

Structure Shapes Meaning

R.L. 8.5: Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

TEXT 1 — A Tree's Work

A tree does not hurry.

It holds the rain.
It catches the sunlight.
It gives a bird a place to rest.

Below,
its roots push slowly
through the dark soil.

Above,
its branches reach
toward the sky.

And while we rush
from one place to another,
the tree remains—
growing.

TEXT 2 — Why Trees Matter

Trees perform several important functions in an ecosystem. Their leaves absorb sunlight and use it to produce energy through photosynthesis. Their roots hold soil in place and help prevent erosion. Trees also provide food and shelter for many animals. In addition, trees release oxygen into the atmosphere and absorb carbon dioxide. Although trees grow slowly, their effects on the environment can last for decades. For these reasons, trees are an important part of healthy ecosystems.

Part 1 — Notice the Structure

Text 1: The Poem

1. How is the poem organized?

- ☐ One continuous paragraph
- ☐ Short lines and separate sections
- ☐ A chronological sequence of events
- ☐ A question-and-answer format

2. What does the poet place emphasis on by putting “A tree does not hurry” on its own line?

Why might the poet have structured the poem this way?

Text 2: The Informational Text

3. How is the informational text organized?

- ☐ Short poetic lines
- ☐ A series of facts and explanations
- ☐ A story with characters
- ☐ A problem followed by dialogue

4. What does the author do first?

5. How does the author develop the information?

Part 2 — Compare the Structures

6. Which text feels slower-paced? Why?

7. Which text gives information more directly? Explain.

8. How does the structure of the poem make the reader think differently about trees than the informational text does?