

ARTICLE

Bogaerds-Hazenberg, S. T. M., Evers-Vermeul, J., & van den Bergh, H. (2020). A meta-analysis on the effects of text structure instruction on reading comprehension in the upper elementary grades. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 56(3), 435–462. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.311>

TEACHING TEXT STRUCTURE BOOSTS COMPREHENSION

WHAT DID THEY DO?

The authors conducted a meta-analysis to assess the effects of text structure instruction on reading comprehension in the upper elementary grades. Their analysis covered 44 studies, focused on both informational and narrative text structure interventions. The two primary research questions explored were: (1) What are the immediate and delayed effects of text structure instruction on students' text comprehension in grades 4-6, as measured by comprehension questions, recall, summarization, and knowledge of text structures? (2) How are these intermediate and delayed effect sizes moderated by content-related and instructional features? In simpler terms, this question addressed how the specific content and instructional methods, such as summarizing strategies, graphic organizers, questioning, and recall influenced the effectiveness of text structure instruction. Additionally, the authors also examined the impact of teacher modeling, collaborative work, and individual student practice to understand how these instructional components contributed to better reading outcomes.

WHAT DID THEY FIND?

The meta-analysis found that text structure instruction had an immediate positive impact on students' reading comprehension. Moderate effect sizes were also observed for summarization, answering comprehension questions, understanding text structure, and recall. However, the promising initial outcomes did not last over time, as students did not perform better than their peers in control groups on delayed posttests. The article suggests a few reasons to explain the posttest deficit. One being inconsistent implementation of text structure instruction, along with the potential of students not fully internalizing the strategies presented in the intervention. To improve long term effects, the authors recommend refining instructional methods utilized during the intervention and ensuring that students have ongoing practice with reinforcement of strategies.

WHAT COULD THIS MEAN FOR TEACHERS?

For teachers, providing ample text structure instruction is crucial for achieving sustained improvements in reading comprehension. The methods and strategies used during instruction are key to helping students internalize text structures in both informational and narrative texts. Recommended strategies include structure visualization and rule-based summarization. Structure visualization can be enhanced when students actively create graphic organizers, fostering a deeper understanding of the text. Rule-based summarization involves paragraph-level processing, where students apply rules to condense information and identify the main idea. This process might involve eliminating trivial details, highlighting key points, and analyzing paragraph structure to restate the main idea in their own words. Additionally, comprehension questions play a vital role in supporting the long-term effectiveness of text structure instruction, helping reinforce and extend students' learning.

