Summary and Preview

Language of Documents mirrors the format used in the ***SkillPlan*** publication *Document Literacy.* Section headings are ordered and build on those found in the first publication. The additions emphasize the vocabulary and teaching points within each topic.

Section 1 - Lists

Like the sentence in continuous text, lists are the sentence of document literacy. This analogy is carried through the lists section in order to focus on the transferable skills that can be taught to increase skill levels in document literacy. Progressing through simple, combined, intersecting and nested lists suggests a sequential series of lessons. This section provides the key understandings which are required to understand subsequent sections.

Section 2 - Entry Forms

In this section, the focus is on recognizing lists within entry form documents. Determining organizational categories leads the reader to an understanding of what questions are being asked. While the discussion is from the point of view of consumer, these are also important lessons for those who design entry forms.

Section 3 - Graphs and Charts

In this section, consideration is given to the visual elements of information displays. In a shift from what is traditionally presented as mathematical manipulation, line graphs, bar graphs and pie charts make mathematics visible and 'readable.'

Section 4 - Maps

The section on maps explores the two main purposes that maps serve. Workers use reference maps to find destinations, plan efficient routes, or locate detailed typographical information. Thematic maps are used by workers in all sectors to highlight all types of information in relationship to a particular geography.

Section 5 - Mimetic Documents

In this section 'a picture is worth a thousand words.' Mimetic documents include an amazing variety of interesting document types. To interpret mimetic documents, one must read both visually and literally. Some mimetic document types help us to identify or categorize the world as we see it; others represent these same items or processes symbolically.

Section 6 - Glossary

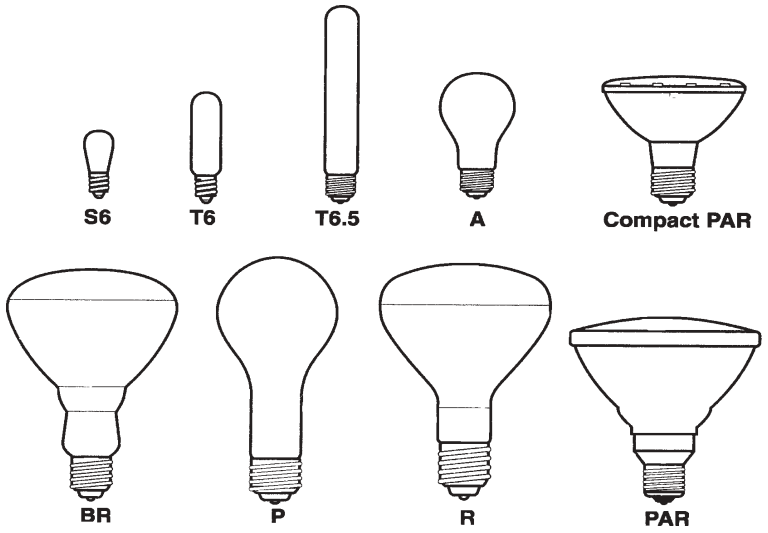
Returning to the theme of document language, this section summarizes the vocabulary needed to form ideas and to discuss the structure of documents from simple lists to the most complex mimetic documents.

SECTION 1

Lists

Kirsch and Mosenthal in their article series published in the Journal of Reading (1989-91) build a classification system for all documents which suggests that all documents can be analysed in terms of lists and list structures. While their work focused on limited functions of document use, that is, reading documents to learn, the argument can still be made that the list is the basic organizing feature for many information display types. In this section, an analogy is drawn between the structure of prose and the structure of lists. Lists are usually ordered by some convention, even a randomly ordered list is an order of sorts. This section starts with simple lists and progresses to more complex lists: combined lists, intersecting lists and nested lists.

feet of clay
fellow traveler
felony
feminism
fermentation
Fermi, Enrico
fertilization
fetish
fetus
feudalism
fiber optics
fibrous roots
fiction



CALGARY, ALTA.	4832 56:08	308 3:21	4509 50:33	4949 57:09	3692 41:39	3488 39:03	1650 19:56	3943 14:21	762 8:12	4527 51:31	6068 70:06
CHARLOTTETOWN, P.E.I.		4861 56:34	356 4:09	239 2:51	1149 14:39	1339 16:36	6317 74:30	954 10:51	4072 48:06	305 3:38	1244 14:57
EDMONTON, ALTA.			4538 51:00	4979 57:36	3721 46:02	3517 39:30	1465 18:10	5590 44:48	791 8:39	4556 51:58	6097 71:33
FREDERICTON, N.B.				473 5:12	823 8:44	1016 11:01	5994 68:55	598 6:42	3749 42:31	108 1:13	1592 19:07
HALIFAX, N.S.					1003 15:42	1456 17:39	6434 75:31	1071 21:54	4189 49:07	422 4:41	1313 15:46
MONTRÉAL, QUE.						199 2:07	5177 60:01	257 2:50	2932 31:37	843 10:38	2384 29:37
OTTAWA, ONT.							4973 57:27	450 4:43	2728 31:01	1034 12:35	2575 31:34
PRINCE RUPERT, B.C.								5396 62:17	2247 26:34	6012 69:53	7553 89:28
QUÉBEC, QUÉ.									3181 36.19	645 8:23	2190 25:49
[illegible]INA, SASK.										3767 43:19	5308 63:04
N.B.											1541 18:36

DRIVING DISTANCES

UN2800	26	Batteries, wet, non-spillable
UN2801	25	Dyes, n.o.s. *or* Dye intermediates, n.o.s.
UN2802	26	Copper chloride
UN2803	37	Gallium
UN2805	19	Lithium hydride, fused solid
UN2806	20	Lithium nitride
UN2809	37	Mercury
UN2810	25	Poisonous liquids, n.o.s.
UN2811	26	Poisonous solids, n.o.s.
UN2812	26	Sodium aluminate, solid
UN2813	19	Substances which in contact with water emit flammable gases, n.o.s.

SECTION 2

Entry Forms

Introduction

Entry forms are routinely used at work and in day-to-day life; it is difficult to avoid them. This section develops a strategy for talking about entry forms. Its main purpose is to demystify the experience that often seems complex and intimidating for many users. Entry forms are widely used because they are thought to be an efficient way to collect and convey a great deal of information in a small space. Much of what is communicated is 'short hand' and requires the user to make interpretations and to understand the underlying list structures.

FORM TITLE

List 1 - Instructions to the Form Filler

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

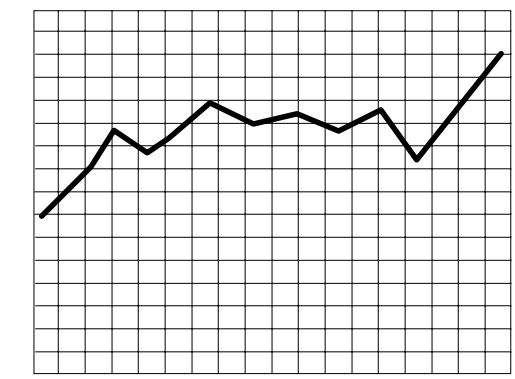
Organizational Category Title		
List 2-Question	List 3-Question	List 4-Question
Response	*Response*	*Response*
Organizational Category Title		
List 5-Title	List 6-Title	List 7-Title
List Item	*List Item*	*List Item*
Organizational Category Title		
List 8-Title	List 9-Title	List 10-Title
List Item	*List Item*	*List Item*

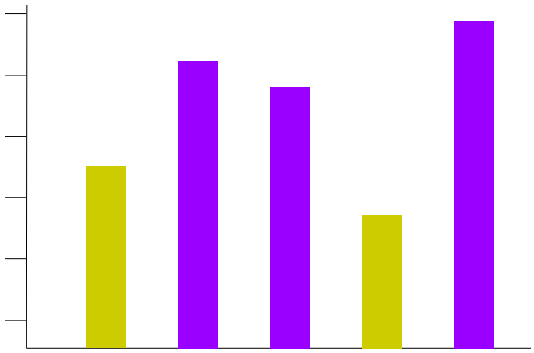
Vocabulary

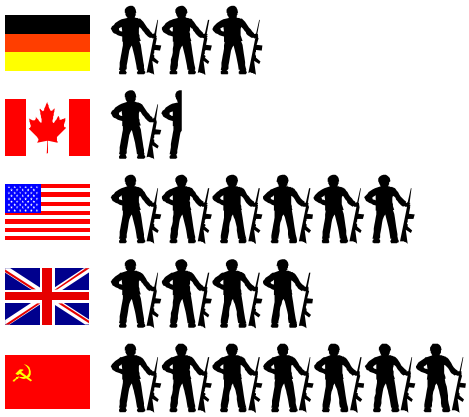
Abstraction, character separators, comparison, decision and response, encoding, organizational category, primary source, recoding, response modes, retrieval, searching, secondary source, storage, transformation, category label, information category.

SECTION 3

Graphs and Charts







Graphs

Graphs are a simple means for showing a change in one function in relation to a change in another. A function used frequently in such comparisons is time. Other factors vary as time passes. Graphs usually illustrate progress, show technical data in an easy to visualize form or present a general description.

The choice of graph type depends on the shape desired and the purpose of analysis. Bar graphs compare values via parallel bars, while line graphs are used to illustrate variations over a period of time. Circle graphs indicate the categorical breakdown of values, and radar charts assist in analysis of previously evaluated items.

SECTION 4

Maps

Maps serve two main purposes. First, maps locate. Workers who are 'on the road,' whether on sales calls or on the way to repair an appliance, simply need to reach a destination. Others have more complex tasks. Services of all kinds—taxis, couriers, pizza restaurants, airlines, boat charters—use maps to find destinations, plan efficient routes, estimate arrival times, and predict fuel costs. Still others need to locate detailed typographical information such as elevation or bearings. *Reference maps* represent geographical equivalents. Such maps indicate the location of highways, streets, parks and rivers.

A second type, *thematic maps*, relate some phenomena to a particular geographic area. For example, weather maps and population density maps. These maps are used by workers in all sectors to highlight information in relationship to a particular place. For instance, a tour booking agent consults an altitude map to advise an asthmatic traveller; a hotel clerk refers to a map with highlighted restaurants to give guests information; a fisher studies a depth chart to navigate.

Reference Maps

Features

Maps depict the spatial arrangement of elements such as rivers or roads over a given geographic area. References are to location not to the specifics of the objects themselves. A park on a map is always in the context of geography, that is where it is located in relation to the location of other features. Visually minimal characteristics of representation relate to the physical attributes of the feature represented. A park for instance, may be represented by a green shape, but is unlikely to show qualities of the park as an aerial photograph of the same geographic area would.

- Maps are usually oriented with north at the top, south at the bottom, west to the left and east to the right.
- Each map represents a geographical area to a scale, whether vast or detailed.
- Features included on most maps are a scale, often in both miles and kilometres, a grid and a key.

How to Read / Interpret

According to some, maps are a universal metaphor for understanding cognition. Compare alternatives to the understanding that a map brings to the reader, in comparison to a linear text which falls short of the spacial relationships accomplished in map reading.

1. Establish the scale.

SECTION 5

Mimetic Documents

In this section 'a picture is worth a thousand words.' Mimetic documents include an amazing variety of interesting document types. To interpret mimetic documents, one must read both visually and literally. Some mimetic document types help us to identify or categorize the world as we see it. Other mimetic documents represent items or processes symbolically or in stylized or abstract forms. While pictures perhaps 'mimic' reality best and allow us to identify objects, they do not emphasize particular features that need to be studied and understood. Diagrams emphasize dimensions, spatial arrangements or function. Another group of mimetic forms illustrate relationships, functions or processes. Both schematics and flowcharts are good examples of the latter.