

Mastering Explanation Texts with Pip and Kit

Learning objective: To identify and apply the structural and linguistic features of an effective explanation text, suitable for Year 5 English.

Read the front of each card to challenge your knowledge of explanation texts. Reveal the answer to see if you have identified the core components required to explain how or why something works.

What is the primary purpose of an explanation text?

To explain how or why a process occurs, or how something works, in a clear and logical manner.

What is the function of a 'causal conjunction' in an explanation?

To link cause and effect (e.g., 'consequently', 'therefore', 'as a result'), helping the reader understand why a step happens.

Why is the present tense used consistently in explanation texts?

Because explanations usually describe processes that are always true or repeatable, rather than events that happened in the past.

Explain why technical vocabulary is essential in an explanation text.

It ensures accuracy and precision, allowing the writer to use specific terminology relevant to the subject matter, such as 'evaporation' in a water cycle text.

How do subheadings benefit the reader of an explanation?

They organise the text into logical sections, acting as signposts that allow the reader to navigate the information efficiently.

What is the role of a diagram with labels in an explanation text?

It provides a visual representation of the process, helping the reader to visualise complex mechanisms that are difficult to describe with words alone.

Compare and contrast a recount with an explanation text.

A recount describes specific past events in chronological order, whereas an explanation focuses on a general process or phenomenon, often using causal links rather than just temporal ones.

Justify why the passive voice is often used in scientific explanations.

It shifts the focus from the person performing the action to the process itself (e.g., 'The water is heated' rather than 'I heated the water'), which makes the text sound more objective and formal.

What might happen if an explanation text omitted its opening statement?

The reader would lack context, failing to understand the 'what' or 'why' of the process, which would make the subsequent steps confusing and disconnected.

Explain the purpose of a glossary at the end of an explanation.

It provides definitions for complex technical terms, ensuring the text remains accessible to readers who may be unfamiliar with the subject's specific vocabulary.