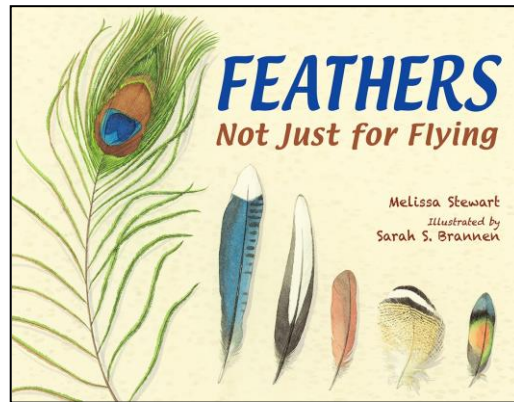


### **Text Format in Expository Nonfiction: An Activity**

Narrative nonfiction usually has simple running text like a fiction book, but expository nonfiction is often heavily formatted. It may include a variety of text features, layered text, and even elements typically found in graphic novels.

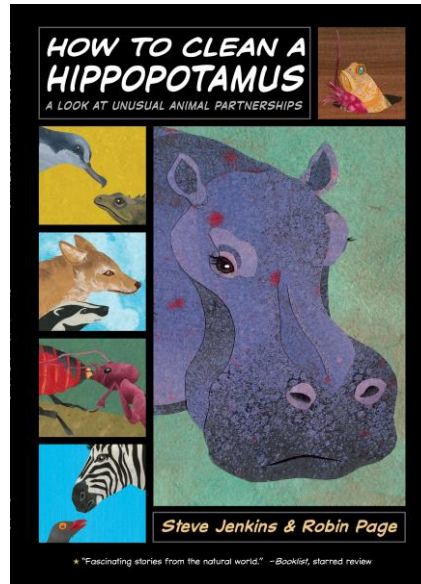
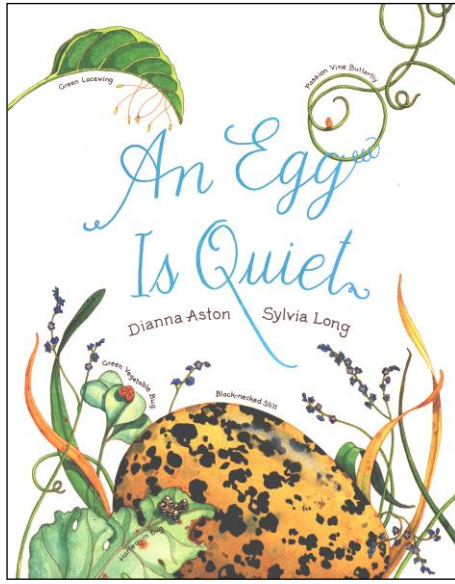
The following activity will encourage students to think critically about the text format of the expository nonfiction they read and experiment with various formats in their own writing.

After reading aloud *Play Like an Animal! Why Critters Splash, Race, Twirl, and Chase* by Maria Gianferrari and *Feathers: Not Just for Flying* by Melissa Stewart, invite students to compare and contrast the format of the two books, using these guiding questions:



- How many layers of text does each book have?
- How is the main text in the two books different?
- Does the secondary text perform the same function in both books?
- What is the text structure of each book?
- What do you think was each author's purpose for writing her book?
- Does the layered text format help the authors achieve their purpose? Explain your rationale.

To move these discussions from the whole class to smaller groups, share *An Egg Is Quiet* by Dianna Hutts Aston and *How to Clean a Hippopotamus: A Look at Unusual Animal Partnerships* by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page. Then divide the class into pairs or small groups and encourage each team to discuss the following questions:



- How is the format of the two books different? Are there any similarities in format?
- How does each author use visual text features?
- What do you think was each author's purpose for writing their book?
- Does the format of each book help the authors achieve their purpose? Explain your rationale.

As the group discussions wind down, encourage each group to share its ideas with the rest of the class.

*CCSS.ELA—Literacy.CCRA.R.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.*

*CCSS.ELA—Literacy.CCRA.R.9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.*