

NON-FICTION TEXT – EXPLANATION TEXTS

An explanation text generally answers 'how' or 'why' questions and includes causes, motives, reasons, and justifications.

Purpose	Common examples of text type	Generic Text Structure / Language Features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help someone understand a process or why something is or has happened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining electricity, forces, food chains etc. in science Explaining the causes of historic events such as wars and revolutions. Explaining the role of the Nile in determining the seasons in Ancient Egypt Explaining phenomena such as the water cycle or how a volcano erupts in geography Explaining religious traditions and practices in RE Encyclopaedia entries Technical manuals 	<p>Structure often includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A title which should be a question and begin 'how' or 'why' An introduction/introductory paragraph to introduce the topic Series of logical (often chronological) explanatory steps Main body - a list of logical steps (paragraphs in KS2) to explain why or how something happens. Can be extended later in KS2 with additional, specific information. Paragraphs usually beginning with a topic sentence Often illustrated by diagrams to aid understanding Conclusion - paragraph to relate the subject to the reader Formal language Present tense Causal connectives and sentence signposts to link explanation Generalisation Detail to help understand points – often in form of information Technical vocabulary

Skills Progression

EYFS	N/A	N/A
KS1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write simple explanatory texts with a three-part structure in sentences or short paragraphs. These may be based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real experiences or processes e.g. <i>why bees are Important...</i>, <i>How our hamster escaped...</i> Familiar stories e.g. <i>Little Red Hen</i> Play and invention e.g. <i>Why bananas are curly...</i> The structure should comprise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A title which sets up expectations for the reader e.g. <i>Why we must look after our bees...</i> An opening that introduces the reader to the topic and signals the purpose of the text e.g. <i>Bees are important because they can make honey.</i> An ordered list of events or reasons leading up to the outcome signalled in the title e.g. <i>First, she asked all the animals to help plant the seeds but they all said 'No', so she did it herself. Then she asked them to help...</i> A conclusion which follows from the reasons listed and links back to the title e.g. <i>So without bees, we would have no fruit. Now you know why they are so important.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where appropriate, use generalising words: e.g. <i>most, many, some, few</i> Use connectives for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time and sequence: <i>then, before, when</i> etc. <i>first second</i> etc. to sequence information leading towards the conclusion Cause and effect to link reasons/motives and conclusions: <i>so..., so that..., because..., in order to... , that's why...,</i> etc. Use complete simple and compound sentences to give information clearly and objectively, with adjectives to denote size, colour, behaviour etc. Use prepositions to show position and direction: <i>behind, above, towards</i> etc. Write in the present tense and usually 3rd person to give text an impersonal and objective voice

Skills Progression

LKS2	<p>As KS1, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the use of three-part structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General statement to introduce the topic, e.g. <i>in the autumn some birds migrate</i> - Series of logical steps explaining how or why something occurs, e.g. <i>because the days get shorter and there is less light...</i>, - End with a summary statement or memorable piece of information. <i>As a result, Dinosaurs quickly became extinct along with about 50% of other animal species.</i> • Interest the reader e.g. with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A title that captures the text <i>The discovery of bubble gum; Why are dragons extinct?</i> - An exclamation: <i>Beware – foxes can bite!</i> - Questions, <i>Did you know that...?</i> - Tempting turns of phrase: <i>strange as it may seem..., not many people know that..., Interestingly...</i> - Add extra, interesting bits of information e.g. <i>the first balloons were made from animal intestines.</i> • Explore options for organising and reorganising sentence order which lead most effectively to the conclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a range of connectives and generalisers to link sentences and add interest for readers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for cause and effect e.g. <i>this means that..., as a result..., owing to..., in order to, leading to..., where..., when..., therefore..., consequently...,</i> - to add information: e.g. <i>as well as..., furthermore..., additionally..., moreover...,</i> - to compare: <i>like the..., similarly..., as with..., equally..., in contrast to.., etc.</i> - for emphasis: <i>most of all..., most importantly..., In fact..., without doubt.., etc.</i> - to generalise e.g. <i>all..., many..., the majority..., typically..., Like most..., always..., often..., sometimes., usually...</i> - to conclude: <i>finally.., so..., thus..., in conclusion..., to sum up..., which explains why..., etc.</i> • Use technical language, explaining what it means where necessary • Use descriptive language to illustrate key points and help the reader build a picture of what is being explained • Use mostly present tense, 3rd person in formal style for an unknown audience
UKS2	<p>As LKS2, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help readers to understand explanations through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introductions that link to their experiences e.g. <i>No doubt you will have seen a suspension bridge, and it's almost as likely that you've travelled over one.</i> - Giving examples: <i>other mammals, such as flying squirrels and gliding possums, can only glide for short distances.</i> - Inventing similes to illustrate points e.g. <i>a tree's bark is like our skin..., the cables of a suspension bridge are stretched under tension like a spring..,</i> - Possible use of diagrams, charts, illustrations or models. • Consolidate and extend the explanation text structure from Y3/4 to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expanding the range of connectives and generalisers, particularly those showing cause and effect - Use of provisional statements with words and phrases like <i>usually..., seem to be..., tend to...,</i> - Opinions as well as facts e.g. <i>Some people still believe that... It used to be thought that..</i> - Technical vocabulary to add precision e.g. <i>spine, compression, glucose</i> - References to sources of evidence to add authority e.g. <i>Most people now believe..., However, last year, a new variety was discovered...</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vary sentence structure, length and type e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complex sentences to combine information effectively: <i>The Outer bark keeps a tree from losing too much water, which could happen easily in a plant so large...;</i> - Sentences with lists of three: <i>Pulleys are used on boats to hoist sails, in garages to lift engines and in cranes for shifting heavy weights;</i> - Active and passive voices: <i>suspension bridges have cables strung between tall towers from which a deck is hung (or suspended);</i> - Conditional and hypothetical (<i>if...then</i>) sentences e.g.: <i>If trees lose (were to lose) their bark, they would die because...; If Fleming hadn't accidentally noticed the mould, we might not have penicillin today.</i>