

Analyzing Text Structures

LAFS

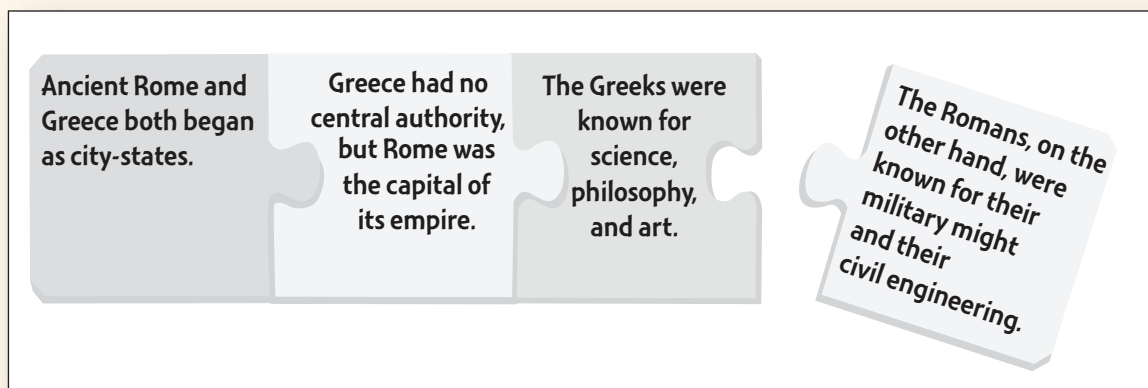
6.RI.2.5: Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

Theme: *Ancient Civilizations*

Suppose you put together a jigsaw puzzle. You'd fit the pieces together to form a picture. But what if one piece were missing? You wouldn't be able to see the image as a whole.

Authors have to fit ideas together just as carefully. The way they organize information is called **text structure**. Depending on their purpose, authors might choose to organize their ideas in different ways. They may present a **problem and solution**; order events from earliest to latest (**chronologically**); **compare and contrast** people, things, or ideas; or explain **causes and effects**. Whichever method they choose, the sentences, paragraphs, and sections must work together to present information clearly and logically.

Look at the image below. Circle each reference to Greece. Underline each reference to Rome. Think about how the parts fit together to form a whole.



Read the chart below to see how the sentences in the puzzle work together. Notice how each part develops the main idea. Fill in the function of Sentence 4 on your own.

Part	Function
Sentence 1	introduces the topic of the paragraph, ancient Rome and Greece
Sentence 2	contrasts the way the two city-states were organized
Sentence 3	adds information about what the Greeks were known for
Sentence 4	

Like the pieces in a puzzle, the parts of a text work together to make something bigger. As a reader, think about how the sentences, paragraphs, and sections work together to convey information and develop ideas. Remember that the parts are in order for a reason—just as a puzzle piece fits only where it belongs.



Read the first part of a history article about an important discovery.

Genre: History Article

from “Terra-Cotta Army Protects First Emperor’s Tomb” by John Roach, National Geographic

Workers digging a well outside the city of Xi’an, China, in 1974 struck upon one of the greatest archaeological discoveries in the world: a life-size clay soldier poised for battle.

The diggers notified Chinese authorities, who dispatched government archaeologists to the site.

They found not one, but thousands of clay soldiers, each with unique facial expressions and positioned according to rank. And though largely gray today, patches of paint hint at once brightly colored clothes. Further excavations have revealed swords, arrow tips, and other weapons, many in pristine condition.

(continued)

Explore how to answer this question: “How does paragraph 3 build on the information presented in paragraphs 1 and 2?”

This part of the article tells how the clay soldiers were discovered. It follows a chronological structure. Each paragraph adds important events or details to the story of the discovery.

Read the paragraphs again. What was the first event in the discovery? Put a number 1 beside it. Continue to number the other events in the text. One of the sentences should not be numbered.

Fill in the chart below to tell what each paragraph adds to your understanding of the terra-cotta army and its discovery.

Part	Function
Paragraph 1	
Paragraph 2	continues the account of the discovery process by explaining how archaeologists got involved

Think about the purpose of paragraph 3. Explain how the sentences in paragraph 3 develop the information provided in paragraphs 1 and 2.



Close Reading

These paragraphs tell more about what the archaeologists found. How does each sentence and paragraph develop key ideas of the text?

Hint

Reread the first paragraph on page 104. What phrase is used to describe the discovery?

Continue reading about the terra-cotta army. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question.

(continued from page 104)

The soldiers are in trenchlike, underground corridors. In some of the corridors, clay horses are aligned four abreast; behind them are wooden chariots.

The terra-cotta army, as it is known, is part of an elaborate [tomb] created to accompany the first emperor of China into the afterlife, according to archaeologists. . . .

Archaeologists estimate the pits may contain as many as 8,000 figures, but the total may never be known.

Circle the correct answer.

How does the final sentence build on a key idea mentioned in the first paragraph?

- A** It suggests there is no point in trying to learn more about the terra-cotta army because it is too big.
- B** It explains how extensive the site is and suggests that the story of the discovery is not yet complete.
- C** It reveals how little the government’s archaeologists actually know about the terra-cotta army.
- D** It implies that archaeologists do not plan any further exploration and must rely on existing findings.



Show Your Thinking

Look at the answer that you chose above. Explain why your choice is correct.



Discuss with a partner how the two parts of the article work together to present important ideas about the terra-cotta army. How does the second half build on the first?



Read the historical account. Use the Study Buddy and the Close Reading to guide your reading.

Genre: Historical Account



I can use the subheads to help me understand how ideas will be presented. I see that there is a question and two possible answers. That's probably how the text is organized.

Close Reading

According to the author, what have visitors to Stonehenge wondered about? **Draw boxes** around details that provide possible answers.

How do paragraphs 3 and 4 fit into the overall structure? **Underline** one sentence from each paragraph that helps you understand their purpose.

Secrets in the Stones

by Michael Burgan

1 Huge stone slabs dot a grassy field on a plain located in southern England. Some stones lie scattered; others stand upright and form part of a large circle. For centuries, visitors have wondered how and why this giant structure was built.

What Are the Secrets of Stonehenge?

2 These slabs are part of Stonehenge, an ancient stone construction that dates back 5,000 years. In their quest to unlock the structure's mysteries, archaeologists have found many artifacts at the site including animal bones, stone tools, and bone skewers. But even though some questions about the site's purpose have been answered, many remain.

Two Possible Answers

3 At first, the site included just a circular ditch surrounding two barrows, or burial mounds, and a smaller circle of 56 pits. Archaeologists have found ashes in these pits and in the circular ditch, and they believe the ashes are from the cremation, or ritual burning, of dead bodies. One theory is that Stonehenge was initially a place where people held religious ceremonies and buried the dead.

4 Some scientists believe that Stonehenge is much more than a burial ground. On the summer solstice, the rising sun's rays align perfectly with a huge outlying stone and the center of the stone circle. This suggests that Stonehenge may have been used to track the seasons. Whatever its true purpose, however, Stonehenge remains a majestic sight.



Hints

Which choice best develops the ideas of the account?

Think about how the last paragraph relates to the subheads.

Think about how each of the first two paragraphs ends. How do they lead into the second half of the account?

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

- 1** The account states that “even though some questions about the site’s purpose have been answered, many remain.” Why does the author include this statement?

 - A** It suggests that we can never know the purpose of Stonehenge.
 - B** It shows that archaeologists are not able to explain the past.
 - C** It explains why people are losing interest in the site.
 - D** It begins the discussion of different ideas about Stonehenge.

- 2** What does the final paragraph contribute to the account’s overall structure?

 - A** It is the second of two possible answers to the question of why Stonehenge was built.
 - B** It summarizes what the secrets of Stonehenge are.
 - C** It raises more questions for readers to consider about the secrets in the stones.
 - D** It explains why some scientists disagree about the origins of Stonehenge.

- 3** Explain how the first two paragraphs fit into the account’s overall structure. Cite at least two details from the text to support your explanation.



Read the account. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

by Christa Smith

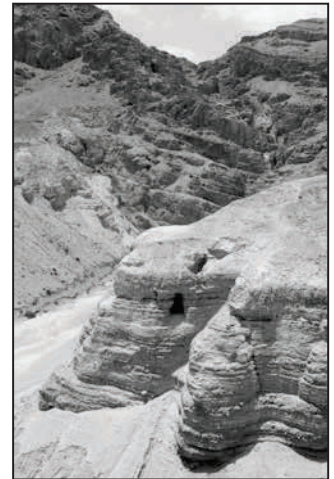
1 One day, a young Bedouin shepherd tossed a rock into a desert cave on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. He was looking for a stray goat and thought it might have wandered into the cave. The boy heard a cracking sound and became curious. What the shepherd discovered in that cave were old jars filled with seven ancient scrolls. The boy may not have realized the full importance of his find on that day in 1947, but luckily, others did. The young shepherd brought the scrolls to an antiques dealer, who sold four of them to an archbishop of the Syrian Orthodox Church. Two archaeologists at Hebrew University bought the other scrolls and donated them to Israel. A museum was founded to house these precious documents, which became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

2 Over the next decade, ten other caves containing manuscripts were found in the Judean Desert. Archaeologists also excavated the ruins of Qumran, not far from the caves. They turned up more documents written in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. There were hundreds of documents, either complete or in fragments. Some of the scrolls were written on dried animal skins, while others were written on papyrus, the largest measuring thirty feet long. These were very old manuscripts, of course, around 2,000 years old. Scientists used a special technique called carbon dating to determine how old they were; ancient coins found near the scrolls also indicated their age.

3 Why are the Dead Sea Scrolls so important to historians? Some of them are copies of fragments from the Hebrew Bible. In fact, the scrolls are the earliest known copies of the Bible. Other parchments contain commentary on biblical texts, and still others are copies of the prayer books of the Jewish people, showing their views on religion and society. Scholars say these papers reveal important information about the Second Temple Period. This period spanned the third century B.C.E. to 68 C.E., a time of political conflict. During this period, the Jews lived uneasily under Roman rule.

4 Through the examination of the scrolls, historians have gained insight into Jewish life and thought in ancient Palestine. Who actually did the work of copying out documents in the scrolls? There are several theories. One suggests that the Essenes may have performed all or much of this task. The Essenes were a very strict group of Jews who left Jerusalem to live in the desert. The Essenes believed that people had become too worldly, and so they went to live apart from society.

5 The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls sparked a half-century of study and debate. It is difficult to prove that they were left behind by just one group of people. We know that they were created over a period of 300 years. It is quite possible that different groups of people created or copied these manuscripts and fragments. It is not clear who hid them or why. Some say that the Essenes or other sects wanted to conceal them from the Romans. There is no way to be sure, though. What we do know is that the Dead Sea Scrolls are one of the most important discoveries of our time.



Some of the caves near Qumran, in the Judean Desert.



Answer the questions. Mark your answers to questions 1–4 on the Answer Form to the right.

Answer Form

- 1 (A) (B) (C) (D)
- 2 (A) (B) (C) (D)
- 3 (A) (B) (C) (D)
- 4 (A) (B) (C) (D)

Number Correct

4

1 How does paragraph 1 prepare readers for the rest of the account?

- A** It describes how the scrolls were discovered.
- B** It introduces the scrolls and suggests their importance.
- C** It explains that the scrolls are really documents.
- D** It describes what scholars learned from the scrolls.

2 Read these sentences from paragraph 2.

Over the next decade, ten other caves containing manuscripts were found in the Judean Desert. Archaeologists also excavated the ruins of Qumran, not far from the caves.

How does this information fit into the overall structure of the account?

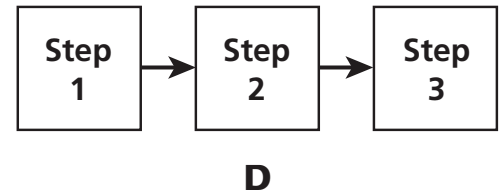
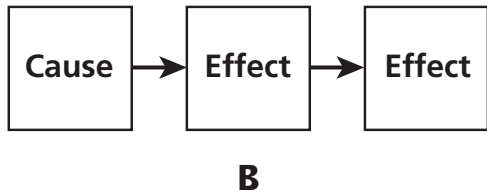
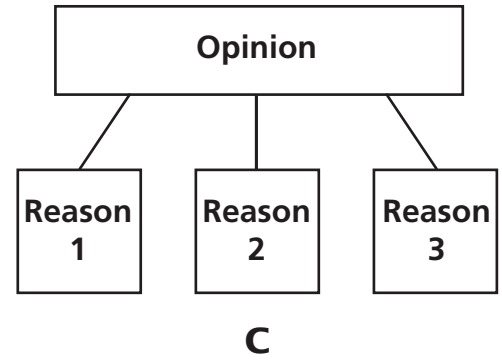
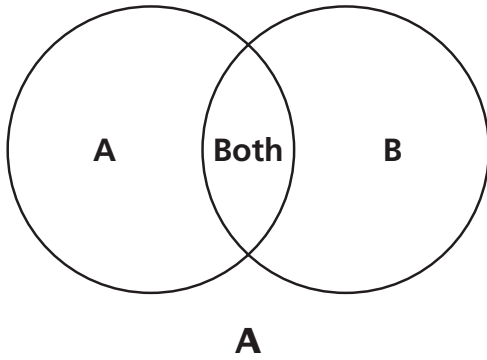
- A** It continues the chronology of events from Paragraph 1.
- B** It answers the question of the manuscripts' origins.
- C** It compares the desert caves to the ruins of Qumran.
- D** It shows what caused archaeologists to excavate the ruins.

3 How do paragraphs 3 and 4 support a key idea of the account?

- A** They explain why the scrolls are so important.
- B** They show just how old the scrolls really are.
- C** They demonstrate how the scrolls are used by scholars.
- D** They prove that the scrolls are as important as the Bible.



4 Which graphic **best** represents the structure of the informational text “The Dead Sea Scrolls”?



5 Explain why the author includes paragraph 5 in the account. Use at least **three** details from the text to show how this paragraph fits into the overall structure of the account.

Self Check *Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 93.*