

Reinforcing the 5 Kinds of Nonfiction Children's Books

5 Kinds of Nonfiction



This activity for grades 3-8 can provide practical experience interacting with books from each of the five categories.

Remind students of the 5 Kinds of Nonfiction by sharing a few exemplar books from each category. Then divide the class into small groups, and encourage the teams to brainstorm a few characteristics of each type—narrative, expository literature, traditional, browseable, and active. If students struggle with this task, you may wish to give each team a copy of the Category Feature Cards below.



Next, give each group a packet of sticky notes and three to six books from various categories. Encourage students to classify the books and label each one with a sticky note.

When all the teams have completed this task, ask each group to rotate to a different station, leaving their books behind. Students should review the books at their new station and discuss how the previous group classified each title. If they disagree with the previous group, they should add a second sticky note explaining their rationale.

Repeat this process until each group has reviewed all the books. Then have a brief class discussion about books that have multiple sticky notes on them. Finally, ask the class to brainstorm ways that knowing these categories can help them as readers and writers.

Category Feature Cards

You can enlarge these cards by dragging on the lower right corner.

Traditional Nonfiction



- Survey (all about) books
- Overview of a topic
- Part of a large series
- Clear, straightforward language
- Expository writing style
- Description text structure

Developed by children's book author Melissa Stewart. For more information, please visit www.melissa-stewart.com

Browseable Nonfiction



- Eye-catching design, lavishly illustrated
- Short blocks of straightforward text
- Can be read cover to cover or by skipping around
- Great for shared reading
- Expository writing style
- Description text structure

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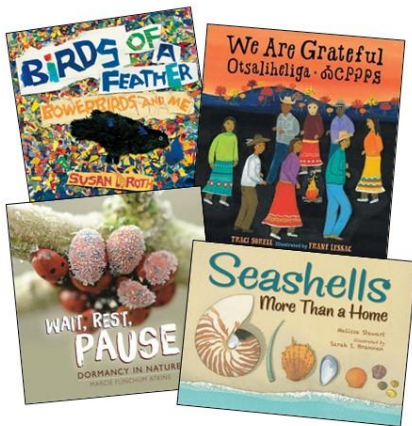
Narrative Nonfiction



- Narrative writing style
- Tells a story or conveys an experience
- Real characters, scenes, dialog, narrative arc
- Strong voice and rich, engaging language
- Chronological sequence structure
- Ideal for biographies and historical events

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Expository Literature



- Expository writing style
- Specialized topic presented creatively
- Strong voice and rich, engaging language
- Innovative format
- Carefully chosen text structure
- Ideal for STEM concepts

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Active Nonfiction



- Highly interactive and/or teaches skills for engaging in an activity
- How-to guides, field guides, cookbooks, craft books
- Clear, straightforward language
- Expository writing style

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