

## Non-Fiction Craft and Structure 1





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## College and Career Readiness Standards for Reading:

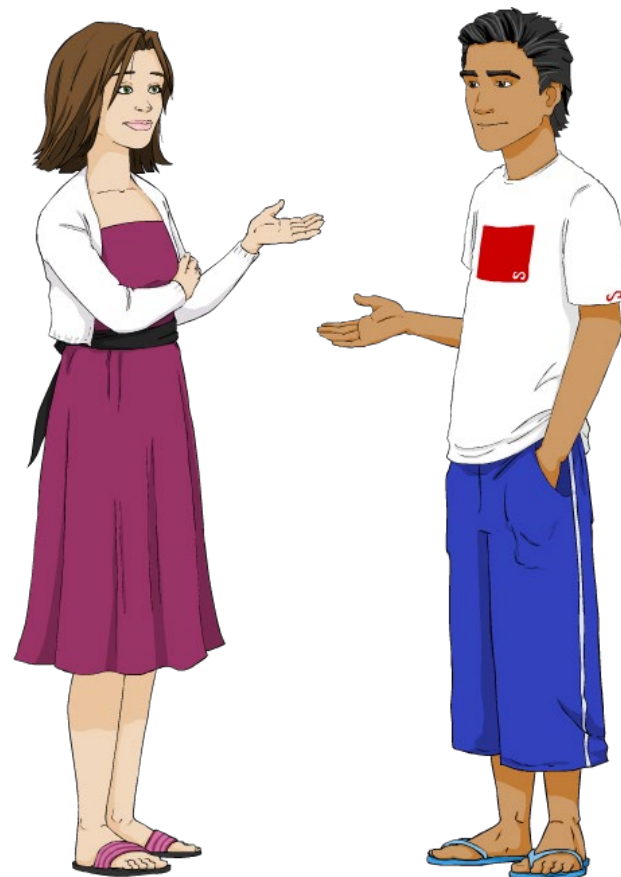
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.



When analyzing any text, it is important to be aware of the author's purpose for writing.

As a class or in pairs, try to brainstorm some non-fiction texts that might fall under each of the following purposes:

- entertain
- inform
- instruct
- persuade.



Look at your lists. Could any of the text types you suggested fall under another category?



It is important to pay attention not only to *what* the author says, but also *how* he or she says it. Elements such as structure, content and language can reveal a great deal about the author's purpose.

When analyzing a non-fiction text, consider the following.

- **Rhetoric:** does the author use emotionally charged words or neutral language to advance a point of view?
- **Structure:** how does the author choose to present the information?
- **Content:** what details does the author use to support his or her main ideas?





The **tone** of a piece of writing gives clues about the author's point of view. We can determine tone by considering the author's word choice.

Compare and contrast the tone of the following passages:

“Little progress was made at the recent school board meeting due to low turnout. The lack of attendance on the part of board members affects the entire district, particularly the students.”

“Since no one bothered showing up to the school board meeting, nothing got done. People don't seem to care about what happens in our schools, and students are suffering as a result.”

How does the language differ in these passages?

In addition to interpreting the **denotative**, or literal, meaning of a word, we must also consider the **connotative**, or implied, meaning.

For example, the words “thin” and “scrawny” have the same denotative meaning. However, “scrawny” has a negative connotation, while “thin” is more neutral.



When evaluating word choice, consider the author’s use of verbs and nouns. Strong, active verbs evoke emotion in an audience and inspire action. Certain nouns might carry connotations that impact the author’s tone.



# Impact of language and content



# Structure review





# Gettysburg Address



There are several ways that authors of non-fiction texts can back up their claims or ideas.

Relevant quotations help support an idea by showing that a claim is supported by another person.

Proven facts and statistics provide concrete examples that validate claims.

An **anecdote** about a real incident helps the audience relate to information and lends perspective.

An **allusion** to a well-known event or text helps call certain ideas or emotions to mind without going into too much detail.

Look back at Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.  
How many of these tactics can you identify?

# Student analysis





When analyzing non-fiction texts, keep the following questions in mind.

1. **Purpose:** Who is the target audience and what is the overall purpose of the piece?
2. **Rhetoric:** How does the author use language to enhance his or her point?
3. **Structure:** How has the author organized the information?
4. **Tone:** What emotion comes through in the writing?
5. **Word choice:** How do specific nouns, verbs and phrases contribute to the meaning of the piece?
6. **Evidence:** What details does the author use to support his or her main ideas?

