



Literacy at Hartford Public High School

March 13, 2006

Volume 3 Number 26

What's in a Textbook?

From Reader's Handbook, Great Source

All of the textbooks that you use have many different elements. These items are designed to help you learn the material that is being presented. Some textbooks have more of these elements than others.

To get the most out of your reading, you should know what these elements are, what they do, and how you should use them.

Chapter Previews:

At the beginning of each chapter, many textbooks include a chapter preview. These previews are a quick summary of the important points in a chapter. Even though you may not feel like reading this opening section, you should definitely look at it in order to set a goal for reading and to get a set of direction.

Charts and Graphs:

Charts and graphs use pictures and symbols to present you with important information. They are efficient ways to present large amounts of information. It is not important that you remember all of the information that you are being presented with. Rather, you should use the charts and graphs as resources.

Each chart or graph has a main point. Read the title to determine this main idea. One way to do this is to turn the title of the chart or graph in to a question, and then answer the question by reading the chart. Your response will summarize the main idea of the graph. This is something that you should remember.

When you look at a line graph or a bar graph, make sure to read the title, the labels on the vertical and horizontal axes, and any other text. Also pay attention to any colors, patterns, or symbols. Then, summarize the main point of the graph in your own words.

There is a difference between a chart and a graph. Charts generally give information, show processes, or make comparisons—usually in column form. Graphs use lines, symbols, and pictures to show information.

Footnotes:

A footnote is used to give additional information about a point made, a word used, or an idea presented in the text. You can always recognize a footnote by the small raised number in the text. This number corresponds to a number at the bottom or side of the page, which comes before the explanation or reference. Sometimes, footnotes are used to define and show how to pronounce difficult words. Footnotes are also used to cite references or sources for the materials in the text or to give further explanation of the material.

Graphic Organizers

Using various types of graphic organizers with your students will help them to visualize what they have read, organize their thoughts in a coherent way, and provide them with a valuable tool for studying. You might wish to work with some of the following types of organizers.

KWS Organizer:

Topic:		
What I Know	What I Want to Know	Possible Sources of Information

Planning Chart:

Select your purpose in writing this piece:	Audience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To tell a real story • To tell a made-up story • To describe a person, place, or thing • To tell how to do something • To find out something • To give an opinion • To ask something • Other: 	Who will read this?
	What do they already know about my topic?
	What do I want them to know?
	What part of my topic would interest them the most?

To help your students, consider using a variety of organizers that will help them to understand the content and to know what is expected of them.