Grade 8: Reading Benchmark

Structure

8.R.2.1: Analyze how individual text sections and/or features convey a purpose and/or meaning in texts.

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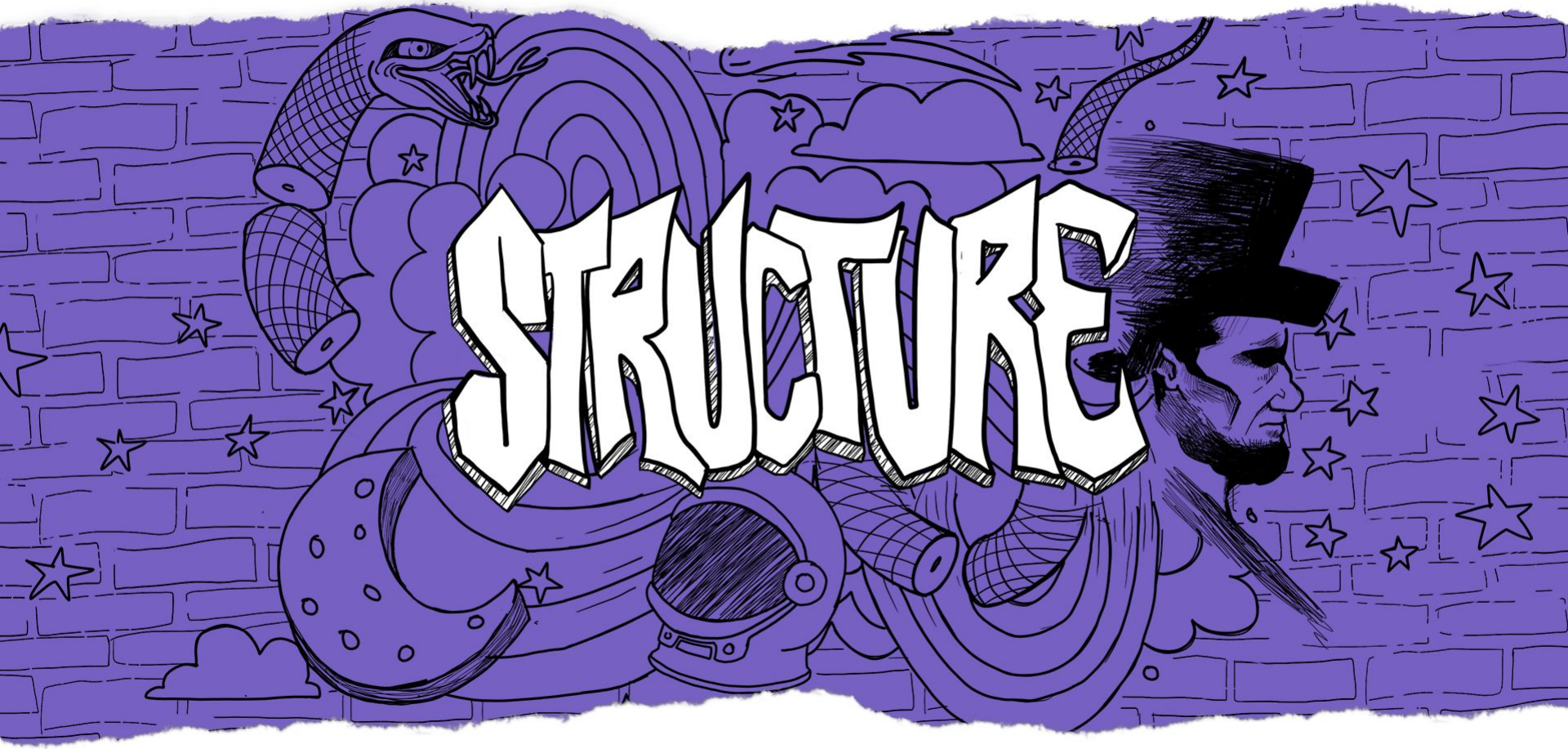
Benchmark Introduction



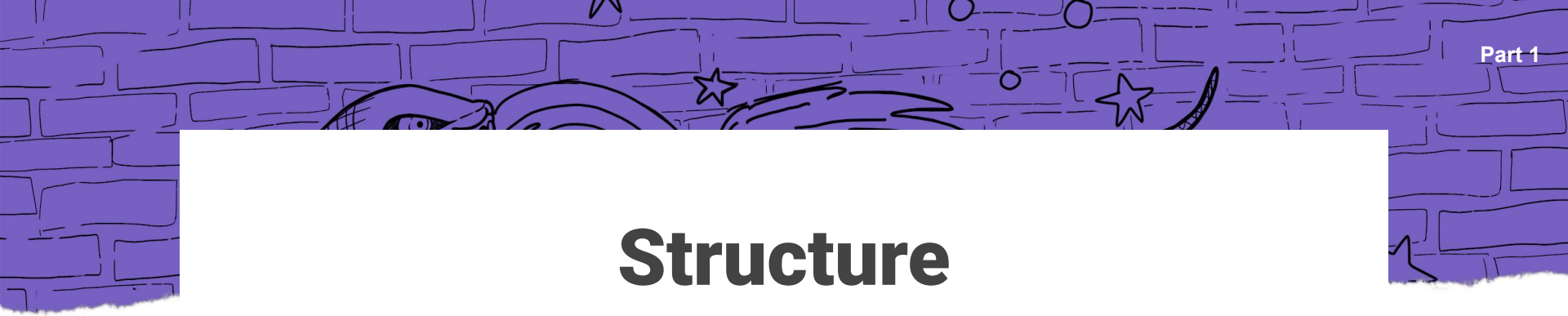
Benchmark:

Examine how text sections and features communicate a purpose or meaning in a text.



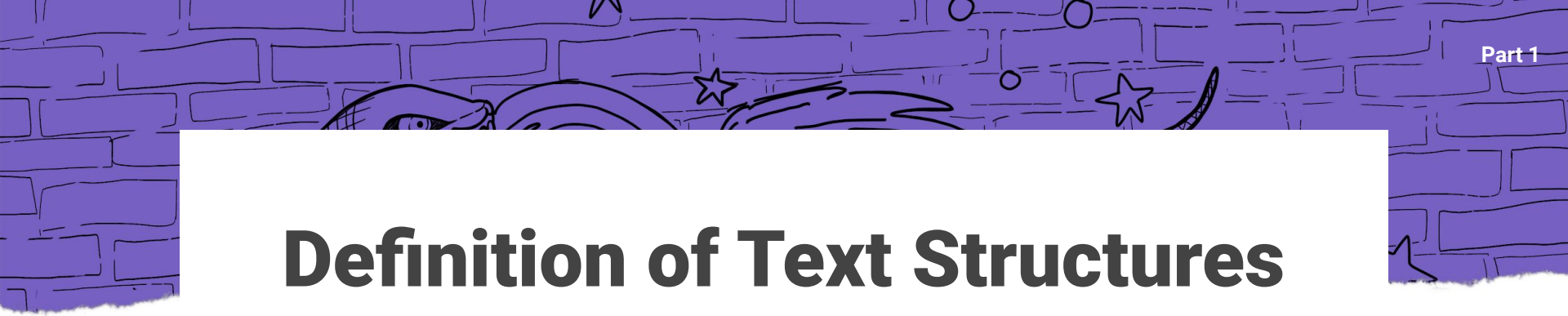
Definition of Structure

Structure refers to the format of a text, or the way a text is organized into different **text sections**. Chapters and paragraphs are examples of text sections.



Structure

Writers choose a particular structure to develop and communicate their ideas, and to support their purpose.



Definition of Text Structures

Text structures are the tools that an author uses to organize the information in a text.

Text Structures

Some common text structures are:

- **Description:** Main idea developed with supporting details
- **Problem and Solution:** Define the problem; explain the solution
- **Cause and Effect:** Present an issue or action; describe the result



Text Structures

Some common text structures are:

- **Compare and Contrast:** Evaluate similarities and differences
- **Sequence:** Present or explain the steps in a process
- **Chronology:** Present events in the order they unfolded



Definition of Text Features

Text features are the components of a text that are not part of the main body of text. Examples of text features include the table of contents, chapter headings, and pictures and captions.



Use of Structure, Text Structures, and Text Features

Texts are usually organized into **sections**, such as chapters and paragraphs. Authors weave the key ideas of the different sections together to convey an overall meaning.



Use of Structure, Text Structures, and Text Features

A text often contains multiple **text structures**. For example, the information in a history book may be organized chronologically overall, but an individual section may use a cause and effect text structure to explain the causes of a war.



Use of Structure, Text Structures, and Text Features

Text features such as pictures and captions, headings, charts, and footnotes offer additional ways to organize information and reinforce the ideas of a particular text section.

Example of a Text Structure

In the lead paragraphs of her article “The Nearly Forgotten Story of the Black Women Who Helped Land a Man on the Moon,” writer Stephanie Merry uses a **descriptive text structure** to support the purpose of the article: **to inform** readers about the female mathematicians who were crucial to the success of NASA’s lunar program.

Example of a Text Structure

“It all started with a mysterious photograph.

In 2011, Mary Gainer worked as a historic preservationist for NASA, and she stumbled on a 1943 picture of a thousand people standing in a huge building. Gainer figured that the black men posing in the front were probably machinists, and the rest of the group was mostly white men in suits and ties.

But scattered here and there was something unexpected: Women, some white and some black, in conspicuous knee-length skirts and pompadour hairdos.”

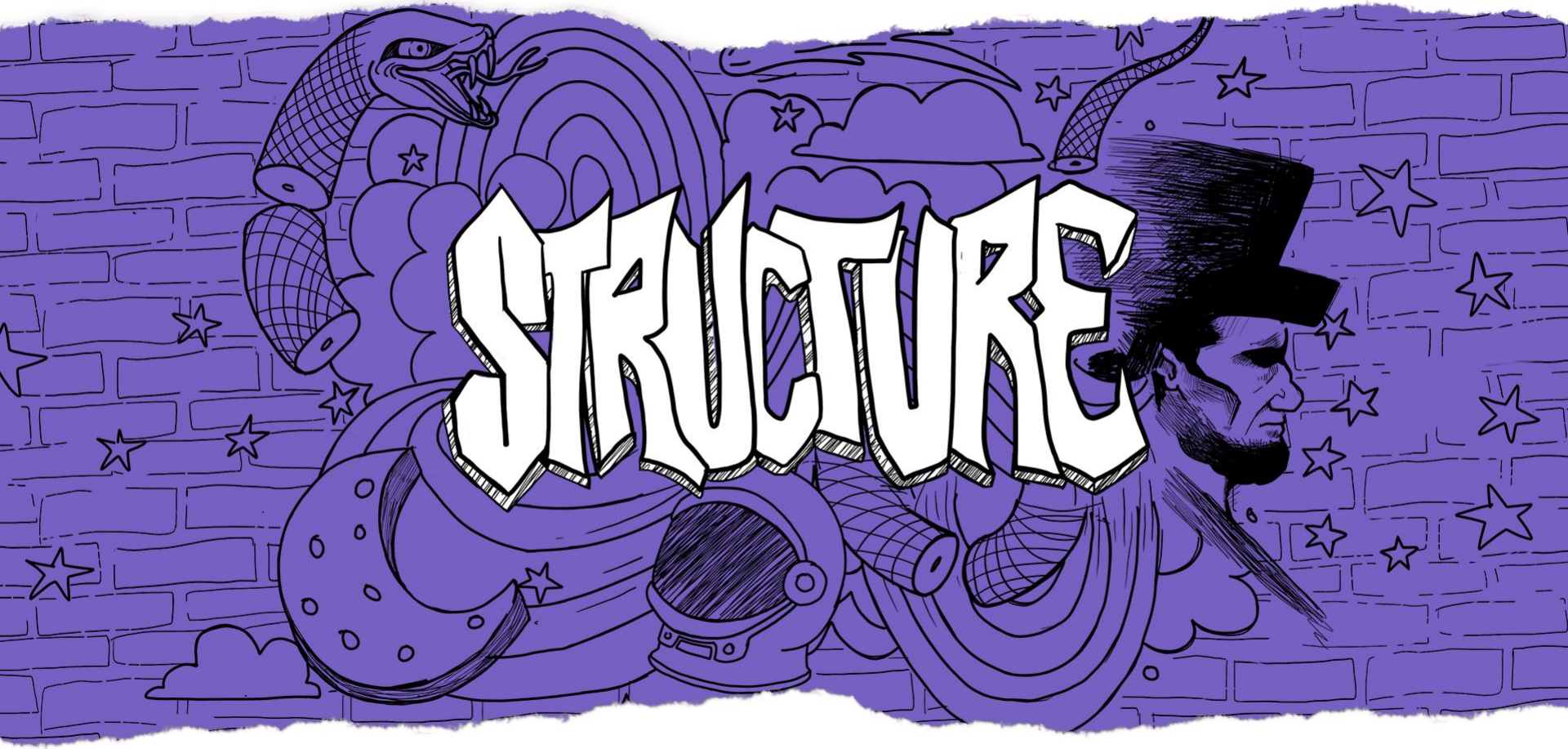
Example of a Text Feature



This photo—unearthed by NASA historic preservationist Mary Gainer in 2011—was taken at the NACA Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory (now NASA Langley Research Center) on Nov. 4, 1943, during a visit by Frank Knox, secretary of the Navy. (NASA Langley Research Center)

The **photograph** found by NASA historian Mary Gainer accompanies the article. This **text feature** documents and supports the central idea that these women *were* part of the NASA team. They are almost lost in the crowd, just as they were nearly lost to history.

Benchmark Skill Routine



How to analyze text sections and features

Identify the topic and purpose of the text.

How to analyze text sections and features

Analyze the text sections:

- Note how the text is arranged into sections.
- What is the central idea in each text section?

How to analyze text sections and features

Ask yourself:

What text structures does the author use to organize and present the information in each text section or across sections?

Common text structures:

- Description
- Problem and solution
- Cause and effect
- Comparison and contrast
- Sequence
- Chronology

How to analyze text sections and features

Analyze the text features:

- Understand the information conveyed by each text feature.
- How does this information relate to or reinforce the ideas of the text?

How to analyze text sections and features

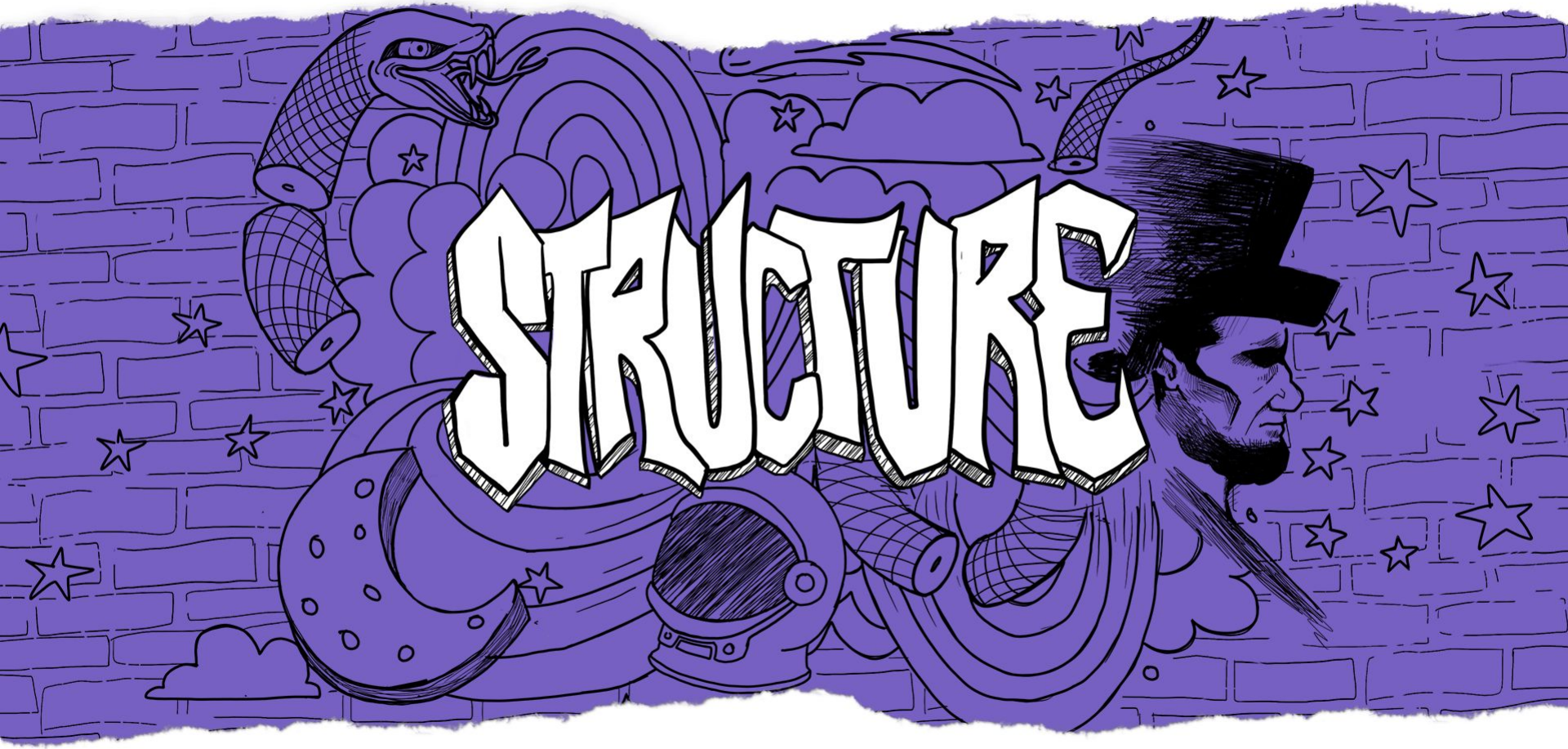
Think about it:

How do the text sections and features help you understand the information and ideas and the purpose of the text?

Remember

1. Identify the topic and purpose of the text.
2. Note how the text is organized into sections and identify the central idea in each text section.
3. Identify the text structures used to organize and present information and to develop a central idea in each text section or across sections.
4. Consider how key text features relate to the central ideas.
5. How do the text sections and features help you understand the information and ideas and the purpose of the text?

Benchmark in Action: Example of how to analyze text sections and features



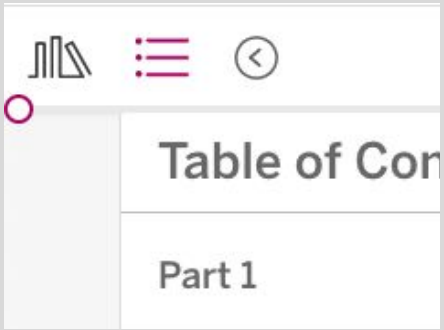
Get ready to read two passages from *Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon* by Catherine Thimmesh.



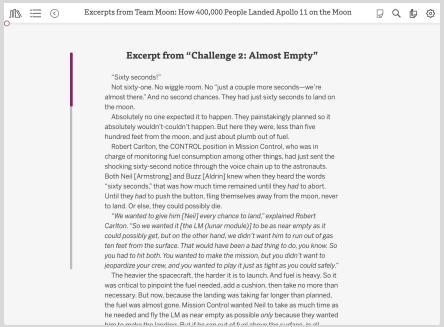
1. Open the Library app.



2. Type “Team Moon” into the search bar. Click on the title of the book to open it.



3. Click on the Table of Contents.



4. Find and go to Excerpt from “Challenge 2: Almost Empty.”

Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon

Context for Passage 1

Team Moon tells the story of the *Apollo 11* mission from the perspective of the thousands of team members who worked to put the first man on the moon. The chapter “Challenge 2: Almost Empty” describes the difficulties engineers in mission control had to overcome to coordinate a safe moon landing.

Read Excerpt from “Challenge 2: Almost Empty,” from *Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon*.

As you read, look for…

- chapters, headings, and paragraphs that show how the text is organized into sections.
- details that help you identify the topic of the text and the central ideas of the text sections.
- text structures that are used to organize and present the information.
- text features that relate to the central ideas.

Practice Step 1

Identify the topic and purpose of the text.

Example:

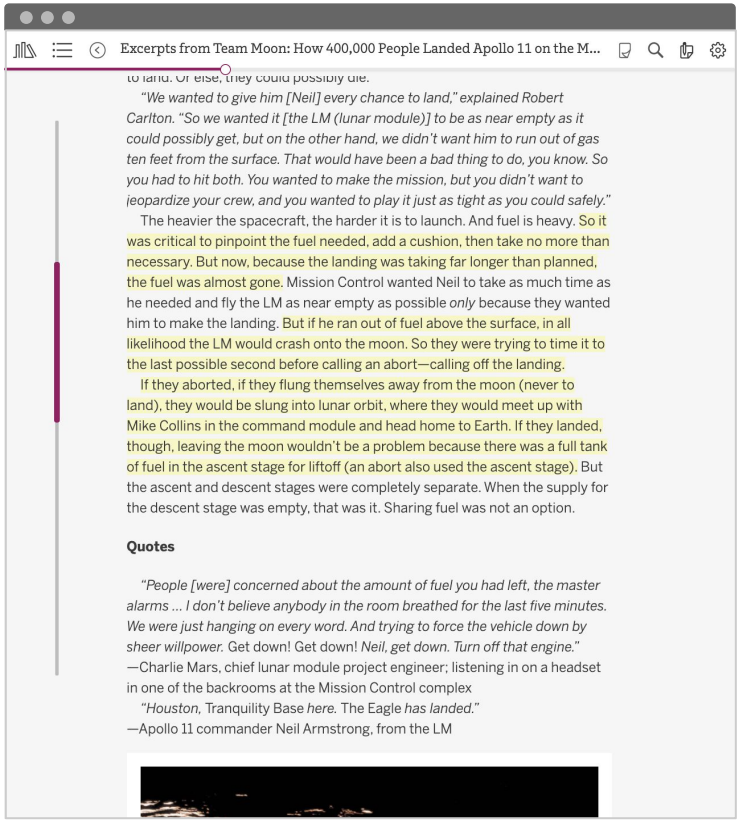
In this passage, author Catherine Thimmesh entertains and informs her readers as she focuses on the challenges faced during the final moments before the landing of the lunar module.

Practice Step 2

Analyze the text sections:

- Note how the text is arranged into sections.
- What is the central idea in each text section?

Practice Step 2


Excerpts from Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the M...

to land. Or else, they could possibly die.

"We wanted to give him [Neil] every chance to land," explained Robert Carlton. "So we wanted it [the LM (lunar module)] to be as near empty as it could possibly get, but on the other hand, we didn't want him to run out of gas ten feet from the surface. That would have been a bad thing to do, you know. So you had to hit both. You wanted to make the mission, but you didn't want to jeopardize your crew, and you wanted to play it just as tight as you could safely."

The heavier the spacecraft, the harder it is to launch. And fuel is heavy. So it was critical to pinpoint the fuel needed, add a cushion, then take no more than necessary. But now, because the landing was taking far longer than planned, the fuel was almost gone. Mission Control wanted Neil to take as much time as he needed and fly the LM as near empty as possible *only* because they wanted him to make the landing. But if he ran out of fuel above the surface, in all likelihood the LM would crash onto the moon. So they were trying to time it to the last possible second before calling an abort—calling off the landing.

If they aborted, if they flung themselves away from the moon (never to land), they would be slung into lunar orbit, where they would meet up with Mike Collins in the command module and head home to Earth. If they landed, though, leaving the moon wouldn't be a problem because there was a full tank of fuel in the ascent stage for liftoff (an abort also used the ascent stage). But the ascent and descent stages were completely separate. When the supply for the descent stage was empty, that was it. Sharing fuel was not an option.

Quotes

"People [were] concerned about the amount of fuel you had left, the master alarms ... I don't believe anybody in the room breathed for the last five minutes. We were just hanging on every word. And trying to force the vehicle down by sheer willpower. Get down! Get down! *Neil, get down. Turn off that engine."*
—Charlie Mars, chief lunar module project engineer; listening in on a headset in one of the backrooms at the Mission Control complex

"Houston, Tranquility Base *here.* The Eagle *has landed."*
—Apollo 11 commander Neil Armstrong, from the LM

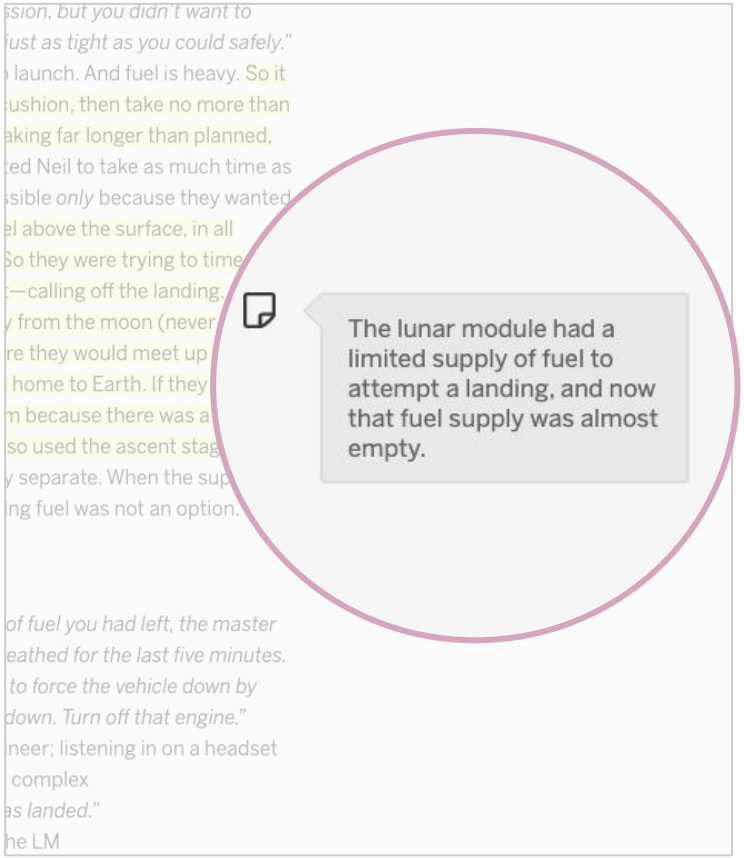
Highlight details to identify central ideas.

"So it was critical to pinpoint the fuel needed, add a cushion, then take no more than necessary. But now, because the landing was taking far longer than planned, the fuel was almost gone."

"But if he ran out of fuel above the surface, in all likelihood the LM would crash onto the moon. So they were trying to time it to the last possible second before calling an abort—calling off the landing."

"If they aborted, if they flung themselves away from the moon (never to land), they would be slung into lunar orbit …and head home to Earth. If they landed, though, leaving the moon wouldn't be a problem because there was a full tank of fuel…for liftoff…."

Practice Step 2



Annotate to explain the central ideas.

- The lunar module had a limited supply of fuel to attempt a landing, and now that fuel supply was almost empty.
- If the lunar module ran out of fuel before landing, the astronauts would probably crash on the moon.
- If they abort, they can return safely. If they take the risk and land without crashing, they can also return safely.

Practice Step 3

Ask yourself:

What text structures does the author use to organize and present the information in each text section or across sections?

Common text structures:

- Description
- Problem and solution
- Cause and effect
- Comparison and contrast
- Sequence
- Chronology

Practice Step 3 Examples:

- Author Catherine Thimmesh uses a chronological text structure to describe the final moments of the descent to the moon's surface in the order in which they happened.

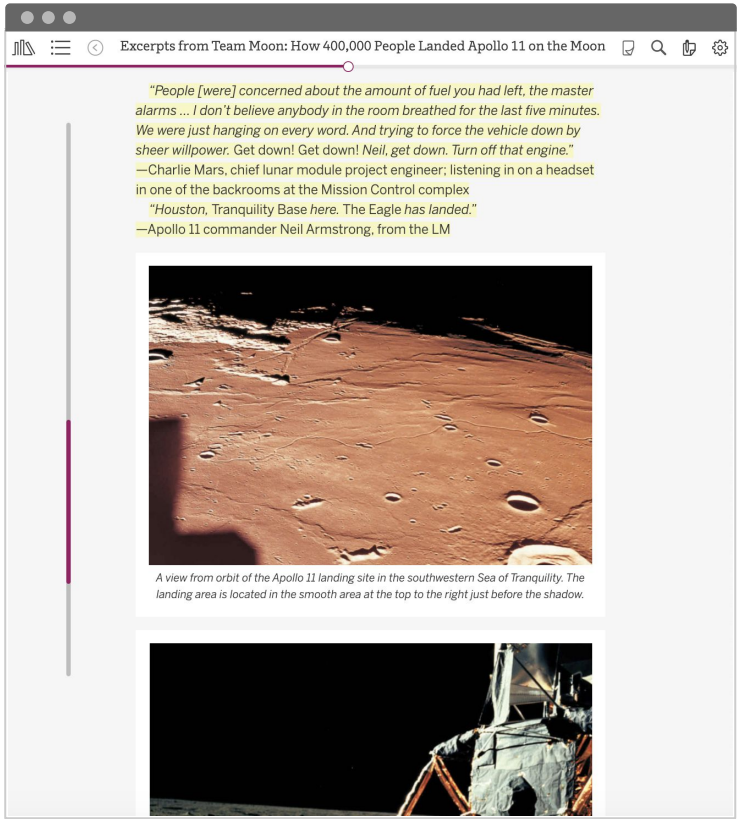
- Within these paragraphs, Thimmesh uses description to build the drama, as well as cause and effect to reinforce the central idea about the challenges mission control engineers faced when deciding whether to attempt a landing.

Practice Step 4

Examine the text features:

- Understand the information conveyed by the feature.
- How does this information relate to or reinforce the ideas of the text?

Practice Step 4



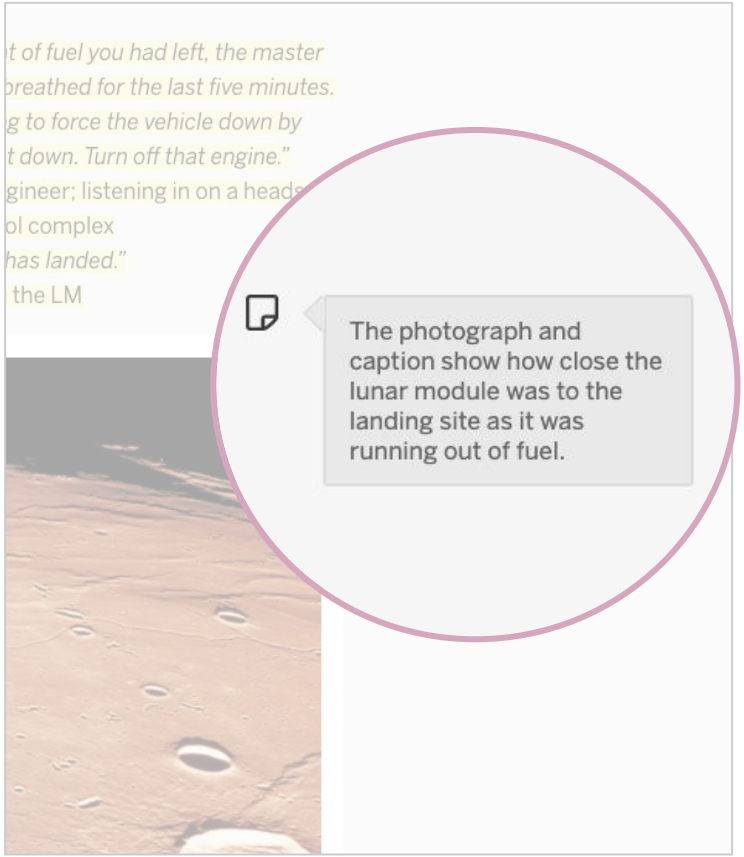
Identify and annotate key text features.

"People [were] concerned about the amount of fuel you had left, the master alarms...I don't believe anybody in the room breathed for the last five minutes. We were just hanging on every word. And trying to force the vehicle down by sheer willpower. Get down! Get down! *Neil, get down. Turn off that engine.*"

—Charlie Mars, chief lunar module project engineer; listening in on a headset in one of the backrooms at the Mission Control complex

"*Houston,* Tranquility Base *here.* The Eagle *has landed.*"
—Apollo 11 commander Neil Armstrong, from the LM

Practice Step 4



Annotate the information conveyed by the feature and its connection to the ideas of the text.

- The photograph and caption show how close the lunar module was to the landing site as it was running out of fuel.
- The author tells the end of the landing story through quotes from different team members, and shows the result through the photograph of the lunar module on the moon.

Practice Step 4 Examples:

The use of photographs reinforces the readers' sense of how close the lunar module was to landing as it was running out of fuel.

The captioned quotes reveal the dramatic tension that engineers in mission control felt during those final moments before the landing.

Practice Step 5

Think about it:

How do the text sections and features help you understand the information and ideas and the purpose of the text?

Practice Step 5 Examples:

- The purpose of the text is to inform and entertain readers about the scale and complexity of the challenges involved in the *Apollo 11* mission. By using a variety of text structures—chronological, description, and cause and effect—Thimmesh recreates the drama of those challenges, while also informing readers of the many risk-benefit calculations (cause and effect) faced by the engineers in mission control.

- The accompanying text features (the photographs and captions), help the reader visualize the final moments of the landing, as well as "hear" the voices of the engineers who were inside the control room at the time.

Remember

1. Identify the topic and purpose of the text.
2. Note how information is organized into text sections and identify the central idea in each section.
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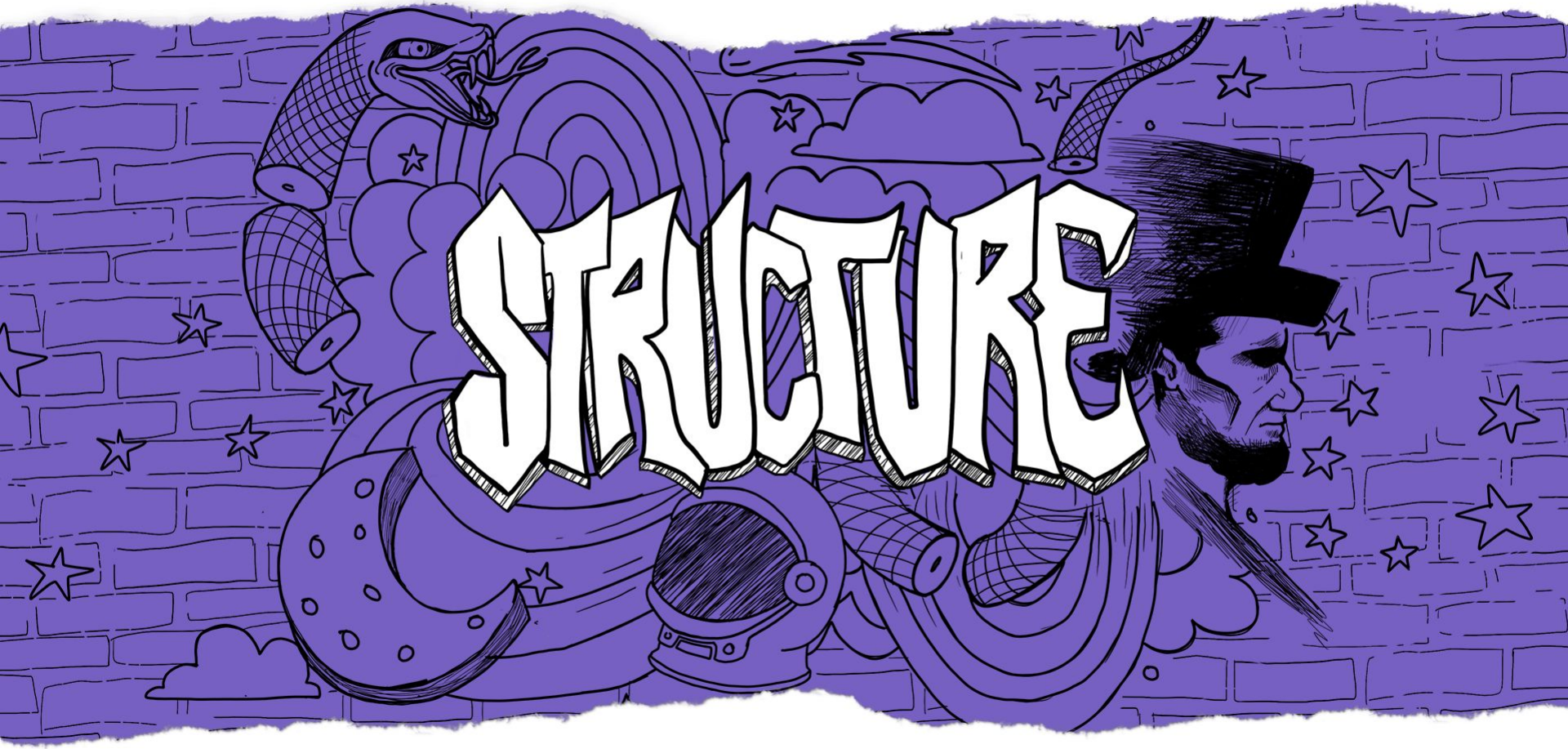
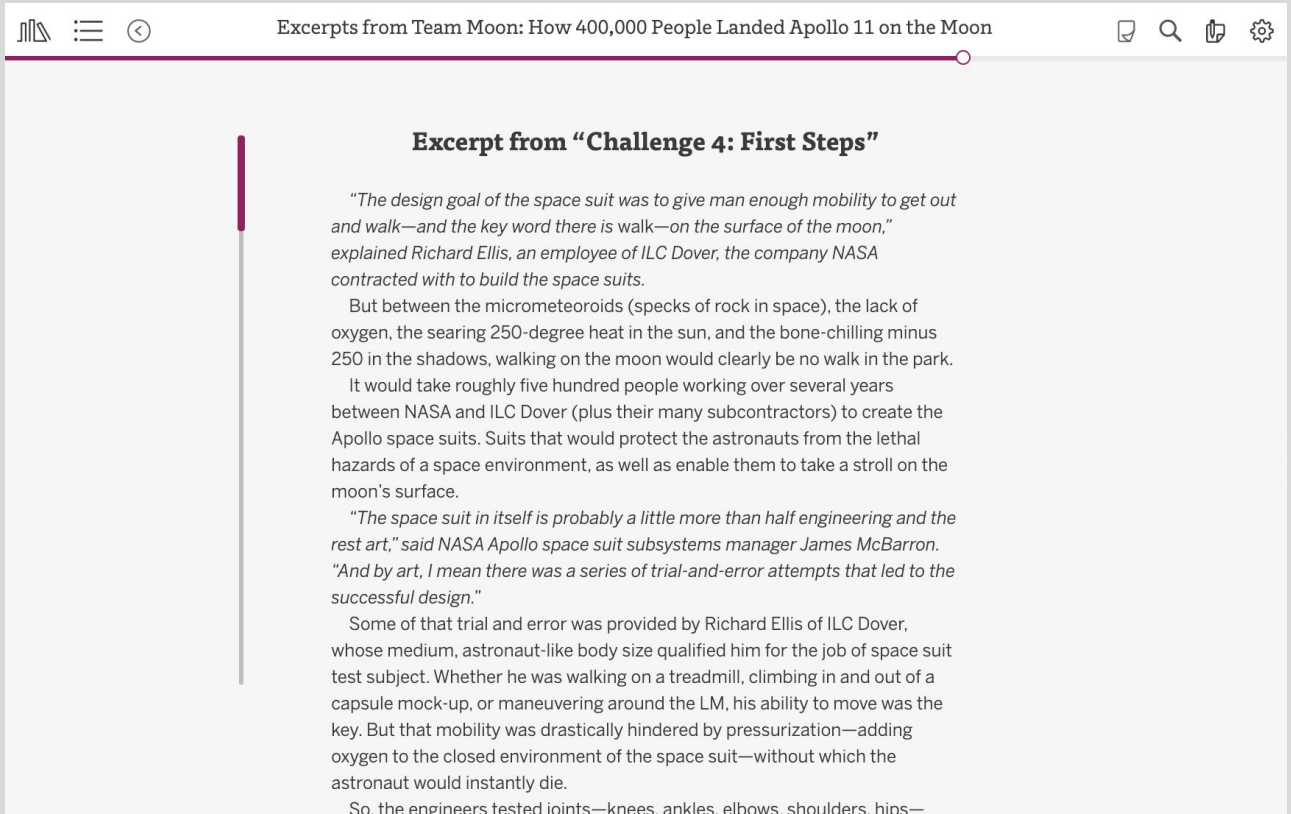
Independent Practice



Benchmark:

Examine how text sections and features communicate a purpose or meaning in a text.

Navigate to and read Excerpt from “Challenge 4: First Steps” from *Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon*.



Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon

Context for Passage 2

In *Team Moon,* two of the *Apollo 11* astronauts have successfully landed on the moon, and they now must focus on the work involved in leaving the spacecraft and walking on the moon. This chapter, “Challenge 4: First Steps,” focuses on the spacesuits and boots that kept the astronauts safe.

Practice analyzing text sections and features

Step 1
Identify the topic and purpose of the text.

Step 2
Note how information is organized into text sections and identify the central idea in each text section.

Step 3
Identify the text structures used to organize and present information and to develop a central idea in each text section or across sections.

Practice analyzing text sections and features

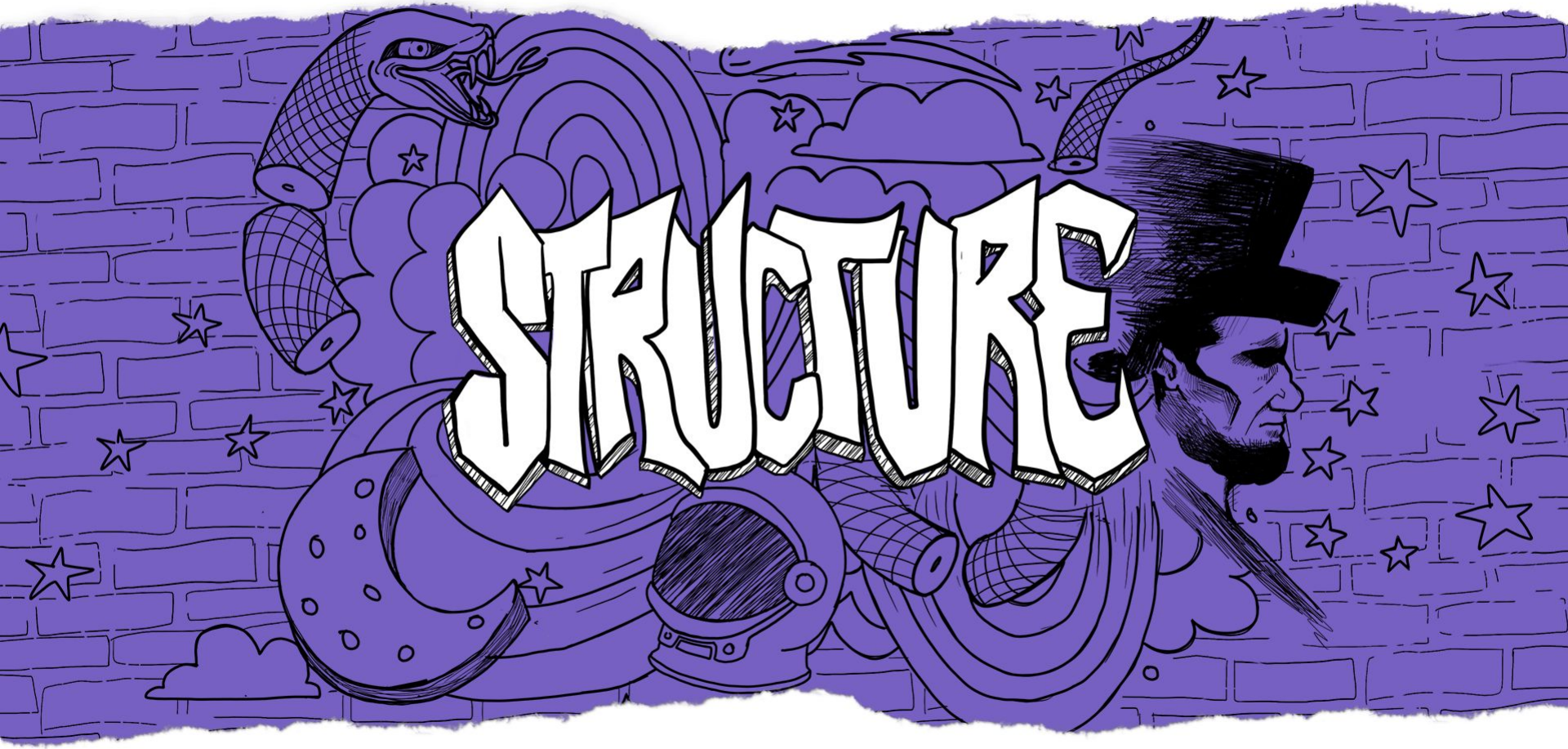
Step 4

Consider how key text features relate to the central ideas.

Step 5

How do the text sections and features help you understand the information and ideas and the purpose of the text?

Check for Understanding



Share and Discuss

1. What is the topic and how is the information organized? What is the central idea?

Share and Discuss

2. What are the key text structures used to organize and present the information? What text features do you notice?

Share and Discuss

3. How do the text sections and features help you understand the information and ideas and the purpose of the text?