



Which Writing Style Do Students Prefer?

Narrative nonfiction receives more starred reviews, garners more awards, and ends up on more classroom and library bookshelves than expository nonfiction because gatekeepers—the adults who make up the children’s literature community—tend to have a natural love of stories and storytelling. That’s why they chose jobs as librarians, literacy educators, editors, and book reviewers, rather than accountants or engineers.

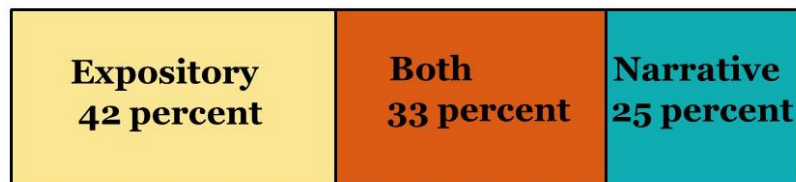
To quantify reading preferences among gatekeepers, in 2018, I surveyed more than one-thousand educators who participated in K-5 professional development workshops or attended literacy or school librarian conferences. Here are the results:

Which **writing style** do teachers and librarians prefer?



But a growing body of research shows that many children think differently. They prefer reading books with an expository writing style.

Which **writing style** do elementary students prefer?



Rather than craving an emotional connection with the central figure in a book, these info-kids read with a purpose—to understand the world and how it works. They’re captivated by fact-filled books that include patterns, analogies, concepts, and calculations. For these students, expository nonfiction is the gateway to literacy.

Because we want all children to become enthusiastic readers, it's critically important to give students access to a diverse array of high-quality nonfiction titles. You can do this by integrating more nonfiction into your instruction. Display both expository and narrative nonfiction in your library or classroom. Booktalk and read nonfiction aloud on a regular basis. Use it as mentor texts during writing workshop. If educators show that they value and respect a wide range of true texts, students will get the message loud and clear.

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