

Explicitly teaching the text types

Model the text type

Modelling (or demonstration) is a method by which teachers can make explicit for the students the purpose, structure and language features of the type of writing needed.

Three elements need to be modelled:

1. The purpose of the text
2. The structure of the text
3. The language features of the text

Show students examples of good models and unsuccessful models, sometimes using student examples.

Some reinforcing activities

- Ask students to reconstruct a text from jumbled paragraphs. Provide a proforma of the text structure and glue the paragraphs into an appropriate sequence.
- Discuss the language features of the text type: the use of technical terms, the present tense, the third person and so on
- Provide a text with colloquial terms instead of technical vocabulary, and ask students to find the inappropriate terms and replace them.

Joint construction of the text type

During the joint construction stage, students contribute as the teacher leads the class through the creation of a text. The teacher reinforces the structure and language features by asking “What do we do first?” “What do we need to do next?” “Is “stinks” an appropriate term to use in an information report?”

This teaching stage need repetition until students are very familiar with what to do. Small group guided writing lessons will be helpful for the writers needing additional support.

Some reinforcing activities

- Provide students with a scaffold for organising their information about a topic under investigation.
- Discuss the use of flow charts or diagrams to organise information
- Discuss the use of time lines to sequence information
- Examine advertisements to discuss intended audience and purpose
- Divide the class into groups, each group being responsible for one aspect of a specified text. Regroup to ensure each aspect of the text is represented. Discuss the organisation to see that it makes sense (for procedures, narratives, recounts, reports, expositions).

Independent Writing

Students will be most successful if they first write the text type that closely parallels the one jointly worked on in class.