson

With students we've worked with, the whole lesson (steps 1–5) takes 40–55 minutes.*

- 3–5 minutes to introduce the prompt and allow students to quick write
- 5–10 minutes to read the story
- 5 minutes to talk about the story
- 5–10 minutes to model the writing
- 10–15 minutes to "go deeper" (truisms, writer's craft, reading response)
- 5–10 minutes to share (in partners and whole class) and wrap up

* The timing depends on the length of the nonfiction book, the age (and needs) of the students, and what activities you choose to do.

Revisions can take one or more sessions or can go on indefinitely.

The "Want to Go Deeper?" options can be done on a separate day or even as the main lesson. The craft lesson can take 15 to 20 minutes, and the analysis lesson can take 40 to 55 minutes, depending on how far you take it.

What Can You Do With All That Great Writing?

Have students share their work out loud! Cover your walls and bulletin boards with kernel essays, stories, poems, and truisms that students have written. Share them with the author of the picture book, and us, of course!

Every lesson includes

- A quick write topic
- Craft moves to notice
- A text structure to use for retelling a story and/or generating new writing
- A craft challenge to try
- Big ideas and truisms for analysis
- Questions for reading response

At a time when the strain and pressures of the world are as intense as ever, everyone needs moments to heal. We hope that you find that these lessons offer hope and spread joy—and inspire every writer in your classroom.

WHAT IS A KERNEL ESSAY?

A writer can write about a topic by using a text structure as a guide, creating one sentence per box. These sentences make a kernel essay. Here's an example using the text structure we call "The Story of My Thinking."

The Story of My Thinking		
I used to think . . .	**But this happened**	**So now I know . . . ***
***This is a good place for a truism!**		

QR Code 0.1
Stephen explains what kernel essays are and how to use them
qrs.ly/cyg7dv9

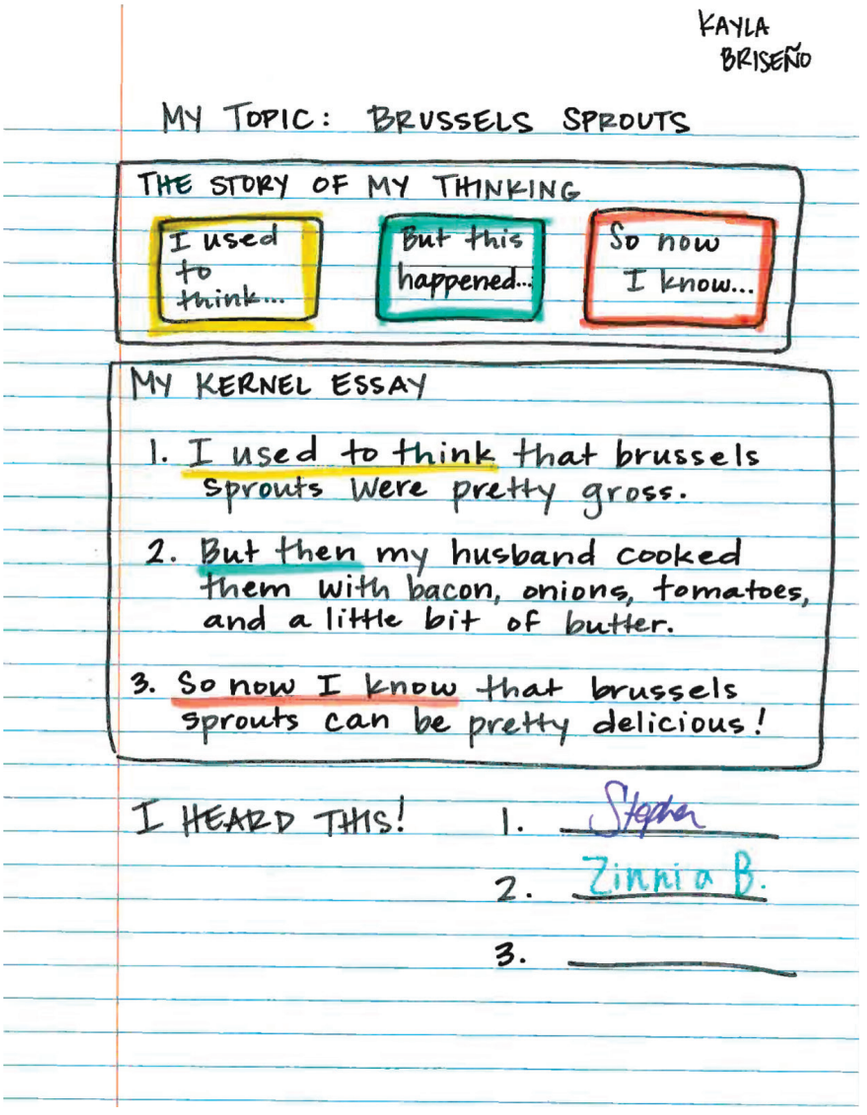
To read a QR code, you must have a smartphone or tablet with a camera. We recommend that you download a QR code reader app that is made specifically for your phone or tablet brand.

If I (Kayla) wanted to write about a time that my thinking changed, I might write a kernel essay like this:

1. **I used to think** that brussels sprouts were pretty gross.
2. **But then** my husband cooked them with bacon, onions, tomatoes, and a little bit of butter.
3. **So now I know** that brussels sprouts can be absolutely delicious!

After the kernel essay is written, the next step is for the writer to read the kernel essay aloud to several listeners to see how the structure worked.

A kernel essay is like a kernel of corn: a small thing packed with possibility. What can you do with a corn kernel? You can *leave* it. You can *pop* it. You can *toss* it. You can *plant* it.



What can you do with a kernel essay? Writers can treat it just like a kernel of corn. They can leave their essay just like it is; they can "pop" it (i.e., develop it into a full essay by adding details and craft); they can toss it out (if they don't like the way it sounds); or they can "plant" it to let it grow into something even bigger, like a research project or a book.

The great thing about a kernel essay is that it offers writers a quick way to get thoughts on paper and see if they have something worth developing or if they need to try something else. A student doesn't have to slog through writing a page or two before knowing whether this writing is on the right track.

QR Code 0.2
Gretchen walks us through how to write a kernel essay
qrs.ly/3ag7dvm

WHAT ARE TEXT STRUCTURES?

A text structure is the plan, or path, that a writer uses in order to "track movement of the mind." In other words, the structure will allow a reader to glimpse what the writer knows and how they know it. It can be created intentionally by a writer or gleaned from reading. For simplicity, we place these steps into sequenced, horizontal boxes, resembling stepping stones.

Text structures can be revised to make them work for the writing situation. Writers are free to use the text structure as it is provided, or they may wish to add, delete, change, or rearrange it in some way. A writer may even want to create a new and unique text structure—and that is absolutely OK! In fact, it's great! The structures are tools that are meant to be manipulated for each writer and task.

QR Code 0.3
Gretchen teaches how to use text structures to respond to reading (Part 1)
qrs.ly/bog7dvo

QR Code 0.4
Gretchen teaches how to use text structures to respond to short answer questions (Part 2)
qrs.ly/aig7dvq

QR Code 0.5
Gretchen teaches how to use text structures to compose literary essays (Part 3)
qrs.ly/2gg7dvt

OK, So What Does All This Have to Do With Nonfiction Picture Books?

All nonfiction picture books use different text structures, offering writers a chance to

- use the text structure as a pre- or post-writing exercise, as an entry or reentry into the text;
- use the text structure to retell the story they have read in the picture book; and
- use the text structure to create their own piece of writing.

Other text structures serve as handy reading response templates. Some of our favorites are in the appendix. Using these reading response structures, writers can demonstrate what they know by

- responding to something they have read (without a question or prompt),
- writing answers to questions provided for each picture book,
- constructing a short answer response,
- constructing an extended response, and
- composing a full essay (a theme, literary analysis, or other form).

INTRODUCING YOUR STUDENTS TO KERNEL ESSAYS

What's the Classroom Problem?

It's time to compose a piece of writing. You announce to the class, "OK, today we are going to write about how our thinking changed about something. Here is your paper. Get started writing your five-paragraph essay on this topic."

The response comes in the form of blank stares.

Students stare into the endless abyss of the blank page, and one raises their hand to announce, "Uh, Miss, I don't know what to write about."

After writing two "sentences," a second student raises their hand to declare, "I'm done!"

Another student gets started right away, to which you breathe a sigh of relief. However, while dutifully observing the writers, you discover that this student is writing in a stream of consciousness, and only about three lines might be viable for the assignment.

Let's face it: When it comes to writing an essay, a response, a story, or even a poem, it is often hard to know where to start. That blank page can be daunting to even the most experienced writer. And then, once they get started, it is sometimes even more difficult to know where to go from there!

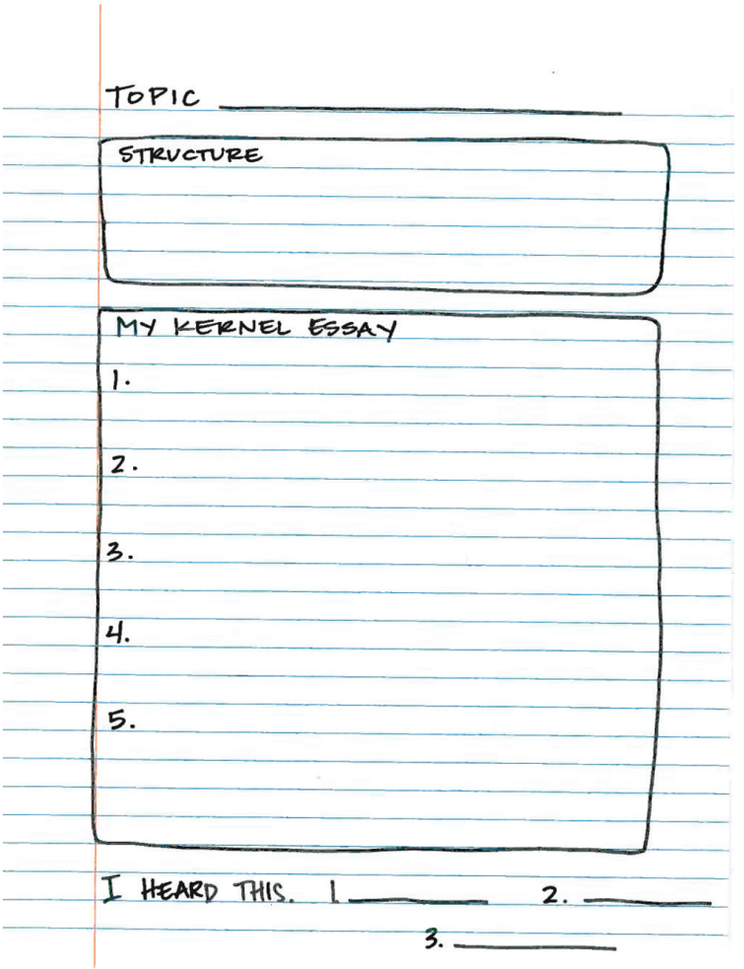
So, What's the Solution?

Enter kernel essays and text structures.

We have found that using a text structure to get our students to write, and asking them to write "just one sentence per box," has helped to jump-start their thinking and provides them with a road map of how to track their thinking.

The following is an introductory lesson for writing a kernel essay that you can teach tomorrow.

> "I believe the beginning of my realization that this class would not be average was when we learned about kernel essays. I remember thinking to myself, 'How on earth can writing a four-sentence story help me write an essay?' I, of course, ended up astonished at the fact that it did help me. It helped me write more than any brainstorming or chart I had ever done before. I told my mother about how natural writing an essay felt after that lesson, [and] she told me 'Cherish that class, it'll help you more than any grammar or lit classes you'll ever take.' I chose to listen."
>
> —Lucia Sears, 11th Grade



Basic Steps:

1. Choose a topic (from a quick list,* a quick write, a prompt, anywhere).
2. Choose a text structure.
3. Have students use the text structure to write about their topic by writing one sentence per box.
4. Have students share their kernel essays with other writers.
5. Repeat often to give them practice with a variety of other structures.
6. After writing several, have students choose one to "pop" by adding details.

Tools/Supplies:

- A quick list,* quick write idea, or topic
- Student journals
- A text structure

*A quick list is a list you can have students make of things and experiences that are personal to them. These lists are meant to be created quickly and to be kept in a writer's notebook for later use. They can be made about anything. Find some examples in many of Gretchen Bernabei's other books.

Step 1: Choosing a Topic

Depending on what you want your students to write, you may need to create a quick list, use a quick write topic (there is at least one provided for each lesson in this book), or choose a topic.

Say: *Look at your quick list and choose a topic* [or] *Think about this topic on the board. We are going to write about this topic in a kernel essay.*

Step 2: Choosing a Text Structure

Whether you are writing a reading response, a story, a piece about your life, a literary analysis, or an argumentative essay, there are text structures for every kind of writing. Choose a text structure that fits the writing needs of the moment in your classroom, and project it on the board, write it on chart paper, or display it under a document camera.

When you are first starting out with kernel essays, we recommend using one text structure with the whole class. Practice the same structure a few times, over a couple of days, so students have a chance to internalize it and get the hang of using a structure to guide their thinking and writing.

Step 3: Writing a Kernel Essay, One Box at a Time

Have students create a page in their journals that looks like this.

Say: *Now to write our kernel essay, we are going to need a text structure. Today we are going to write about a time our thinking changed by using "The Story of My Thinking," which has three boxes. A kernel essay is small—you will only need to write one sentence per box, so how many sentences are we going to write?* [Hopefully your students will tell you three sentences.] *That's right, three. Remember that sentences start with a capital letter and end with some sort of punctuation. Now let's get started.*

We always recommend writing with your students, so you may wish to write your own kernel essay (on the board, chart paper, or the document projected by the document camera) as you walk them through the steps.

Say: *OK, I'm going to write about a time when my thinking changed about a food—brussels sprouts. The first box says, "I used to think . . ." So I'm going to write,* ***"I used to think*** *that brussels sprouts were pretty gross." Go ahead and write your first sentence. If you need to change the words from the box in some way, go ahead.*

Give students time to write their sentences.

Say: *Now let's write our second sentence. The second box says, "But this happened . . ." I need to tell what happened to change my thinking. So I'm going to write, "****But then*** *my husband cooked them with bacon, onions, tomatoes, and a little bit of butter." I don't need to use the words "But this happened." I'm just going to say what happened. Go ahead and write your next sentence.*

Give students time to write their sentences.

Say: *Now let's write our last sentence. The third box says, "So now I know . . ." I need to tell how my thinking changed. So I'm going to write, "**So now I know** that brussels sprouts can be absolutely delicious!" Go ahead and write your last sentence. If you need to change the words from the box in some way, go ahead.*

Give students time to write their sentences.

Step 4: Sharing the Kernel Essays (Don't Skip This Step!)

Writing should be social, and sharing is the main course, not the dessert, in the process, so *don't skip the sharing.* There will be students who think they didn't do it correctly or who didn't understand it at all, so their page might be blank. Sharing will help with that. They will have a chance to hear what other writers did with the structure.

Say: *OK, now that we have written our kernel essays, it's time to share what you wrote. Before I tell you how to move around, here are some ways not to do it.*

1. **Say:** *Here's my kernel essay. Read it.* [This is your chance to poke fun at—I mean, *imitate*—the lethargic behavior of your students when they just toss their journals at someone else when it's time to share. Ham it up. Have fun with this.] *What am I doing or not doing?*

   Students: *You're not sharing with your voice! You're just trading papers.*

   Say: *Exactly. We need to read our own writing, with our own voices.*

2. **Say:** *Here's another wrong way to do it. "I used to think that brussels sprouts were pretty gross. My parents didn't really like them, so they never made them. In fact, whenever we'd see them at a restaurant or something, they would turn up their noses and talk about how gross they were. . . ."* [It helps to do this part quickly, imitating that one student who always adds on a bunch of extra details. You know the type.] *What am I doing?*

   Students: *You're adding a whole bunch of details you didn't write. You're going on and on.*

   Say: *Yep. And while it is great to add details to your story (that's what we'll do when we pop and revise our kernel essays later), that's not the job for right now. Just read what you wrote and then listen to your partner's essay.*

Say: *OK, so now that you know how to do it wrong, here's how to do it correctly. Write* "I heard this" *at the bottom of your page. Then draw three lines next to it. When I say* "go," *I want you to stand up, find a partner, and take turns reading your kernel essays. Once someone has listened to your kernel essay, have that person sign on one of the lines. Your job is to have three people listen to your kernel essay, get three signatures, listen to at least three kernel essays, and then sit down when you have finished. I'll know we are finished sharing when we have all returned to our seats.*

Allow students to move around the room and share their kernel essays. Once they have had a chance to get their signatures, gather them back together again and ask for volunteers to share with the class.

Say: *Now that you've had a chance to try out your writing on a few people's ears, who would like to share theirs with the whole class? Did anyone hear a good one that we all need to hear?* [Watch as hands fly up after that question.]

Allow as many students to share as time allows. As students share their essays out loud, point to each step of the text structure to reinforce the structure.

If a student has changed the structure in some way, celebrate it by writing it on the board or chart paper. **You might say**: *"Oh, I noticed how Clementine has used the words 'Now I believe . . .' instead of 'Now I know . . .' and Cuate has added an extra 'But this happened . . .' because he just couldn't keep it to one sentence. If you'd like to use Clementine's 'Story of My Thinking' or Cuate's 'Story of My Thinking' next time we use this text structure, go ahead."*

Allowing students to make these structures their own has powerful results. Not only will students start tweaking the structures to make them work for their writing, but before long, many will start finding and/or inventing their own. If you keep the text structures you use and discover on the wall, it will be filled in no time with student-created additions. They will quickly see themselves as writers who make choices.

> "Kernel essays have helped me really make my paragraphs better. They have helped me with my structure of writing. Writing is way more fun and easier with this type of writing. It's also quick and efficient, and it doesn't waste time."
>
> —Zayd Ehab Samir Zabaneh, 6th Grade

Step 5: Repeating the Process (Often)

Once students have practiced writing and sharing a kernel essay, repeat this process often to give them practice with a variety of other structures.

If you really want them to internalize a certain structure, consider having them practice it three or more times in a week. You may choose to type the structure for them to glue to the top of the page of their journals or have them write it themselves (this helps with internalizing the structure).

If you would like them to use a variety of structures, once you have practiced a few together, consider giving them a few to choose from and having them share what they come up with.

Step 6: Popping a Kernel Essay (Adding Details)

Once students have had some practice with writing kernel essays and have a few to choose from, ask students to choose one they think they could pop (by adding the rest of the story with plenty of details—perhaps turning each sentence into at least one paragraph). If they are having trouble choosing, consider inviting them to choose two or three and try them out on some listeners to see which one others find most interesting.

To develop a kernel essay, start by turning each sentence of the kernel essay into a paragraph. Here are some ideas for how to do that.

- Use the "like what" button. (After a statement, imagine a reader asking, "Like what?" The student will know what details to add.)
- Use jerk talk. (After a statement, imagine a real or imaginary listener who says, "No, it's not!" Prove it!")
- Add some ba-da-bings. (These are sentences that traditionally tell what someone was doing [*ba*], what someone saw [*da*], and what someone felt [*bing*]: where your feet were, what you saw, and what you thought.)

- Add some pitchforks. (A pitchfork sentence or series of sentences will take one thing and branch it off into three or more.)
- Hunt for vague writing and change it into something specific.
- Add dialogue.
- Add text evidence.
- Add a truism and explain it.
- Add descriptions.
- Add metaphors, similes, or other writer's craft tools.
- Use the "three questions" technique: Listeners write three questions, things they want to know about the writing.
- Use the "Writer's Tools Chart" (found on the companion website) as a handy tool for revision.

TEACHER DEBRIEF

This intro lesson offers a pattern of writing that, with repeated practice, becomes routine and can be used for any sort of writing. In this book, lessons are built around the text structures found in nonfiction picture books. However, if you want to get your students used to writing kernel essays that follow a text structure, you may want to try having them write a few kernel essays using these simple structures:

THE STORY OF MY THINKING		
I used to think . . .	But this happened	So now I know . . .

THE MEMORY STRUCTURE				
Where I was and what I was doing	What happened first	What happened next	What happened last	What I learned or realized

HOW ONE EVENT CHANGED A CHARACTER		
How a character was before	What happened	How the character changed

11-MINUTE ESSAY				
Truism (something I believe is true)	One way I know it's true (an example from a book, a movie, history, or my life)	Another way I know it's true (an example from a book, a movie, history, or my life)	Another way I know it's true (an example from a book, a movie, history, or my life)	Truism (said differently) or I wonder . . .

Once students have the hang of it, jump into some of the lessons in this book to see how real authors use text structures in their writing.

We write kernel essays regularly to do all kinds of things: write about our lives, respond to something we've read or watched, reflect, or compose a persuasive or informative essay. As we have said, text structures can be found everywhere and can be created for just about any writing purpose. In their kernel form, they act as an outline for where the writing should go, and they provide an entry point for even the most reluctant writers.

GOING FURTHER

Here are several ways to use the text structures in this book.

- Use a text structure to write a kernel essay summary of a story.
- Use a text structure to write an original piece in a kernel essay.
- Use a text structure to write a piece of longer writing.
- Use the list of question stems and reading response text **structures** **(see** "Questions and Answers About Understanding the Reading" and "Questions About Author's Choices" on page 8) to do some reading responses, writing, discussing, and even preparing for a standardized test.
- Use the text structure to launch a discussion or compose a poem, a letter, a skit, an essay, or a speech.

Consider providing a permanent home for text structures in your classroom (bulletin board, wall, back of door, the side of a filing cabinet). Have students collect text structures in their journals for easy access.

INTRODUCING YOUR STUDENTS TO TRUISMS

What's the Classroom Problem?

You give your students a piece ("All Summer in a Day" by Ray Bradbury, for example), and after they read it, you ask them, "What's the theme?"

They don't hesitate.

"It's about my grandmother!"

"My kindergarten teacher!"

"It's about rain."

"Turtles."

Like people playing darts with their eyes closed, they just hope something sticks to the board and you get off their backs. Teachers all over agree: *Theme* is one of the most difficult concepts to teach. However, it is a vital skill for students to be able to read between the lines, to pick up on subtleties and nuances, and to explain their thinking accurately and succinctly. And if we can get them to do it with some style and eloquence, all the better.

So, What's the Solution?

The solution to get your students to analyze for the theme accurately is to teach them how to write truisms. A truism is simply a life lesson—what an author or creator might want us to take away from a work.

The following is an introductory lesson you can teach tomorrow.

Basic Steps:

1. Project a compelling photo or piece of art.
2. Practice point-it-out observations.
3. Practice noticing "big ideas."
4. Practice composing truism statements.

Tools/Supplies:

- Two or three photographs (We like to use photos from many sources, including "Photos of the Week" from *The Atlantic*, "Best Photographs of the Day" from *The Guardian*, the *National Geographic* "Photo of the Day," images from the website Unsplash, and others.)
- Student journals

Step 1: Project a Compelling Photo or Piece of Art

You want something that will grab your students' attention—something that will get them talking as soon as it's up on the projector and the lesson hasn't even begun. This photo is a great one to get them talking.

Source: iStock.com/PeopleImages

Say: *Go ahead and look at the photograph of children playing tug-of-war on the screen. Take a good long look. Pay attention to every detail.*

Today, we're going to break apart this photo. But before we do that, we're going to need to define an important word.

Who knows what the word inference *means?*

That's right; it means an educated guess based on clues or evidence. Keep that definition in your mind today.

Step 2: Practicing Point-It-Out Observations

Say: *Now that you've looked at it closely, imagine you could step into this photo. What are some things that you would be able to touch? Look for things that you can point out. For example, a detail I see is the rope. If you can place your finger on it, then that's a detail. So, what do you see?*

Allow students to share what they see. If they jump to an inference, like "The boy looks happy," redirect them by saying, "I like that inferencing, but let's focus just on the details. Instead, we could say, 'The boy is smiling.'"

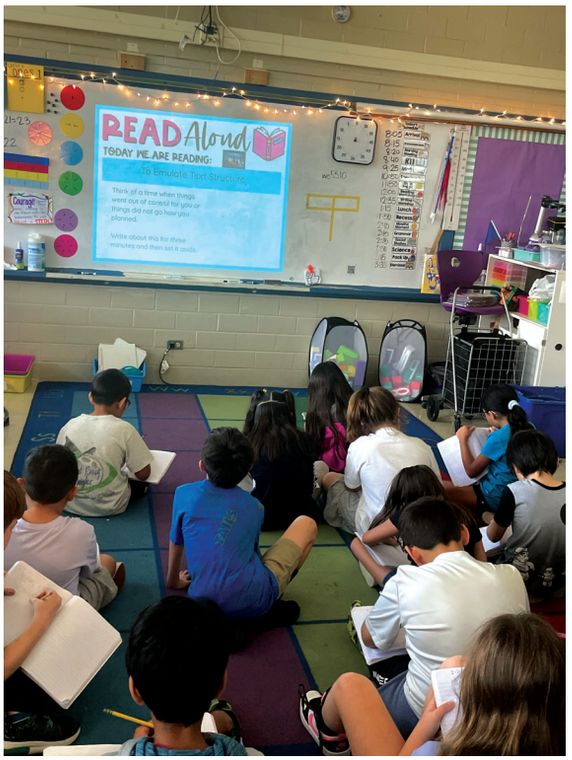
Step 3: Practicing Noticing "Big Ideas"

Say: *Next, we're going to look at the photo and identify what I call "big idea words."These are words of things that you can't really touch. For example:* love, friendship, heartache. *Those are big idea words. What are some other big idea words that come to mind?*

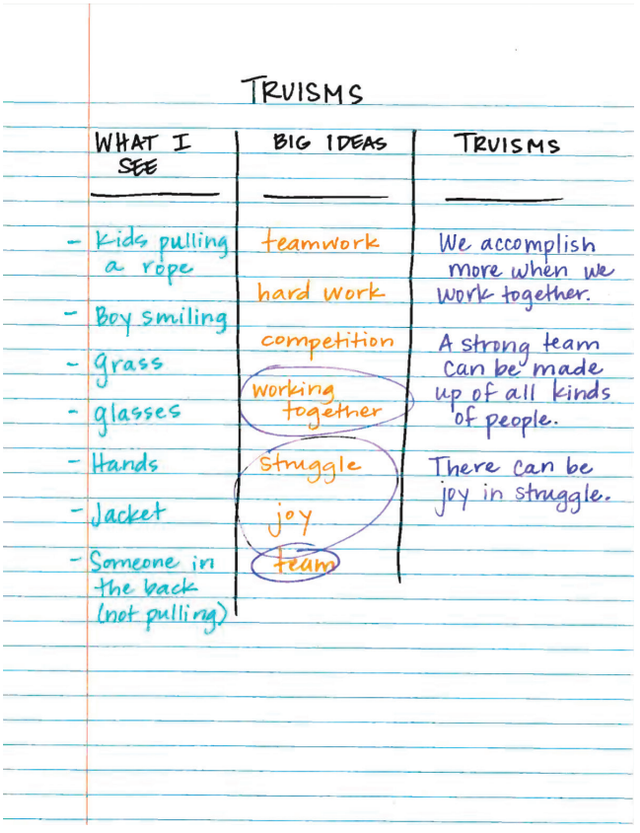
Allow students to share some big idea words. Correct them as necessary.

Say: *Great work! Let's look at this picture again, but this time, instead of looking for details we can touch, let's look for details that we can't touch—big idea words. What do you see? Whatever you come up with, you're going to have to have point-it-out evidence to back it up.*

Allow time for students to think about and then share what big ideas they see. As they share, write their ideas down on the board.



A list of big idea words is provided on the companion website. Big idea words our students have seen in this photo include *teamwork, childhood, competition, excitement, joy, enthusiasm,* and *struggle*.



Step 4: Practice Composing Truism Statements

Say: *All artists or authors usually have something they want the audience or reader or viewer to think about or understand—a message they hope their audience learns. In your journal, on a blank page, write the word "Truisms" and the following definition* [write the definition on the board, too].

> A truism is a message or a truth about life that applies to nearly everyone.
>
> Truisms do not describe, and they do not command.

Say: *At this point, we've (1) broken down this photograph and (2) identified a huge list of big ideas. Look through our list of big ideas. Choose the one big idea that you think this photograph is mainly about. Write a truism for this photograph using the big idea word you chose. For example, let's say you think that* teamwork *is the most important big idea in this photo. Ask yourself, "What is the photographer trying to get me to understand about teamwork?" Your answer is your truism.*

I have three requirements for your truism.

1. *You must be able to provide point-it-out evidence for your truism. Don't just pull something out of your hat! It should connect with the picture in some way.*
2. *Your truism should be written as a complete sentence.*
3. *Your truism should not be a command—don't tell me what to do.*

If you're stuck, start with the word sometimes. *Let's see what you come up with!*

Give students a few minutes to write. Purposefully don't give them an example. See what they come up with on their own. Give them a chance to share with a small group or partner before sharing with the whole class. Some example truisms could be

- We accomplish more when we work together.
- A strong team can be made up of all kinds of people.
- There can be joy in struggle.

Say: *Let's hear a few. Who heard a truism that is powerful or the whole class should hear? That's a great truism! What point-it-out evidence do you have that supports your truism? Good!*

TEACHER DEBRIEF

This intro lesson demonstrates a pattern of analysis that, with repeated practice, becomes shorthand in your class and can be used for any sort of media. We'll be analyzing nonfiction picture books, but we recommend starting with a photograph to make the analytical process concrete and as simple as possible for your

students. We try to do this at least weekly, with poems, pictures, videos, stories, announcements—you name it. ("Oh, what would a truism be for this?") Remember, you are laying the groundwork for analysis skills that students will use all year long—and hopefully the rest of their lives!

GOING FURTHER

For scaffolding purposes, it is best to start with a picture. As students get more practice and gain confidence, consider using short videos, short texts, poetry, picture books, and eventually novels.

- *Photographs* (the more thought-provoking, the better). Historical photographs and *National Geographic* "Photo of the Day" images work well.
- *Artwork*. Pieces by these artists often work well: Norman Rockwell, Paweł Kuczyński, Banksy.
- *Short, wordless videos.* "Alma," "The Invention of Love," and "Wire Cutters" are a few favorites for middle schoolers. Pixar shorts are great for elementary students.
- *Short stories or excerpts of mentor texts.* "Love" by William Maxwell, "All Summer in a Day" by Ray Bradbury, and "Thank You, Ma'am" by Langston Hughes are a few staples for fifth grade and up.
- *Poems*. A few of our favorites for middle and secondary grades are "Gate A4" and "Kindness," both by Naomi Shihab Nye; "Teenagers" by Pat Mora; "A Rainy Morning" by Ted Kooser; "Allowables" by Nikki Giovanni; "First Love" by Carl Linder; "What Love Is Not" by Yrsa Daley-Ward; and "Death Barged In" by Kathleen Sheeder Bonanno.
- And, of course, we recommend nonfiction picture books! We'll provide starting points in this book, but any favorite picture nonfiction picture book will do.

QR Code 0.6
Stephen and Kayla explain the power of truisms
qrs.ly/w1g7dvu

We recommend doing a group practice after this lesson. Project a new picture, review the process, and have students discuss with those around them at each step.

QR Code 0.7
A Prezi we created to teach this to our seventh graders
qrs.ly/7jg7dvv

Consider providing a permanent home for truisms in your classroom, such as a bulletin board, a wall, the side of a filing cabinet, or the back of a window shade. This will be a place for students to post their own truisms, ones they've found in the real world, as well as the "keepers" from their independent reading.

OK, so what do I do with all these truisms? Visit https://companion.corwin.com/courses/TS-nonfictionpicturebooks to download the following resources that will help you teach truisms.

- **Big idea word list**
- **Truism tree**
- **Truism sentence frame (see "Truism Reteach Lessons")**
- **Theme chart**
- **Truism braid (with video)**
- **11-minute essay (with video)**

A growing wall of truisms in Kayla's classroom.

INTRODUCING YOUR STUDENTS TO READING RESPONSE

What's the Classroom Problem?

You've just read something together as a class, and now it's time to see if anyone understood it. You ask the class, "Can anyone tell me how our character changed from the beginning of the story to the end?"

"Her hair got shorter!"

"She fell asleep."

"She got older."

"Uh. . . ."

"She got nicer?"

Encouraged with that last response, you say, "OK! How do you know that?" No response.

The facts are these: Getting students to *talk* about what they have read, what they think, and why they think that (beyond the surface level) can be nearly impossible—let alone asking them to *write* about these things. And even if you *do* get them started, they tend to go in circles and never really form the answer. Nor do they provide that ever-elusive text evidence to back it up.

Some states require this form of writing on their state assessments, so there is a real urgency for our students to do this well.

So, What's the Solution?

Once again, we turn to text structures and kernel essays.

Just as we have seen kernel essays and text structures work wonders in other genres of writing, we have found that providing students with a structure to follow is like leading them along a path with a trail of breadcrumbs.

Without being forceful or formulaic, we can naturally show them how to provide a solid answer supported by evidence from the text. Students can easily learn a concrete way to say, "This is what I think" and "This is how I know that."

The following are a few introductory lessons for writing a reading response that you can teach tomorrow.

Basic Steps:

Basic Reading Response Text Structures

STORY OF MY THINKING

I used to think . . .	But this happened	So now I know . . .

CHARACTER FEELINGS

_____ felt _____	I know because they did _____	I also know because they said _____	What this shows

MAKING A CONNECTION

When I read _____	I made a connection to (self, text, world)	Because _____

SUMMARY

Somebody wanted _____	But _____	So _____	Then _____

THE EFFECT OF AN AUTHOR'S CHOICE

The author uses (pick one) ☐ Vocabulary ☐ Sensory images ☐ Figurative language ☐ Device: _____ ☐ Something else	An example	Another example	This creates (pick one) ☐ A mood of _____ ☐ A feeling of _____ ☐ A _____tone ☐ A character who _____ ☐ Interest in _____ ☐ Understanding of _____ ☐ Something else

Source: Bernabei & Hover (2022).

See p. 325 for the full-sized version of this template.

If you want students simply to respond to reading (no prompt)

1. Read something together.
2. Show students the reading response text structures.
3. Let them choose a text structure.
4. Have students use the text structure to write about the text by writing one sentence per box.
5. Have students read their kernel essays to other writers.
6. Repeat often to give them practice with a variety of other structures.
7. After students have written several, have them choose one to "pop" by adding details to turn it into a full essay.

Questions and Text Structures for Constructed Reading Responses

Questions and Answers About Understanding the Reading

GENERIC QUESTION STEMS	TEXT STRUCTURES TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS
1. What happens in the story? (Retell the story.) 2. What is the story mostly about right now? 3. How do you think _____ feels at the beginning and/or end of the story? 4. What is the conflict or problem of the story so far? 5. Who is more _____(helpful, nicer), _____(a character) or _____(another character)? 6. How does _____ change during the story? 7. Why does _____ do/think/say/ believe/ want? 8. What's one word you would use to describe _____(character)? 9. What lesson does _____ learn in the story? 10. What is the moral of the story? 11. In sentence _____, what does the word or phrase _____ suggest? 12. How are _____ and _____ alike/ different? 13. Why does _____ become _____ (upset, happy) when _____? 14. What does _____(character) mean when he/she says _____? 15. What can the reader tell (conclude) from the action in sentence(s) _____? 16. What is _____'s reaction when she/ he learns _____ show about her/his character?	**QA12345** Question / Answer / How do you know? / What does that mean? / How else do you know? / So . . . your answer is . . . what? **RACE** Restate the question / Answer / Cite evidence from the text / Explain what the evidence means **BA-DA-BINGING THE EVIDENCE** Answer to the question / What the character does, says, and/or thinks that proves my answer / What that shows **FIGURING OUT THE READING** I read the words "_____." / Which told me _____ / Then I read "_____." / Which told me _____ / And then I knew _____ **EXPLAINING A CHANGE** How ___ changes in the story / At the beginning, . . . (with evidence) / At the end, . . . (with evidence) / Another way to describe the change
17. How do the actions of _____ and/or _____ support the theme or moral? 18. What causes _____ to realize _____? 19. Why does _____ agree to _____? 20. What is _____'s attitude about_____? 21. What argument does _____ (a character) make to support _____'s (that character's) behavior/opinion? 22. What challenge(s) does _____ face? 23. What does _____ represent in the story?	

Source: Briseño, S., Briseño, K. & Bernabei, G. (2023).

Questions About Author's Choices

GENERIC QUESTION STEMS	TEXT STRUCTURES TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS
1. Why is_____ (an event or character) important? 2. Why does the author_____? 3. How does the author show that _____ (character) is _____ (characteristic)? 4. Why did the author write this story? 5. What does the author show us by including a description of _____? 6. How did the author help visualize _____? 7. What is the main reason the author included the sentence(s)_____? 8. Why does the author choose this setting for the story? 9. In sentence _____, the author uses the word(s)/phrase(s) _____ to suggest what? 10. What does the sensory language in the sentence _____ illustrate? 11. How does the description in the sentence(s) _____ affect the reader's understanding of the setting/ character? 12. The author includes the information in the sentence(s) _____ to help the reader do what? 13. What is the author's purpose in writing this story? 14. How does the author's description of _____help the reader understand _____? 15. What effect does the word/phrase _____have in the sentence _____? 16. How does _____ contribute to the development of the author's ideas? 17. _____is important in the story because it shows what? 18. How does the setting influence the plot of the story? 19. What is the effect of the author's use of _____?	**RACE** Restate the question / Answer / Cite evidence from the text / Explain what the evidence means **NOTICING THE AUTHOR'S MOVES** I read the words "_____." / Which told me _____ / Then I read "_____." / Which told me _____ / And then I knew the author did _____ to create _____ **THE EFFECT ON A READER** When I read "_____." / It made me feel/ picture/ think _____ / Which created _____. / If the author had used a different word/ phrase, such as _____ / It would have had this effect / So I think the author was trying to create _____. **THE EFFECT OF AN AUTHOR'S CHOICE** The author uses (pick one) ☐ Vocabulary ☐ Sensory images ☐ Figurative language ☐ Device: _____ ☐ Something else / An example / Another example / This creates (pick one) ☐ A mood of _____ ☐ A feeling of _____ ☐ A _____ tone ☐ A character who _____ ☐ Interest in _____ ☐ Understanding in _____ ☐ Something else

Source: Bernabei & Hover (2022).

See p. 322 for the full-sized versions of these templates.

If you want them to respond to reading with a student-written prompt

1. Read something together.
2. Show students the question stems and write some questions together.
3. Ask them to choose one of the questions to answer.
4. Show students the reading response text structures.
5. Let them choose a text structure.
6. Have students use the text structure to answer the question about the text by writing one sentence per box.
7. Have students read their kernel essays to other writers.
8. Repeat often to give them practice with a variety of other structures.
9. After they have written several kernel essays, have students choose one to "pop" by adding details to turn it into a full essay.

Common Extended Constructed Response Prompts and Text Structures

Informational How do the two pieces have the same message (or theme, life lesson, purpose, point . . .)?	**TWO VOICES, ONE MESSAGE**				
	The message	How one voice says it	How another voice says it	What does that mean?	Why the message is important to both
Informational How does _____ (a character, a situation, a place, an idea) change?	**SOMETHING CHANGED**				
	A noticeable change	In the beginning, . . .	Later . . .	Finally . . .	How to explain the change
Informational How are _____ and _____ alike (or different)?	**WAYS WE ARE ALIKE**				
	We both basically are _____	Another (surprising) similarity	A moment we reacted similarly	How our reactions were similar	Overall, how we are alike
Informational How do _____ and _____ benefit each other?	**A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP**				
	Who A and B are	How A helps B	How B helps A	What would happen if A and B didn't have each other	So that's why . . .
Argument What's better? _____ or _____ ? (or more important, more beneficial, more valuable, more beautiful, more impactful)	**THIS IS BETTER THAN THAT**				
	_____ is better than _____	One way I know	Another way I know	Even though some people _____,	. . . overall, _____ is better

Source: Briseño, S., Briseño, K. & Bernabei, G. (2023).

See p. 321 for the full-sized version of this template.

If you want students to respond to reading with a teacher-provided prompt

1. Read something together.
2. Show students the question they will answer.
3. Show students the reading response text structures.
4. Let them choose a text structure.
5. Have students use the text structure to answer the question about the text by writing one sentence per box.
6. Have students read their kernel essays to other writers.
7. Repeat often to give them practice with a variety of other structures.
8. After they have written several, have students choose one to "pop" by adding details to turn it into a full essay.

Tools/Supplies

- A common text
- Student journals
- A text structure (or a collection of reading response structures)
- A prompt or question (or the list of question stems)

Step 1: Reading a Common Text

Read one of the books together (or any selection). You may wish to start with the quick write provided, but you don't have to. Stop to discuss the story.

You can ask about any aspect of the story. Here are a few questions to get you started:

- What happened in the story?
- What did you notice?
- What confused you?
- What did you connect with? Why?
- What was the main character like?
- What parts of the story stuck out to you? Why?
- What writer's craft moves did you notice the author using?

Say: *To show our understanding, we're going to write a response to our story. Let's get our page ready to write.*

Step 2: Choosing a Path to Respond

In this lesson, step 2 can follow a few different tracks.

If you want students simply to respond to reading (no prompt), follow step 2a.

Step 2a: Choosing a Text Structure

If you are doing this for the first time, we recommend using the "Basic Reading Response Text Structures" without a prompt.

To familiarize them with this process, give students only one structure and practice it a few times with multiple stories.

Choose the text structure that you would like the students to use and project it (write it on the board, write it on chart paper, or display it under a document camera). If your students are comfortable using these structures, let them choose their own.

Continue on to Steps 3–6.

If you want them to respond to reading with a student-written prompt, follow steps 2b through 2d.

Step 2b: Creating Questions

Show students the question stems for reading response.

Say: *We are going to create our own questions about this book. Here's an example of a question we might write for* The Dot *by Peter H. Reynolds.* [Write this question on the board, write it on chart paper, or show it under the document camera: *How does Vashti's attitude toward art change during the story?*] *I'm not going to answer this question right now. I'm just going to write a few questions that I could answer. Take a few minutes and write two or three questions about the story that you could answer using the question stems I've provided. You don't need to answer them right now.*

Give the students time to write a few questions in their journals or on sticky notes.

Say: *Now that we have all written some questions, who would like to share theirs?*

As students share, write five to eight of their questions on the board or on chart paper, or show them under the document camera.

Step 2c: Choosing a Question to Answer

Now you have a bank of questions for students to answer. Keep the questions visible for students to choose.

Say: *Now you have several questions you could choose to answer. Choose one and write it at the top of your page (next to where you have written "My Response to* The Dot *by Peter H. Reynolds). This is the question you will answer, using a text structure.*

Step 2d: Choosing a Text Structure

To familiarize them with this process, give students only one structure and practice it a few times with multiple stories.

Choose the text structure that you would like the students to use and project it on the board, write it on chart paper, or display it under a document camera. If your students are comfortable using these structures, let them choose their own.

Continue on to Steps 3–6.

If you want students to respond to reading with a teacher-provided prompt, follow steps 2e through 2f.

Step 2e: Revealing the Question

For each book, we have provided you with some questions for short and extended responses. Feel free to use these or create your own using the question stems.

Say: *I want you to answer this question about the story: How does Vashti's attitude toward art change during the story? Write it at the top of your page (next to where you have written "My Response to* The Dot *by Peter H. Reynolds"). We will answer this question using a text structure.*

(Continued)

(Continued)

Step 2f: Choosing a Text Structure

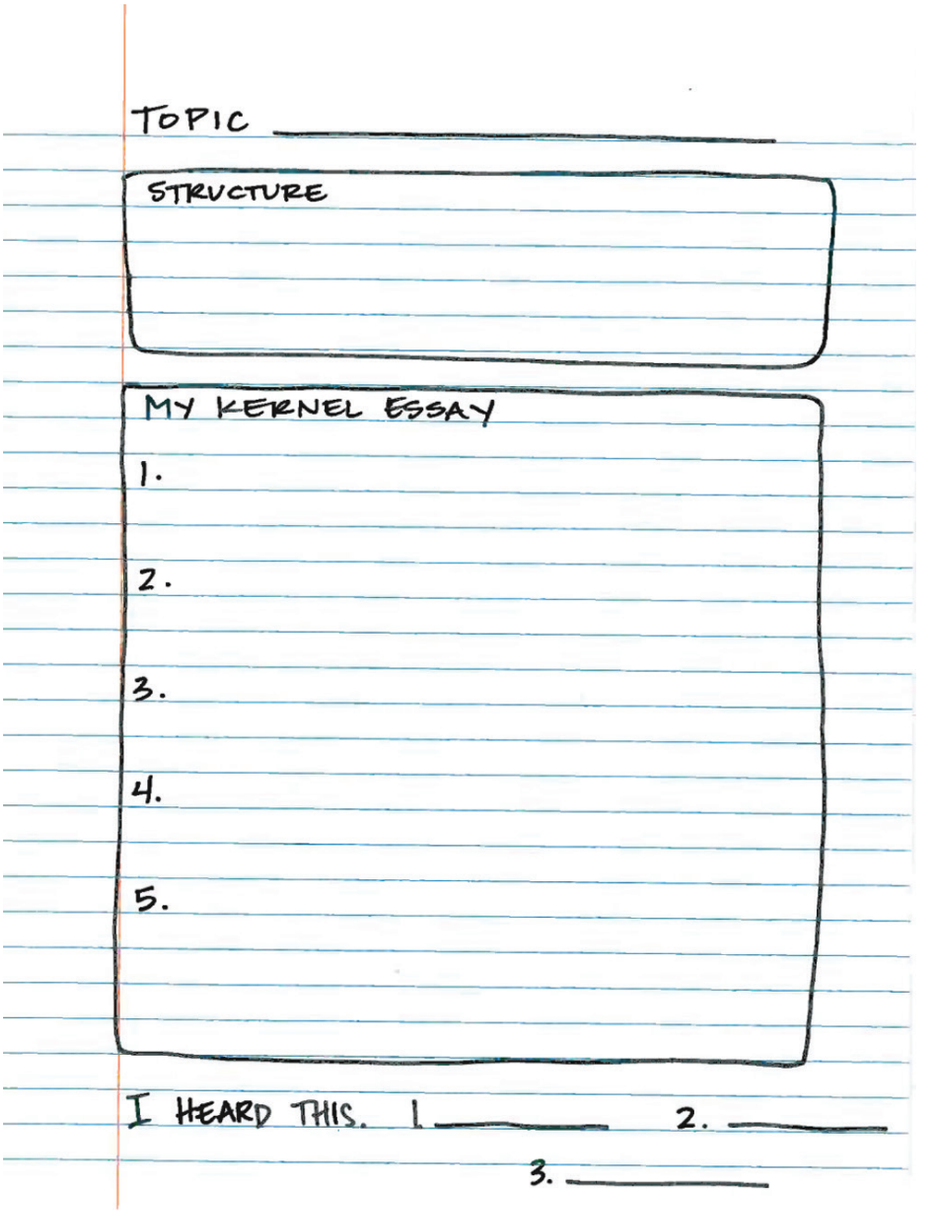
To familiarize them with this process, give students only one structure and practice it a few times with multiple stories.

Choose the text structure that you would like the students to use and project it: Write it on the board, write it on chart paper, or display it under a document camera. If your students are comfortable using these structures, let them choose their own.

Continue on to Steps 3–6.

Step 3: Writing a Kernel Essay, One Box at a Time

Have students create a page in their journals that looks like this.

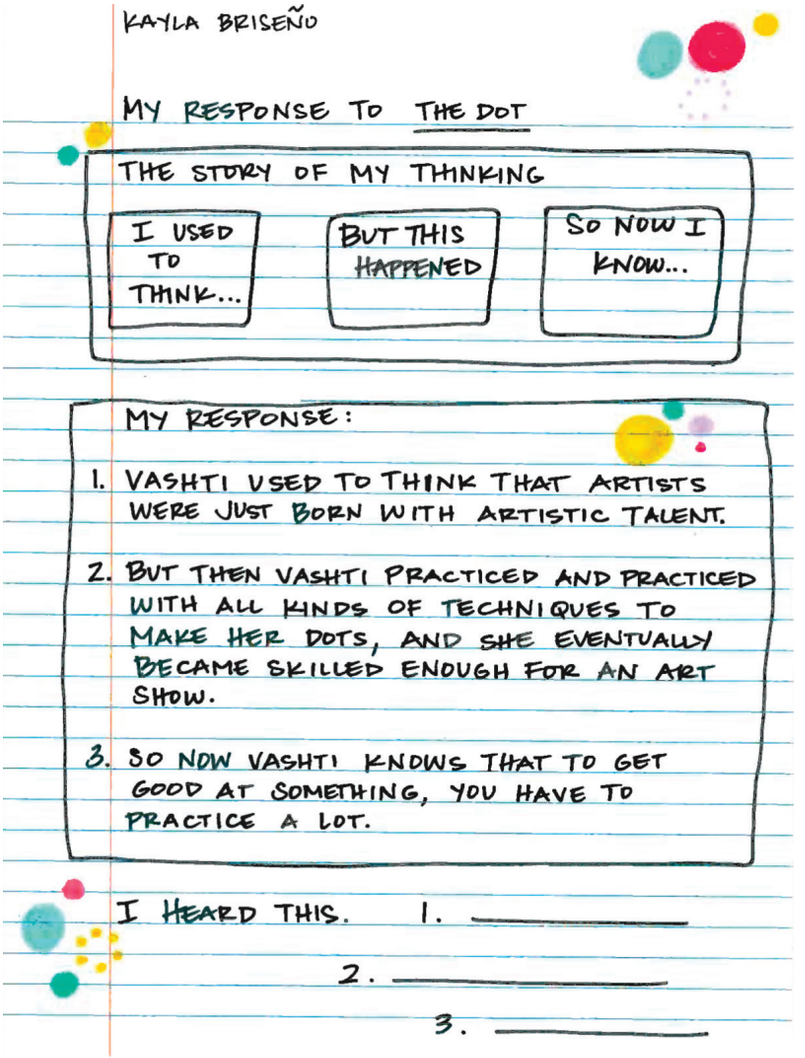


Say: *Now to write our kernel essay about our story* The Dot *by Peter H. Reynolds, we are going to use the text structure called "The Story of My Thinking," which has three boxes.* [If you have allowed the students to choose their own structure, skip this part.] *Remember that a kernel essay is small—you will only need to write one sentence per box. So how many sentences are we going to write?* [We hope your students will tell you three sentences.] *That's right, three. Remember that sentences start with a capital letter and end with some sort of punctuation. Now let's get started.*

We always recommend writing with your students, so you may wish to write your own kernel essay (on the board, chart paper, or on the document camera) as you walk them through the steps.

Say: *I'm going to write about how Vashti's thinking changed about how artists get better. The first box says, "I used to think . . . " So I'm going to write, "**Vashti** (not I) **used to think** that artists were just born with artistic talent." Go ahead and write your first sentence. If you need to change the words from the box in some way, go ahead.*

Give students time to write their sentences.



Say: *Now let's write our second sentence. The second box says, "But this happened . . ." I need to tell what happened in the story to change Vashti's thinking. So I'm going to write, "**But then** Vashti practiced and practiced with all kinds of techniques to make her dots, and she eventually became skilled enough for an art show." I don't need to use the words "But this happened." I'm just going to say what happened. Go ahead and write your next sentence.*

Give students time to write their sentences.

Say: *Now let's write our last sentence. The third box says, "So now I know . . ." I need to tell how Vashti's thinking changed. So I'm going to write, "**So now Vashti (not I) knows** that to get good at something, you have to practice it a lot." Hey! That's a truism. That last sentence is a great place to put a truism. You might want to try that, too. Go ahead and write your last sentence. If you need to change the words from the box in some way, go ahead.*

Give students time to write their sentences.

Step 4: Sharing the Kernel Essays (Don't Skip This Step!)

Writing should be social, and sharing is the main course, not the dessert, in the process, so *don't skip the sharing.* There will be students who think that they did not do the task correctly, or who didn't understand it at all, so their page might be blank. Sharing will help with that. They will have a chance to hear what other writers did with the structure.

Say: *We have written our kernel essays, and it's time to share what you wrote. Before I tell you how to move around, here are some ways not to do that sharing:*

1. **Say:** *"Here's my kernel essay. Read it."* [This is your chance to poke fun at—I mean, *imitate*—the lethargic behavior of your students when they just toss their notebooks at someone else when it's time to share. Ham it up. Have fun with this.] *What am I doing or not doing?*

   Students: *You're not sharing with your voice! You're just trading papers.*

   Say: *Exactly. We need to read our own writing, with our own voices.*

2. **Say:** *Here's the other wrong way to do it: "**Vashti used to think** that artists were just born with artistic talent. I mean, I thought that, too. My sister has always been good at art, and she's just good at everything. She's been into art ever since she was little. She was always drawing and painting and creating. She even sells her art now on her own website (www.maryreganart.com).* [It helps to do this part quickly, imitating that one student who always adds on a bunch of extra details. (You know the type.)] *What am I doing?*

   Students: *You're adding a whole bunch of details you didn't write. You're going on and on.*

   Say: *Yep. And while it is great to add details to your story (that's what we'll do when we pop and revise our kernel essays later), that's not the job for right now. Just read what you wrote, and then listen to your partner's essay.*

Say: *Now that you know what not to do, here's what you* should *do. Write "I heard this" at the bottom of your page. Then draw three lines next to it. When I say "go," I want you to stand up, find a partner, and take turns reading your kernel essays. Once someone has listened to your kernel essay, have the listener sign on one of the lines. Your job is to have three people listen to your kernel essay, get three signatures, listen to at least three kernel essays, and then sit down when you have finished. I'll know we are finished sharing when we have all returned to our seats.*

Allow students to move around the room and share their kernel essays. Once they have had a chance to get their signatures, gather them back together again and ask for volunteers to share with the class.

Say: *Now that you've had a chance to try out your writing on a few people's ears, who would like to share with the whole class? Did anyone hear a good one that we all need to hear?* [Watch as hands fly up after that question.]

Allow as many students to share as time allows. As students share their essays out loud, point to each step of the text structure to reinforce the structure.

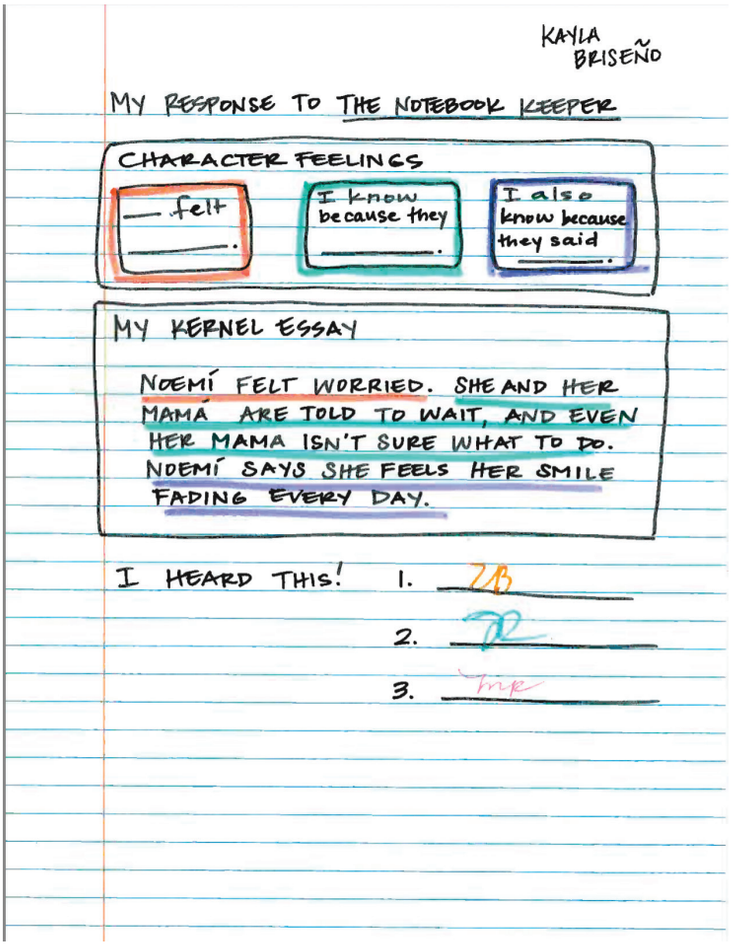
If a student has changed the structure in some way, celebrate it by writing it on the board or chart paper. **You might say**: *Oh, I noticed that Francisco has used the words "Now Vashti believes . . ." instead of "Now Vashti knows . . ." and that Lily has added an extra "But this happened . . ." because she just couldn't keep it to one sentence. If you'd like to use Francisco's "Story of My Thinking" or Lily's "Story of My Thinking" next time we use this text structure, go ahead.*

Allowing students to make these structures their own has powerful results. Not only will students start tweaking the structures to make them work for their writing, but before long, many will start finding and/or inventing their own. If you keep the text structures you use and discover on the wall, it will be filled in no time with student-created ones. Students will quickly see themselves as writers who make choices.

Step 5: Repeating the Process (Often)

Once students have practiced writing and sharing a kernel essay, repeat this process often to give them practice with a variety of the other reading response structures.

If you really want them to internalize a certain structure, consider having them practice it three or more times in a week. You may choose to type the structure for them to glue to the top of the page of their journals or have them write it themselves (this helps with internalizing the structure).



If you would like them to use a variety of structures, once you have practiced a few together, consider giving them a few to choose from and sharing what they come up with.

Step 6: Popping a Kernel Essay (Adding Details)

Once students have had some practice with writing kernel essays and they have a few to choose from, ask students to choose one they think they could pop (by adding more details—they might turn each sentence into at least one paragraph). If they are having trouble choosing, consider inviting them to choose two or three and trying them out on some listeners to see which one others find most compelling.

To develop a kernel essay, start by turning each sentence of the kernel essay into a paragraph. Here are some ideas for how to do that:

- Use the "like what" button. (After a statement, imagine a reader asking, "Like what?" The student will know what details to add.)
- Use jerk talk. (After a statement, imagine a real or imaginary listener who says, "No, it's not!" Prove it!")
- Add some ba-da-bings. (These are sentences that traditionally tell about circumstances and sensations: where your feet were, what you saw, and what you thought.)

- Add some pitchforks. (A pitchfork sentence or series of sentences takes one thing and branches it off into three or more.)
- Hunt for vague writing and change it into something specific.
- Add dialogue.
- Add (more) text evidence.
- Add a truism, and explain it.
- Add descriptions.
- Add metaphors, similes, or other writer's craft tools.
- Use the "three questions" technique. (Listeners write three questions, things they want to know about the writing.)
- Use the "Writer's Tools Chart" (found on the companion website) as a handy tool for revision.

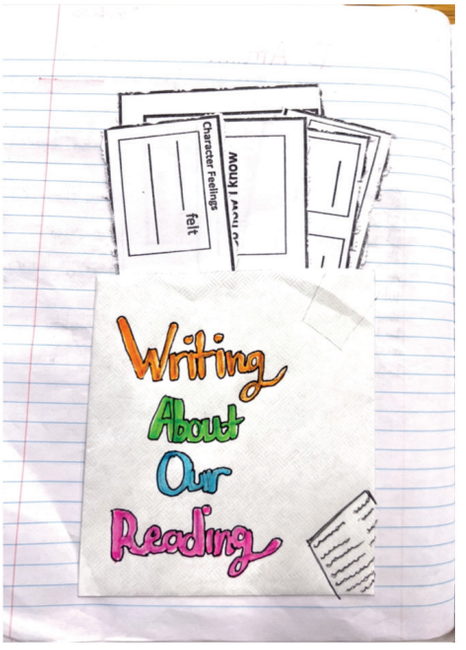
TEACHER DEBRIEF

Why Should I Give My Students All This Choice?

No matter which way you decide to go (unprompted or prompted), it is important to give students choices. Providing a variety of choices leads them to really think about what they are answering and what they need to say.

Why These Kinds of Questions?

While we're not reinventing the wheel with these question types, we want thinking to be in the forefront. Taking students beyond the surface level requires them to really think.



Why Should I Have My Students Create Their Own Questions?

While we've provided you with some questions for each nonfiction picture book, it is important for students to go through the question creation phase. Students are more involved when they write their own questions. It builds confidence. When they face these types of questions on a test, the task won't be as daunting because they have walked down that road before.

The main reason students don't share their writing is that they lack confidence in their answers. *What if I'm wrong?* When they are the question creators, not only are they confident to share, but they have been given steps to express and support their thinking.

Can I Use These Structures for More Than Just Reading Response?

Just about all writing is argumentative. We make a claim and prove it. Whenever we ask students to answer a question about a text, their answer is a claim (something they believe is true), and they have to back it up with some sort of proof—text evidence, examples from their own life, or information or ideas from something else they've read, watched, or learned. This kind of writing and thinking can be applied to all sorts of genres.

QR Code 0.8
Gretchen teaches how to use text structures to respond to reading (Part 1)
qrs.ly/kkg7dvx

QR Code 0.9
Gretchen teaches how to use text structures to respond to short answer questions (Part 2)
qrs.ly/wzg7dvy

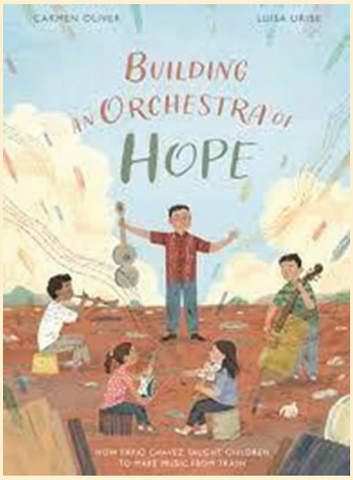
QR Code 0.10
Gretchen teaches how to use text structures to compose literary essays (Part 3)
qrs.ly/88g7dw0

Originally found in *Text Structures and Fables* by Gretchen Bernabei and Jayne Hover, a "3-Things Response" (also found on our book's companion website) is another useful tool to get your students to respond to reading (or to a video, a speaker, a field trip—anything), unprompted.

Lessons

1 Building an Orchestra of Hope

by Carmen Oliver and illustrated by Luisa Uribe



Summary: Favio Chávez loved music, but over time his focus changed to environmental science, which led him to Paraguay. While there, he discovered families who lived and worked in the landfills. Soon he combined his love of music and the environment to build an orchestra of instruments, which breathed new life and hope into the lives of many.

Why We Love It: This story brings new meaning to the phrase "from trash to treasure." Chávez's determination to use his skills and passions to better the lives of others is inspiring and thought-provoking. It leads the reader to think, "What trash can I turn to music?"

Topics: trash, landfills, Paraguay, South America, the environment, recycling, music, orchestras, musical instruments, music programs, people working in landfills, village life, subsistence living

Big Ideas: hope, determination, problem solving, dreaming for a better life, resourcefulness, caring for others, trash to treasure, teaching others, the power of music, lifting others, poverty, hope for the future, the power of performance

Back Matter:

- "More About Favio Chávez and the Recycled Orchestra of Cateura"
- Selected bibliography

LESSON STEPS:

1 QUICK WRITE.

(Choose One):

- Have you ever picked up a common, everyday object and turned it into something else?
- What are some problems (maybe make a list) that need a solution? What ideas do you have to fix or change one of them?
- Do you ever think about what happens to trash when we throw it out? What can you imagine might be the best thing to happen to it?

Write about this for 3 minutes and then set it aside.

2 READ.

Read the picture book *Building an Orchestra on Hope* by Carmen Oliver and discuss the story. Discuss parts of the story that stick out to you or that you connect with. What writer's craft moves do you notice the author using? Notice the parts of the story.

Building an Orchestra of Hope

by Carmen Oliver and illustrated by Luisa Uribe

1

3 SHARE THE STRUCTURE.

Show the students the structure found in the picture book. Reread the story, looking for chunks together and watching for how the author moves from one part to the other.

A Problem Solver's Journey				
The person's background and what brought them to the situation	What they noticed that gave them an idea	How the new idea started to take shape	A new problem that popped up and how they solved it	The result and who all benefitted

4 INVITATION TO WRITE.

Here are several ways you can get students to write.

- Have students use the text structure to write a kernel essay summary of the story. (Give them between 5 and 10 minutes to do this.)
- Have the students use the text structure to write their own piece in a kernel essay. (Give them between 5 and 10 minutes to do this.)
- See what students come up with. (Give them around 10 minutes.) Here are some possibilities:
    - A page of thoughts in their quick write
    - Examples of the author's craft moves
    - A text structure

Whatever they choose to write, let them know that they can change anything they need to and make it their own.

5 SHARE.

Invite students to try their writing on someone else's ears. This is a crucial step! The sharing is just as important as the writing.

1 Want to Go Deeper?

Try these options.

OPTION 1: CRAFT CHALLENGE

- **Noun + Verb Pitchfork**: This author uses a noun + verb pitchfork pattern where she creates a few two- or three-word sentences with a noun and verb in a row. Here's an example from the story:

  "Glass clinked. Metal pinged. Plastic bags rustled."

  Look through your piece to see where you can use a noun + verb pitchfork. After you write, try it out on someone's ears to see how it sounds in your writing.

- **Catalog:** In this story, the author creates a list of nouns, which is a rhetorical device called a catalog. Here's the example from the story:

  *"Colá collected oven **trays**, old **drainpipes**, door **keys**, metal **forks** and **spoons**, X-ray **films**, bottle **caps**, glue **canisters**, plastic **buttons**, paint **cans**, wooden **crates**, and oil **barrels**."*

  Look through your piece to see where you can use a catalog. After you write, try it out on someone's ears to see how it sounds in your writing.

- **Anaphork (Anaphora + Pitchfork)**: This author uses something we call an anaphork, a rhetorical device that combines anaphora—the repeating of a beginning word or phrase in successive phrases—and a pitchfork. Here's an example from the story:

  *"**He taught them how to** hold the bow at the right angle. **He taught them how to** hold the violin under the chin. **He taught them how to** read notes."*

  Look through your piece to see where you can try an anaphork. After you write, try it out on someone's ears to see how it sounds in your writing.

OPTION 2: ANALYZE

1. **Start with a big idea.**

   - If you want students to find the big ideas themselves, try asking, "What big ideas do you see in this story that tell you what it's really about?"
   - If students need a nudge, try using some of the big ideas from the list in this lesson's introduction and have students provide evidence from the story to support their answers. Ask, "How is this story about [the big idea]? How does the author explore [the big idea]? Where in the story do you see that?"

2. **Turn the big idea into a truism (thematic statement).**

   Once you have identified the big ideas, use one of them to create truisms for this story. Here are a few (found in the story) to get you started:

   - *When the world sends us garbage, we can choose to send back music.*
   - *Nothing can change your outlook as powerfully as music.*
   - *A person's skills are never wasted.*

   Have students write and share their own truisms.

   Ask them to prove their truisms by providing evidence from the text. They might imagine a listener saying, "Oh yeah? How do you know? How is that true in the story?"

Want to Go Deeper?

Try these options.

1

OPTION 3: READING RESPONSE

Students can compose short or extended responses to demonstrate understanding by answering any of these questions. Look in the appendix to find a list titled "Basic Reading Response Text Structures" and a list of "Useful Essay Question Stems for Nonfiction Texts."

Questions for Reading Response

- Explain how Favio's training contributed to the community.
- How does the setting influence the plot of this story?
- Explain how the people living and working in the landfill benefitted from the orchestra.
- How does the author show that Favio is resourceful?
- What happens in the story? (Retell the story.)

OPTION 4: EXTENSION IDEAS

- Dig into the back matter:
  - Use the "More About Favio Chávez and the Recycled Orchestra of Cateura" piece as a short nonfiction text to read, discuss, create and answer questions, and write.
  - Use the selected bibliography to jump-start research about this topic.
- Do an unconventional materials challenge: What useful thing can you make out of trash? Plan, create, write, and speak about it. It could be a classroom or a schoolwide challenge. Use it to bring awareness to the need to reduce waste and recycle properly.
- Put on a fashion show of trash: Bring in a variety of trash items and challenge groups of students to create clothing out of the materials to model in a fashion show. Consider inviting spectators to watch. Consider having students include some of their research about recycling and conservation in the show.
- Make music out of nontraditional materials and instruments.
- Talk to the music teacher about unusual instruments they have encountered and ask them to do a show and tell.
- Watch the YouTube video "Landfill Harmonic—the 'Recycled Orchestra,'" available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYbORpgSmjg&ab_channel=KeepAmericaBeautiful.
- Research recycling, creating things out of trash, and/or landfill living.
  - Create an infographic about that research.
  - Create a poem based on your research.
- Research other people or groups who have used things in an unconventional way.
  - Use the text structure "A Problem Solver's Journey" to write about your research.

1 Student Samples for *Building an Orchestra of Hope*

QUICK WRITE

by Hazel Gonzalez, 4th Grade

Cancer is a problem we have in the world. Many people have died because of cancer. We need a cure for cancer soon!

QUICK WRITE

by Luke Waun, 5th Grade

I have turned a paper into a marble track. It was hard and confusing to stand it up. I was really focusing and got it done! It took me six days.

TRUISM

by Sydney Hines, 12th Grade

Hope can manifest and grow in various forms, much like the branches of a tree.

CRAFT CHALLENGE (NOUN + VERB PITCHFORK)

by Hazel Gonzalez, 4th Grade

Paper rustled. Books flew. Backpacks fell.

CRAFT CHALLENGE (NOUN + VERB PITCHFORK)

by Luke Waun, 5th Grade

Paper creased. Marbles binked. Pencils shook.

CRAFT CHALLENGE (CATALOG)

by Luke Waun, 5th Grade

I collected string, glistening beads, big charms, and leather.