



HOW TO READ A SCIENCE EXPLANATION

Look for the structure and the science ideas.



THE IDEA

Science explanations have a clear structure and follow a pattern.

Students need to learn how to read these texts by looking for key features, understanding how ideas are connected and recognising cause and effect.



IN THE CLASSROOM

Show students the structure of a science explanation.

Use a short text from your subject (e.g. life science, earth science).

Highlight the key features together (e.g. headings, diagrams, key terms).

Ask students to identify the main idea and how the information is organised.

1

LOOK AT THE STRUCTURE

Identify the different parts of the explanation. Look for:

- title and headings
- an introduction (what is it about?)
- explanations (how or why?)
- diagrams or images
- a summary or key idea

How Plants Make Food



Introduction

Explanation

Diagram

2

UNDERSTAND THE IDEAS

Read the explanation and look for the key science ideas.

- What is the process, event or concept?
- What causes it to happen?
- What are the steps?
- What are the results or effects?
- Are there any key science terms?

Cause



Process



Effect

3

CONNECT THE TEXT AND DIAGRAM

Use the diagram and the written text together to build a full understanding.

- How does the diagram support the text?
- What extra information does it add?
- Do the labels help you understand key steps or parts?
- Can you explain the whole process in your own words?

"The diagram shows that sunlight is needed for the process. This supports the text, which explains how plants use sunlight to make food."



EAL UPGRADE

Pre-teach key science terms and processes. Use diagrams to build vocabulary (e.g. photosynthesis, evaporation, force, habitat).



TRY IT TOMORROW

Choose a short science explanation. Ask students to identify the structure, the main idea and the key process, then explain it in their own words.



TEACHER LANGUAGE

"What is this text explaining?"
 "What is the process?"
 "What causes it to happen?"
 "How does the diagram help?"
 "Can you summarise it?"