

CHAPTER 9

Text Features Scavenger Hunt

Look at any piece of informational text—a magazine article, a textbook chapter, an informational book—and you will see many features you don't see in stories, poems, or plays. The most noticeable feature of informational text is a variety of visuals; drawings, photos, maps, charts, graphs, and diagrams are common features of informational text. Additionally, informational texts contain headings that signal the main ideas of each section and, sometimes, subheadings. Within the text, you will occasionally notice bold words. These are important vocabulary terms that are often defined in the text and sometimes further clarified in a glossary. Most informational texts contain words students may not know how to pronounce; some texts even provide pronunciations in parentheses next to vocabulary words. If the text is divided into chapters, you can probably find a table of contents in the beginning and an index at the end, which will help you quickly locate specific information within the text.

With all these helpful features, students should be more successful at reading informational text than they are at reading stories. Often the opposite is true, however. In our experience, many elementary students comprehend stories better than they comprehend informational text. How can that be? Most likely, the explanation is simple. Most students don't know what all these helpful features are for or how to use them. Text Features Scavenger Hunt teaches students to maximize use of all the special features they find in informational text. In order to complete the hunt, they have to use all the features a particular piece of informational text contains. Focusing attention on bold words and having students either consult the glossary or figure out the meaning from the text help students meet Reading informational text and Language anchor standards four (RI.4 and CCRA.L.4). Using the gradual release of responsibility model of instruction, Text Features Scavenger Hunt combines student trios and teacher-led collaborative conversations to discuss various aspects of the text's content.

TIP

You can do Text Features Scavenger Hunt with most first graders in the spring, if you limit the features you focus on to two or three and include no more than ten questions.

A Sample Text Features Scavenger Hunt Lesson

Following is a sample Text Features Scavenger Hunt lesson in a social studies class. The students are about to read a chapter about the Great Depression. First, they will go on a scavenger hunt, learning from the visuals and other special features of the text. This is their first scavenger hunt, so Mr. Y. begins by having teams scavenge for items in the classroom. Then, the students scavenge for features in the text.

TIP

Seize every opportunity to build meanings for words, and you will increase the size of all your students' vocabularies!

TIP

In our experience working with teachers, three is the magic number for small-group work in most elementary classrooms. If the group size is too large, some students spend time vying for control of the group, and other students just sit and let the bossy ones do the work!

TIP

Hand the book to the least able reader in the trio. There is status in holding the book!

Purpose Setting and Vocabulary Building

Mr. Y. begins the lesson by asking if any of the students has gone on a scavenger hunt. Only two students have done this. They share their experiences and explain that you have to find specific items within a limited amount of time. The team who finds the most wins the scavenger hunt.

Next, Mr. Y. asks if anyone can guess why we call it a *scavenger hunt*. One student volunteers that some animals are scavengers. Using examples students relate to—raccoons rummaging in trash cans and vultures eating roadkill—Mr. Y. leads the students to realize that a scavenger is someone who finds things and eats or collects them.

He says, “Soon we are going to scavenge for information in a chapter we will read later this week. But we are going to begin by doing a quick scavenger hunt in our classroom. Please gather in your reading trios, and I will give you a list of things I want you to find in the classroom. You will have three minutes to find as many of the items on the list as you can and write what you found on the classroom scavenger hunt sheet. The team who finds the most items will win the scavenger hunt.”

The students assemble themselves into trios.

Mr. Y. hands each trio a classroom scavenger hunt sheet (see figure 9.1) and sets the timer for three minutes.

When the timer sounds, Mr. Y. tells students to finish writing the item they are on, and then together the class tallies up the score. The winning team found seventeen items in three minutes. As the students cheer, they want to know if they get a prize.

“Bragging rights,” responds Mr. Y.

Next, Mr. Y. shows students several pages of a chapter book they have recently read and several pages from the social studies book.

He says, “I know you haven’t had time to read these pages, but which one do you think is a story, and which one is informational?”

The class quickly decides that the one with no pictures is the story and the one with “all the pictures” is information. Mr. Y. then flips through the pages of the social studies text and asks what, besides the pictures, is different about the informational text. He leads his students to notice that the social studies text contains maps, charts, bold words, and headings.

He says, “We call these special things that informational texts have but story texts don’t usually have *informational text features*. Today, we are going to look at this chapter in our social studies book and see how much we can learn from these special text features. We are going to go on a scavenger hunt in our book and see how much information we can find just by focusing on pictures, captions, graphs, charts, bold words, and other special features of informational text.”

Classroom Scavenger Hunt		
Directions: You have three minutes to find and write the name of an object that matches the description.		
<i>Something green</i> _____	<i>Something opaque</i> _____	<i>Something made of cloth</i> _____
<i>Something rectangular</i> _____	<i>Something oval</i> _____	<i>Something taller than Mr. Y.</i> _____
<i>Something you can see through</i> _____	<i>Something that can move</i> _____	<i>Something white</i> _____
<i>Something made of glass</i> _____	<i>Something growing</i> _____	<i>Something breakable</i> _____
<i>Something alive</i> _____	<i>Something brown</i> _____	<i>Something you can put things in</i> _____
<i>Something made of wood</i> _____	<i>Something liquid</i> _____	<i>Something you can't move</i> _____
<i>Something red</i> _____	<i>Something you can read</i> _____	<i>Something you can eat</i> _____
<i>Something you can write on</i> _____	<i>Something smaller than your thumb</i> _____	<i>Something that can talk</i> _____
<i>Something made of plastic</i> _____	<i>Something rough</i> _____	<i>Something you can turn off</i> _____
<i>Something eight inches long</i> _____	<i>Something shiny</i> _____	<i>Something you can't reach</i> _____

Figure 9.1: Sample classroom scavenger hunt sheet.

I Do, and You Watch

Mr. Y. hands out one copy of the social studies book to each trio and asks the students to turn to page 369.

He says, “Now we are going to go on a scavenger hunt in our social studies books. We are going to use the visuals and other features of the book to find answers to questions. Just as in our classroom scavenger hunt, you will have a limited amount of time—twenty minutes—and probably won't be able to find everything, but that's

TIP

Hand the sheet to the most able writer. The writing will go much more quickly!

OK. At the end of twenty minutes, we will come together and see what you found and determine the winner. I am going to do a few for you to get you started, and then the twenty minutes will start.”

Mr. Y. hands the Text Features Scavenger Hunt sheet (see figure 9.2) to one student in each trio.

Text Features Scavenger Hunt		
Directions: Use the visuals and other special text features from your book to answer these questions. Indicate where you found the answers. You have twenty minutes to find as many answers as you can. Your team will get one point for every correct answer and another point for writing where you found the answer.		
Question	Your Answer	Where Did You Find This Answer?
What instrument did Louis Armstrong play?		
What was the name of the dog on RCA's label?		
What is the name of a Charlie Chaplin movie?		
How many Ford cars were sold in 1920? In 1929? (Two points)		
What new buildings were built in New York City in the 1920s?		
What year had the most business failures?		
About how many people lost their jobs in 1933?		
What five states were in the dust bowl region? (Five points)		
Which president began the New Deal program?		
In what year did Charles Lindbergh fly across the Atlantic?		
What is the fifth step in assembling a car in Henry Ford's factory?		
What is the first major heading in chapter 5?		
What is the last major heading in chapter 5?		

Question	Your Answer	Where Did You Find This Answer?
Use the index to decide on what page you will find information about:		
• Herbert Hoover		
• Clarence Birdseye		
• Henry Ford		
Find three bold words and write their glossary definitions.		
•		
•		
•		
Following are pronunciations for three words. Write the word and the page on which you found it.		
ur-buh-nuh-ZAY-shun		
in-dus-tree-uh-luh-ZAY-shun		
byu-RAH-kruh-see		

Figure 9.2: Sample Text Features Scavenger Hunt sheet.

Mr. Y. reads the first question aloud and then says, "I see a picture of Louis Armstrong at the top of page 369, and he has a trumpet. I will write *trumpet* in this box and *photo on page 369* in the next box." (See figure 9.3.)

What instrument did Louis Armstrong play?	<i>trumpet</i>	<i>photo on page 369</i>
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Figure 9.3: Sample Text Features Scavenger Hunt sheet answer.

Looking again at page 369, he says, "You don't have to go in order on a scavenger hunt; I see the answer to another question on this page, so I will fill that one in." (See figure 9.4, page 90.)

What is the first major heading in chapter 5?	<i>New Forms of Expression</i>	<i>heading on page 369</i>
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Figure 9.4: Sample Text Features Scavenger Hunt sheet answer.

“The writer in each trio should fill in these two answers on your sheet,” he says.

I Do, and You Help

“Now, help me do two more,” Mr. Y. says, “and then I will turn you loose to find the rest of the answers. Who can find the answer to the second question?”

Someone quickly locates the photo of the dog and reads the caption that accompanies the photo. Mr. Y. and the writer in each trio fill in their answers. (See figure 9.5.)

What was the name of the dog on RCA's label?	<i>Nipper</i>	<i>caption on page 370</i>
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Figure 9.5: Sample Text Features Scavenger Hunt sheet answer.

Mr. Y. says, “Good, now go to the very bottom of the classroom scavenger hunt sheet. The word is written the way it is pronounced: byu-RAH-kruh-see. We need to find that word and figure out what it is. Help me find it.”

A student quickly finds the word and page, and everyone records this answer. (See figure 9.6.)

<i>byu-RAH-kruh-see</i>	<i>bureaucracy</i>	<i>last paragraph on page 371</i>
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Figure 9.6: Sample Text Features Scavenger Hunt sheet answer.

You Do It Together, and I Help

Mr. Y. reiterates the directions on the classroom scavenger hunt sheet: “Use the visuals and other special text features from your book to answer the remaining questions. Indicate where you found the answers. You have twenty minutes to find as many answers as you can. Your team will get one point for every correct answer and another point for writing where you found the answer. Your time begins now!” Mr. Y. starts the timer.

The students quickly and eagerly get busy finding answers and writing them down. Mr. Y. circulates and reminds one trio that the students also need to include the page

number where they found the information. For twenty minutes, the classroom is filled with “good noise” as students work to beat the clock.

The Class Debriefs

The timer sounds, and Mr. Y. lets students finish the answers they are writing and then demands that everyone put his or her pencil down. Together, Mr. Y. and the class check the answer to each question, looking at the visual or special feature that provided the answer and explaining how they figured out the answers. Each team totals its points, and after Mr. Y. double-checks the scores, there is a three-way tie. Three teams cheer and enjoy their bragging rights. (See figure 9.7 for a completed Text Features Scavenger Hunt sheet.)

Text Features Scavenger Hunt		
<p>Directions: Use the visuals and other special text features from your book to answer these questions. Indicate where you found the answers. You have twenty minutes to find as many answers as you can. Your team will get one point for every correct answer and another point for writing where you found the answer.</p>		
Question	Your Answer	Where Did You Find This Answer?
What instrument did Louis Armstrong play?	trumpet	photo on page 369
What was the name of the dog on RCA's label?	Nipper	caption on page 370
What is the name of a Charlie Chaplin movie?	<u>The Kid</u>	poster on page 371
How many Ford cars were sold in 1920? In 1929? (Two points)	2 million in 1920 and 4.5 million in 1929	picture graph on page 375
What new buildings were built in New York City in the 1920s?	skyscrapers	picture graph on page 370
What year had the most business failures?	1931	photo caption on page 372
About how many people lost their jobs in 1933?	13,000	bar graph on page 371
What five states were in the dust bowl region? (Five points)	Colorado, Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico	map on page 370

Figure 9.7: Sample completed Text Features Scavenger Hunt sheet.

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Question	Your Answer	Where Did You Find This Answer?
Which president began the New Deal program?	Franklin D. Roosevelt	photo caption on page 373
In what year did Charles Lindbergh fly across the Atlantic?	1927	timeline on page 372
What is the fifth step in assembling a car in Henry Ford's factory?	Wheels and radiators are attached.	diagram on page 375
What is the first major heading in chapter 5?	New Forms of Expression	heading on page 369
What is the last major heading in chapter 5?	New Deal	heading on page 376
Find three bold words and write their glossary definitions.		
• stock market	a place where people can buy and sell shares in a business	paragraph two on page 373
• Depression	a time of little economic growth when there are few jobs and people have little money	paragraph four on page 366
• consumer goods	products made for personal use	paragraph one on page 365
Following are pronunciations for three words. Write the word and the page on which you found it.		
ur-buh-nuh-ZAY-shun	urbanization	on page 372
in-dus-tree-uh-luh-ZAY-shun	industrialization	on page 373
byu-RAH-kruh-see	bureaucracy	last paragraph on page 371

Mr. Y. asks each student to construct one new question that visuals or special features can help answer. Mr. Y. picks a few of these and reads them to the class, and everyone hunts for the answers.

Planning and Teaching a Text Features Scavenger Hunt Lesson

To plan the lesson, choose a piece of informational text you want students to read, and create questions that will direct their attention to all the special text features in that text. Decide how long you will allow students to hunt—giving them a little less time than you think they need will create a sense of urgency. If your students do not know what a scavenger hunt is or have never been on one, engage them in a real scavenger hunt in your classroom or school before starting the Text Features Scavenger Hunt lesson. Use the following six steps when teaching a Text Features Scavenger Hunt lesson.

1. Tell students the purpose of the lesson. If this is the first Text Features Scavenger Hunt they have gone on, show them some story text and informational text and help them notice the special features of informational text. Note that you can learn a lot of information just by focusing on special text features.
2. Put your students in trios. Give each group one copy of the text to use for the hunt and one Text Features Scavenger Hunt sheet. Hand the sheet to your most fluent writer and the book to the least fluent reader in each group. This setup allows the writer to jot answers quickly and conveys status for the reader.
3. For the first several scavenger hunts, use the “I do, and you watch” and “I do, and you help” gradual release of responsibility phases to model the Text Features Scavenger Hunt. This will get them off to a successful start with the activity.
4. Set a timer for twenty minutes, and have students work together to find the answers and record the answers and where they found them. Circulate and provide help to teams as needed.
5. When the time is up, go over the answers and their text locations. Talk about each special text feature and how it helps answer questions. Have teams tally their points. Check the tallies of the winning teams, and reward them with bragging rights.
6. Have students individually construct one more scavenger hunt question. Choose a few questions and have classmates solve them as time permits.

Text Features Scavenger Hunt Lessons Across the Year

When your observations of the teams indicate that everyone understands how to use the various text features, fade out the “I do, and you watch” and “I do, and you help” phases. When almost all students understand how to use the various text features, have students complete a Text Features Scavenger Hunt independently. Use these assessments to determine students who need more instruction on certain text features.

How Text Features Scavenger Hunt Lessons Teach the Standards

Text Features Scavenger Hunt lessons teach students to use special features of informational text. This lesson framework teaches Reading informational text standard five

(RI.5), which requires students to learn to use headings, glossaries, indexes, and more to locate information. Reading informational text standard seven (RI.7) focuses on the visuals—maps, charts, graphs, and others. Because these lessons focus on vocabulary in informational text, students are increasing the size of their meaning vocabularies, as Reading informational text standard four (RI.4) and Language anchor standard four (CCRA.L.4) require. The discussions students have while on the scavenger hunt help teach Speaking and Listening anchor standard one (CCRA.SL.1).