

Text Features

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

text features: design elements that highlight the organization and especially important information in a text

boldface type: thicker, darker type, often used for key terms

bulleted list: each listed item is signaled with a dot or “bullet”

caption: written information about an illustration, photograph, or graphic

footnote: a numbered note placed at the bottom of a page that provides additional or source information

graphic aid: visual tool (a photograph, table, graph, or other illustration)

head or heading: title that identifies the topic of the content that follows it

key word: important term, may be italicized, boldface, or highlighted

numbered or lettered list: list showing a sequence or an order of importance

review questions: help readers focus or assess their understanding

sidebar: additional information set apart from the main text of a page

subhead or subheading: signals the beginning of a new topic or section under a more general heading

title: name given to a book, chapter, play, film, or poem

HERE'S HOW

Step 1: Before you read, identify the text features. Knowing the kinds of features that a text contains can help you find information.

Step 2: Next, preview the text features. Follow these steps:

- Read the heads and subheads to get an overview of the material and to determine which details go with which main ideas.
- Scan for boldface terms, other key words, and lists to get a sense of the important details you will encounter in this text.
- Glance at the graphic aids (and corresponding captions) to see what kind of data the text offers besides words.
- Look at what is covered in the sidebars, but don't read them yet.

Step 3: Now read the text and organize information. As you read, paragraph by paragraph, work in the graphic aids and sidebars as convenient. Use the text features to help your note taking, outlining, summarizing, and questioning.