



# TEXT TYPES: EXPLANATION

ENW105 – SUPERVISOR GUIDE

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# TEXT TYPES: EXPLANATION

## SUPERVISOR GUIDE

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### PURPOSES FOR WRITING

Writers write for a purpose and an audience. When they do this, they structure their writing in different ways called text types.

Each text type has a number of features. As writers become more skilled and experienced, they learn to use the features in their writing.

The main purposes for writing are to:

- narrate
- recount
- describe (for example a character)
- explain
- persuade
- report.

### EXPLANATION

Purpose: There are two basic types of explanation, to tell how something works or to give reasons why something occurs. (E.g. How does a spider spin a web? Why are birds' beaks different?)

#### Features of an explanation:

Title	What the explanation is about.
Start with a topic sentence	Telling the reader what, when and where.
Present tense	Happening now.
Written in third person	He, she, it, they.
Sequenced	In a logical order.
Use time words	First, next, several weeks later.
Use conjunctions	When, because.
Topic words	Words that are special to what is being explained.

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## BEGINNING WRITERS

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How do spiders spin webs?

Title is a question

Simple present tense

Technical vocabulary

Pronouns

Spiders make some threads that are sticky and some that are not. They spin the threads round like a wheel.

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## PROFICIENT WRITERS

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How do spiders spin webs?

Title is a question

Simple present tense

Time words

Technical vocabulary

Pronouns

Spiders spin some threads that are sticky and some that are not. First they spin the thread at the top. Then they add three threads that look like spokes in a wheel. These threads are not sticky. Finally they spin the sticky threads in a circle so that they can catch flies.

Topic sentence

Plan

Explanation	
Introduction/opening statement	ocean/salt
Paragraph 1	rains
Paragraph 2	rivers
Conclusion	150 metres

Why is the ocean salty?

Title is a question

Simple present tense

Technical vocabulary  
Cause and effect word

All the oceans in the world have salt in them.

Salt is a mineral that is found in rocks and soil. When it rains water falls on the earth and picks up salt from rocks and the soil. Then rivers carry the salt to the ocean where all the salt stays.

Some people think that if you took all the salt out of the sea and spread it on the land it would be more than 150 metres thick.

Topic sentence

## STUDENT WRITING



Use the student writing book *To Explain* for practice.

### LEARNING INTENTION

I am learning to:

- explain how something works or why something happens

From the Success criteria below, choose one or two items for students to focus on in each piece of writing. Write these into the space in the student's Explain writing book.

Success criteria may be the same for several pieces of writing, or change, depending on student needs.

Writers will build capability up over time or teachers may discuss with you which ones to focus on.

### Success criteria

- Make a plan to help me remember what I want to write.
- Use a title to show what I want to write about.
- Start with a topic sentence.
- Use simple present tense.
- Write my ideas in order.
- Use technical vocabulary.
- Use time words.
- Use conjunctions.
- Use pronouns.

### LINKS TO OTHER WRITING MODULES:



Links to modules in *Let's Get Writing! A Guide for Supervisors*:

Module 4 – Planning a piece of writing: work with the student to plan an explanation.

Module 7 – Quality detail in writing: with a focus on topic words (technical vocabulary).

### LINKS TO EXAMPLES:

The links provided on the next page show examples that writers in their first two years at school would be capable of writing. Teachers use these examples to compare where children in their own class are with children across New Zealand. Some teachers show the examples to children so that they can see what to aim for.

## THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM EXEMPLARS

### Emergent

How chickens hatch

[www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/explanation/wpp\\_1s\\_e.html](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/explanation/wpp_1s_e.html)

### Early

Having a shower

[www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/explanation/wpp\\_1x\\_e.html](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/explanation/wpp_1x_e.html)

Night and day

[www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/explanation/wpp\\_1r\\_e.html](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/explanation/wpp_1r_e.html)

### Advanced

Pedestrian crossing

[www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/explanation/wpp\\_1v\\_e.html](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/explanation/wpp_1v_e.html)

Why do shadows happen?

[www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/explanation/wpp\\_1u\\_e.html](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/explanation/wpp_1u_e.html)

Why do we wear our seatbelt?

[www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/explanation/wpp\\_1w\\_e.html](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/eng/explanation/wpp_1w_e.html)

## EASTTLE SPECIFIC WRITING EXEMPLARS

[e-asttle.tki.org.nz/Teacher-resources/Marking-resources-for-e-asTtle-writing#Specific](http://e-asttle.tki.org.nz/Teacher-resources/Marking-resources-for-e-asTtle-writing#Specific)

Good friends

- I be kin

A special place in the community

- Caravan park

## NATIONAL STANDARDS WRITING ILLUSTRATIONS

### After one year at school

Magnets

[literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Student-needs/National-Standards-Reading-and-Writing/National-Standards-illustrations/Year-1/Magnets-Writing](http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Student-needs/National-Standards-Reading-and-Writing/National-Standards-illustrations/Year-1/Magnets-Writing)

### After two years at school

Stories along the river

[literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Student-needs/National-Standards-Reading-and-Writing/National-Standards-illustrations/Year-2/Stories-along-the-River-Writing](http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Student-needs/National-Standards-Reading-and-Writing/National-Standards-illustrations/Year-2/Stories-along-the-River-Writing)

How the lungs work

[literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Student-needs/National-Standards-Reading-and-Writing/National-Standards-illustrations/Year-2/How-the-Lungs-Work-Writing](http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Student-needs/National-Standards-Reading-and-Writing/National-Standards-illustrations/Year-2/How-the-Lungs-Work-Writing)

'What are pyramids for?'

[literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Student-needs/National-Standards-Reading-and-Writing/National-Standards-illustrations/Year-2/What-are-Pyramids-for-Writing](http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Student-needs/National-Standards-Reading-and-Writing/National-Standards-illustrations/Year-2/What-are-Pyramids-for-Writing)

Might not be as good an example as others.



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