

The Basic Structure of Writing

In order to establish a *common language* in writing instruction, one should recognize that all text consists of two basic “structures” or types of information.

<p>(1) Concrete Detail</p> <p>information from a story or text</p> <p>statements / ideas in a text</p> <p>the “what”</p> <p>paraphrase CD</p> <p>quotation CD</p>	<p>Also known as ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facts• Examples• Illustrations• Evidence• Support• Plot references• Paraphrases• Citations• Quotations• Plot summary• What happens in a story• What is said in a text• Play by play announcer
<p>(2) Commentary</p> <p>information from your head</p> <p>the “so what?”</p> <p>words with feelings behind them that you can describe</p>	<p>Also known as ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis• Interpretation• Opinion• Inference• Insight• Reasons

IMPORTANT NOTE: The *ratio* of the amount of concrete detail (CD) to commentary (CM) in any given text varies, depending on the type of writing, as well as the purpose of the writing. For example, a historical account by definition should include more concrete detail (CD) than commentary in that its focus is on relating certain historical events or facts. Contrastingly, poetry is a highly emotional expression of language that stems from a poet’s personal interpretation of some aspect of life; thus, poetry is largely commentary (with few or no concrete details).