

ELEMENTS of Nonfiction



Sidebars: These are boxes on a page of a book or magazine article, containing information that didn't quite fit into the text but that the author wanted to include. Sidebars may contain a list of fascinating facts, quotes, part of an interview, a newspaper clipping, or a letter.

Boldface Type: This is the darker type used for titles and headings. Some vocabulary words may also be in boldface type. This feature calls the reader's attention to words or phrases and indicates they are important.

Photographs and Captions: These supply an image of an object or person and can give readers extra information about the topic. Captions are one or two sentences that explain the photograph.

Quotes and Interviews: These features can be in sidebars or on a section of the page outside of the story. Quotes and interviews give the exact words of a person, sometimes an expert.

Maps: These help readers visualize a place the author discusses. They also allow readers to follow the path of an explorer, pilot, or rescue effort.

Diagrams: These are labeled illustrations of a process, such as the water cycle, or a visual depiction of how something, such as the electric motor, works.

Introduction: This part of a text can explain how the author conceived of the idea as well as recognize others who helped the author gather information.

Table of Contents: This provides chapter titles and pages numbers. It's also a quick overview of what will be found in the text.

Glossary: This alphabetic list of important terms explains tough or unusual words found in the text. It usually comes near the end of the book. Sometimes a glossary entry also includes guidelines for pronouncing the word.

Afterword: Information about a person or event that occurs after the end of the book.

Index: This alphabetic list of key words, topics, and names of people and places in the text comes at the end of the book. Next to each item is a page number or several page numbers, referring the reader to the places in the book where the idea or person is mentioned. The more page numbers an index entry has, the more details there are about that topic.

Time Line: This feature can include key dates in a person's life. It can also cover the dates of key events in a historical period, such as the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, or a major war, such as World War II. Time lines can have photographs, illustrations, and short write-ups under each date.

Bibliography: This list at the end of the book cites the books, magazines, and other sources the author used to write the book.