Putting Things in Order

Use this lesson plan for ebooks that are narrative in nature—biographies, memoirs, and histories of events told in chronological order.

Looking at narrative text to find and organize the order of events.

Select an ebook about the topic, theme, or unit you're teaching in class. Allow students time to read the book in class or at home. Tell students to keep the book they read in their VIA backpack.

When students have finished reading the ebook, ask them to identify the text structure: does the book recount a chain of events, make an argument, or explain a concept? Remind them that books that recount a chain of events are narrative texts.

Get students ready to open the ebook again, along with the "Putting Things in Order" graphic organizer. Flipping through the book, can they identify any text features that frame the narration (table of contents, headers, chronology, or timeline)? If so, does the text feature(s) focus on the key elements of the story? Does it omit any important events? Does it include anything that isn't very important?

Ask students to flip through the ebook and fill in their timelines, using the events in the narrative that they think are most important and influential. These may or may not be the same events listed on a text feature within the book, but they should definitely be in students' own words.

After students have completed their assignments, begin a class conversation about narrative texts and chronological order. You may wish to use the following discussion questions to get started:

- Why is it useful to think about events in the order in which they happened?
- Do any of the events on the timeline seem to be influenced by previous events?
- Do any of the events on your timeline suggest cause and effect? How?
- Do any of the events on your timeline suggest problem and solution? If so, how?
- Which, if any, of the events seem to be a "turning point" in the narrative? How?

MACKIN CLASSROOM