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How to use the Language Pathways Summary Tables

The Summary Tables can help you identify the type of text you and your students are working with. We're using the term "Key Language Use" to identify different types, or categories, of texts. These different types of texts have different purposes and therefore have different linguistic patterns and language features that students need to be explicitly taught.

Here are some steps to help guide you. You can use these steps when reading, writing, or discussing texts.

1. Identify the primary **purpose** of the text. The purpose of each Key Language Use appears in the first row of each summary table. Then look at the different types of text within each Key Language Use (Row 3 of the table) and determine the focus of the particular text you are working with.
2. Consider your instructional context for **planning** purposes (co-teaching or stand-alone class). The Summary Tables can help with **unit** planning as well as **language lesson** planning.
 - a. What standard are you addressing? What are your learning objectives?
 - i. Use the section on **organizational patterns** (Row 2) to teach how each Key Language Use includes certain types of information. This helps students learn how to anticipate when they read (procedural steps, character descriptions, causal relationships, etc.). This also clarifies what students need to include in their own writing within a Key Language Use.
 - ii. Use the section on **language patterns** (Row 4) to help identify explicit grammar instruction that supports meaning-making within the Key Language Use. Choose grammatical patterns that are prevalent in the text or ones you want students to learn. Be selective in your choices.
 - b. What is the end product? How will students demonstrate they've met the objectives?
 - c. What pre-learning and/or scaffolding will best support your students?

Language Pathways

Summary Table for Narrate

Purpose of narratives	To provide entertainment (stories and storytelling); To provide details or an interpretation of a past event (personal recount); To engage and extend the imagination.		
Organizational patterns for narratives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narratives follow a <i>story grammar</i> with an orientation, a complication, and a solution or conclusion. • Personal experiences include an orientation, a series of events or chronology, and personal commentary. • Literary recounts often create an atmosphere, or mood; foreshadow actions within the organizational structure. 		
Types of narrative recounts	Stories and Storytelling	Personal Experiences	Literary Recount
	Fictional stories to entertain, to pass on cultural traditions and values, or to give insights into the human condition. Animals usually have human characteristics. Examples: Fiction: mysteries, romance, adventure, horror, fantasy, science fiction, fables, legends, myths	Generally nonfiction, but may include embellished details that add to entertainment and interest quality Examples: Vacation, field trip, family excursion, sports event, any personal experience	Retells factual or imaginary events and often includes aesthetic features to add interest Examples: Poetry, prose, or multimodal texts
Language patterns of narratives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language choices take audience and social purpose of text into account. • Writer/Speaker uses first or third person most commonly. • Descriptive language is used to develop the narrative and enhance images of characters and their actions, events, and settings: (<i>expanded noun and prepositional phrases help reader/listener visualize appearance, unique and embellished features</i>); verb groups (<i>thinking/feeling/saying/doing verbs</i>) describe behaviors (usually past tense). • Literary language (<i>similes, metaphors, synonyms, antonyms, literary vocabulary, humor</i>) and dialog may be added to engage the reader. • Cohesion across text to clarify connections between characters, events or complications, settings, summaries or commentary (<i>lexical chains: pronouns, synonyms, demonstratives, possessives, articles, substitutions, ellipsis; use of given/new information patterns to maintain flow across sentences, paragraphs, and extended text</i>). 		

Language Pathways

Summary Table for Inform

Purpose of inform	To give information about a topic; to describe what took place; to tell how to do something, all in a nonfiction context.			
Organizational patterns for informing recounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally begin with an orientation, giving the reader/listener the background information needed to understand what the text is about (<i>what, who, where, when</i>). • Materials are usually included when providing instructions and procedures. • Provide descriptions and clear details; instructions and procedures describe a series of events in chronological sequence; historical recounts provide additional background and factors relevant to the event. • Conclusions are optional except for historical recounts, which usually provide concluding or summary statements regarding significance of the event. 			
Types of informing recounts	Information Reports	Instructions	Procedures	Historical Recounts
	Nonfiction reports that organize information by classifying and describing subclasses, components, or aspects of a larger <i>class of things</i> . Examples: Living things like plants and animals. Nonliving things like computers, cars, as well as oceans, or space	Nonfiction information to tell someone how to do or make something through sequenced events or steps. Examples: Recipes, game rules, how-to-do steps, directions, projects	Nonfiction information that focuses on a sequence of events, all of which are connected to a specific event. Examples: Science experiments, lab reports, news summaries	Nonfiction information that focuses on the significance of an event that took place prior to the present. Examples: The 14 th Amendment, The Normandy Landing, Civil Rights Movement
Language patterns of informing recounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language choices take audience and purpose of text into account. • Writer/Speaker tone is one of an authority on the topic; the idea of being the expert (<i>factual, declarative statements; action verbs to describe behaviors; passive voice to state facts and show relationships</i>). • Detailed descriptions in all types of recounts using <i>expanded noun, verb and prepositional phrases that clarify type, quantity, size, shape, order/chronology, placement, location, manner</i>. • Precision, including <i>technical language, clear sequences and steps, labeled diagrams, charts, formulas, graphs</i>. • Generalized nouns to name class of things, such as <i>caterpillars, immigrants, legislation, acids and bases</i>. • Relational verbs to link parts to whole (<i>be, have, belong to</i>); describe attributes; and state facts. • Cohesion across text (<i>lexical chains: pronouns, synonyms, substitution to rename topic or subject</i>), use of given/new information patterns to maintain flow across sentences and paragraphs. 			

Language Pathways

Summary Table for Argue

Purpose of an argument	To persuade someone to your point of view or to argue that some sort of action be taken.			
Organizational pattern of an argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin with a statement of position about an issue (stating a claim or expressing a point of view). • Provide background information about the issue as needed to support the audience. • Give reasons (personal responses and reviews), provide evidence, and connect these to point of view or claim (thesis). • Anticipate counter-claims, evaluate multiple perspectives, refuting them with evidence or challenges. Debates, which include two-sided arguments, present Position A, then Position B and provide recommendations. • Restate points of view or claims that sums up position and may include a call to action. 			
Types of arguments	Personal Response	Persuasive	Debate	Critical Response or Interpretive
	Personal opinions or points of view, likes and dislikes, often about familiar topics. Developmentally, this is the first type of argument students are expected to produce.	Considering the audience determines language choices, background information, type and manner of persuasion for the purpose of influencing behavior or thinking. Generally requires some research into the issue but usually presents only one side.	Presents two sides of an issue. Usually requires research to inform claims and provide evidence. Generally follows a logical (rhetorical) reasoning pattern to persuade others. Subjectivity is often disguised through word choices and sentence structures.	For younger grades this is tied to personal responses and includes positive and negative comments about the issue or presented argument. Older grades are expected to identify, deconstruct, and challenge the author's assumptions.
Language patterns for developing arguments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language choices take audience and purpose of text into account. • Writer/Speaker uses first person (personal response/point of view) or third person (neutral stance) to make claims and provide reasons/evidence. • Word choices (<i>evaluative, emotive or objective language; inclusive or exclusive language choices to create group identities, beliefs, and perspectives; models of obligation and degree; suggestions of objectivity or subjectivity with passive or active voice</i>). • Connect and strengthen opinions and claims with linking conjunctions (<i>as a result, based on the analysis, therefore, because</i>); logical sequence signal words (<i>first, in addition, finally</i>) and causal relationships (<i>if/then clauses</i>); complex sentences (<i>relative clauses: The issue, which has divided the people..</i>); adverbials to integrate multiple perspectives (<i>on the other hand..., some argue...</i>); comparative language (<i>green energy has greater potential in the future than fossil fuels</i>). • Cohesion across text using lexical chains (<i>pronouns, synonyms, definitions, antonyms that rename subject</i>), nominalization, and abstractions (<i>the decision, these issues</i>). 			

Language Pathways

Summary Table for Explain

Purpose of explanations	To explain how or why about a phenomenon or to analyze how things work.					
Organizational patterns for explanations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying statement of the phenomenon. Explanation sequence (for sequential, cyclical, causal explanations). Description, explanation, interaction among parts (for systems explanations). Description, explanation, factors and consequences (for factorial, consequential explanations).* Conclusion (optional for sequential, cyclical, causal explanations); general statement (for systems, factorial and consequential with a reinforcement of factors and/or evaluative statement). 					
Types of explanations	<p>Sequential</p> <p>Explains <i>how</i> something is or works in a linear sequence.</p> <p>Examples: How do plants grow? How does a bill become a law?</p>	<p>Causal</p> <p>Explains <i>how</i> something happens by showing how each step causes the next step.</p> <p>Examples: How does a volcano erupt? How is energy generated?</p>	<p>Cyclical</p> <p>Explains a phenomenon where the last step of the cycle becomes the first step.</p> <p>Examples: What is the water cycle? What is the life cycle of animals?</p>	<p>System</p> <p>Explains <i>how</i> a system operates or functions.</p> <p>Examples: How do the branches of government work together?</p>	<p>Factorial*</p> <p>Explains <i>why</i> something is so based on factors leading up to an outcome. Makes clear relationships of cause and effect.</p> <p>Examples: What events led to WWII? What factors contribute to changes in the climate?</p>	<p>Consequential*</p> <p>Explains the consequences of a particular input; the focus is the causal relationships that lead to the result.</p> <p>Examples: What are the effects of global warming? What are the consequences of pesticides?</p>
Language patterns for developing explanations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language choices take audience and purpose of text into account. Writer/Speaker tone is one of an authority on the phenomenon (<i>factual, declarative statements; timeless present</i>) Word choices (<i>precise/technical language, expanded noun and verb phrases that clarify type, quantity, size, shape, placement</i>). Connectors and dependent clauses match purpose of explanation (<i>causal: because, if...so, as a result, when; cyclical/sequential: first, next, finally</i>), and relationships between components (<i>these contribute, resulting in, while, due to</i>). Cohesion across text (<i>lexical chains: pronouns, demonstratives, synonyms, abstract and generalized nouns to rename and refer to phenomenon; given/new information patterns to maintain flow across complex sentences and</i> 					

*Found more frequently in secondary grades.

Language Pathways

Language of Classroom Discussions

Purpose of classroom discussions: To support communication skills and the co-construction of knowledge in small groups, large groups, pair work and whole class discussions.		
Classroom Discursive Cues	Rapport in Communication	Reflexive & Critical Thinking
Classroom cues that help students and teachers work together.	Communication skills that build rapport with others and help everyone achieve their discussion objectives.	Techniques that help question and challenge assumptions, examining the relationship between literacy and socio-political discourse.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn-taking resources: Become aware of the turn-taking patterns during discussions and master the skill of taking turns in an effective and appropriate manner (<i>when to interrupt and when to ask questions</i>). • Contextualization resources: Recognize and respond to both verbal language (<i>language, intonations, stress</i>) and nonverbal languages (<i>facial expressions, gestures, body position</i>). • Narrative resources: Become aware of the different narrative style other peers use in classroom discussion, and respect the differences in narratives (<i>by listening attentively, by thinking about the story before asking clarifying questions</i>). • Questions types: Use different types of questions (<i>close-ended, open-ended, clarification request</i>) according to different purpose and situation, in order to make sense of discussion content. • Multimodal resources: Use a variety of supports to aid in communication (<i>pictures, gestures, graphs, diagrams, video/audio displays, online resources, digital games</i>). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware of the social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of peers and pay attention to some hidden social norms to show respect and to build co-membership (<i>using body language to show interest, respect, attention</i>). • Master the skills of connecting with others' ideas (<i>going back to Lisa's idea...; Did you mention...before?</i>) and making transitions by using effective and polite sentences and phrases (<i>Shall we talk about...now? I understand what you mean, but...</i>). • Listen and speak purposefully to achieve the goal of discussion (<i>to make sense, elaborate, to extend, to agree or disagree, to give feedback, to summary</i>). • Adjust their linguistic repertoire (<i>verbal and nonverbal languages, styles, degree of formality</i>) according to specific purpose, nature, and participants, in order to make the discussion go more smoothly. • Become aware of conflicts that arise in conversations and master some strategies to solve these conflicts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to reflexively decode the texts through discussion and to critically examine some hidden norms (<i>enforced ideologies or biased perceptions</i>) in the texts. They might ask questions like: <i>Is the depiction of this place authentic or biased?? What does this story convince us to believe?</i> • Recognize that the content and organization (<i>visual display, language</i>) of texts serve to legitimate certain groups and to marginalize other groups. By analyzing these elements, students might understand how inequalities in class, race and gender are enacted in these literacy texts. • Become aware of how power dynamics happen in their own discussion groups, and learn to strategically make all members (from linguistically, racially and culturally diverse backgrounds) engaged in discussion. • Draw on their own resources to explicitly and critically connect them to the discussion topic, and reflexively examine their own positions in response to these discussions (<i>why I think the author is biased? What are the choices for me, if I want to confront these inequalities?</i>).