How Chapters Build the Whole Story

Teacher		**Class**	Grade 5
Subject	ELA	**Topic**	Story structure
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Students learn how chapters, scenes, and stanzas build on each other. They order chapters into a chain and explain the whole structure.

Curriculum links

- Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text fit together [1]

Learning objectives

- Students will explain how chapters build on each other to make overall story structure.
- Students will name chapters, scenes, and stanzas and describe their jobs in texts.

Success criteria

- I can label chapters, scenes, and stanzas and tell their job.
- I can explain how Chapter 2 builds on Chapter 1.
- I can explain how all parts together make the whole story.

What students already know

Ask: What do beginning, middle, and end do in a story? Take 3 quick hands and listen for setting and characters at start, problem in middle, resolution at end.

Key words

chapter	a separate part of a story book [2]
scene	a separate part of a play with talking and action [2]
stanza	a grouped set of lines that form a part of a poem [2]
structure	how all the small parts fit together to make a whole [1]
resolution	the part near the end where the problem gets fixed

Materials

- Slide deck with Slides 1-7 and 9-12, projector with sound for Video clip 2
- Printed sentence strips of The Lighthouse Key Paragraphs 1-3, one mixed-up set per group
- Tape for sticking chapter chains to the wall
- Copies of Worksheet Task A sentence builder, one per student
- Exit slips printed from Slide 12

Before the lesson

- Print and cut one set of Paragraph 1-3 strips per group of 4; print a support set with first-line clues underlined
- Test Video clip 2 (0:00–4:40) on Slide 6 for picture and sound
- Copy Worksheet Task A for pairs and exit slips for each student
- Move desks into groups of 4 with wall space for taping chains

Created with LessonDino.com · AI lesson planner with checkable sources

Lesson outline

0–7 min **Starter** 7 min · Whole class

Hook curiosity about missing chapters and recall beginning-middle-end to frame structure.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1 title and Slide 2 objectives and read the goals in student words.
2. Say the hook: What if we ripped chapter two right out of a book? Would the story still make sense?
3. Show Slide 5 mystery bricks and explain that small bricks can make one strong tower like chapters make one story.
4. Have partners turn and talk for 30 seconds about what would be confusing if Chapter 2 was gone.

STUDENTS DO

1. Listen to objectives and look at Slide 5 bricks.
2. Turn and talk with a neighbor about what would break if Chapter 2 was missing.
3. Share one idea quickly with the class.

Say: What if we ripped chapter two right out of a book? Would the story still make sense? Stories are built in pieces. Today we will see how each piece builds on the one before to make a whole.

Ask: What does the beginning of a story usually do? (Introduces the characters and setting [2].) · What would happen if you skipped the middle of a story? (You would miss the problem and clues, so the ending would not make sense.)

Check understanding: Thumbs up or down: could the ending make sense without the middle? If many are unsure, restate that middle adds problems and clues that the ending needs.

Support: Let students answer with beginning-middle-end picture cues from prior work. **Stretch:** Ask what would happen if you read the ending first — would it create mystery or confusion?

Use: Slides 1-2, 5

Created with LessonDino.com · AI lesson planner with checkable sources

7–19 min **Teaching** 12 min · Whole class

Teach the names and jobs of chapters, scenes, and stanzas and how they build step by step.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 3 timeline and walk through Opening, Build-Up, Peak Problem, and Resolution [7].
2. Show Slide 4 photo and explain each chapter adds like a new block that holds up the whole story.
3. Play Video clip 2 (0:00–4:40) on Slide 6 and tell students to spot the start, problem, and fix and how blocks connect.
4. Show Slide 7 mindmap and name chapters as parts of a story, scenes as parts of a play, and stanzas as parts of a poem, where each part adds new action [2] and larger portions build meaning [1].

STUDENTS DO

1. Follow the timeline and repeat part names: chapter, scene, stanza.
2. Watch the video and call out start, problem, fix when they hear them.
3. Copy the three part names and jobs into notebooks.

Say: A chapter is a part of a story. A scene is a part of a play. A stanza is a part of a poem. Each new part builds on earlier sections [2] and all the parts together make the whole meaning [1].

Worked example: Paragraph 1 as Opening, step by step: Step 1 - Who and where? A girl stays with her uncle by a tall lighthouse. Step 2 - What new thing? She finds a small brass key under the wooden steps. Step 3 - What job? The reader meets the girl and learns the place and the problem, which sets up Chapter 2.

Ask: What is a scene and where do you find it? (A part of a play or drama [2].) · How does a new chapter help the whole story? (It builds on earlier sections by adding new action, clues, or problems [2].) · How do larger portions of text shape meaning? (Each part adds ideas that lead to the next part until they make whole meaning [1].)

Check understanding: Mini whiteboards: write chapter, scene, or stanza for: part of a poem, part of a story, part of a play. Reteach any mixed terms with Slide 7.

Support: Point to Slide 7 mindmap while students repeat each term and job aloud. **Stretch:** Ask students to predict how starting in the middle of a play would create mystery or surprise.

Use: Slides 3-4, 6-7, Video clip 2 (0:00–4:40)

19–30 min **Guided practice** 11 min · Pairs

Practice structure language together using sentence frames before building chains.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 10 bullets and read: each part answers and asks something new, earlier details set up later surprises.
2. Model Worksheet Task A by picking one box from each column to build a sentence about structure.
3. Have pairs write three sentences and then read one aloud.
4. Fix word use by reminding pairs to use chapter, scene, and stanza correctly when speaking about the text [2].

STUDENTS DO

1. Build three sentences with Task A boxes in pairs.
2. Read sentences aloud and check that each tells a part job.
3. Keep best sentence to use in the main activity.

Say: Let us build strong sentences about structure together. Pick one box from each column, write the sentence, then check it tells what the part does. You will need these sentences for your chain talk.

Worked example: Model, step by step: Pick start - Chapter 2. Pick middle - builds on Chapter 1. Pick end - by adding a new clue. Full sentence: Chapter 2 builds on Chapter 1 by adding a new clue. Second model: All the chapters fit together to make one complete story.

Ask: Which sentence tells how one part builds on the one before? (Chapter 2 builds on Chapter 1 by adding a new clue.) · Which sentence tells about overall structure? (All the chapters fit together to make one complete story.)

Check understanding: Walk the room and read two pair sentences; if language is vague, model one more sentence with the class.

Support: Provide sentence starters like Stanza 1 tells us ___ and Stanza 2 adds ___ to track building ideas.
Stretch: Have pairs write a fourth sentence about what would happen if the middle part was removed.

Use: Slides 7, 10, Worksheet Task A

Created with LessonDino.com · AI lesson planner with checkable sources

30–50 min **Main activity** 20 min · Groups

Order chapter strips into a chain and explain how each part builds to make overall structure.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 9 task and hand out mixed-up sentence strips of The Lighthouse Key Paragraphs 1-3.
2. Direct groups to order the strips, label Chapter 1, 2, 3 and what each adds, and discuss how each successive part builds on earlier sections [2].
3. Remind groups to check that the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action [2].
4. Have each group tape its chain to the wall and explain in 2 sentences why Chapter 2 could not come first.

STUDENTS DO

1. Order three strips, label Chapter 1, 2, 3 and write what each adds.
2. Tape the chain to the wall in order.
3. Present the chain and give 2 sentences on why Chapter 2 could not come first.

Say: You are paper detectives. Put Paragraphs 1 to 3 in order to make the chain. Label what each chapter adds. Be ready to explain how Chapter 2 builds on Chapter 1 and how all parts make the whole story.

Worked example: Finished chain, step by step: Chapter 1 - Paragraph 1 introduces the girl, lighthouse, and key problem. Chapter 2 - Paragraph 2 builds on Chapter 1 and adds a clue with the tiny door at the bottom of the lighthouse. Chapter 3 - Paragraph 3 adds danger and leads to the ending when wind bangs the door shut. Together they show how events develop over the course of the text [1].

Ask: How does Chapter 2 build on Chapter 1? (It tries the key from Chapter 1 in new doors and adds the clue of the tiny lighthouse door.) · Why could Chapter 2 not come first? (We would not know the girl, place, or key, so the clue would not make sense.)

Check understanding: Listen to each 2-sentence explanation; if order or reason is weak, ask the group to point to the clue words first, then, finally in the strips.

Support: Give a version with first-line clues underlined to show setting and problem in order [8]. **Stretch:** Have students write one sentence to predict what a fourth chapter would add to the overall structure.

Use: Slide 9

Created with LessonDino.com · AI lesson planner with checkable sources

50–60 min **Plenary** 10 min · Whole class

Link each part to the whole story and check the objectives with an exit ticket.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 10 and restate that the last part shows change from the first part and details earlier set up surprises later.
2. Use Slide 11 question for think, pair, share: If Chapter 2 was missing, would the ending still make sense? Why?
3. Connect to drama and poem: scenes connect the same way in a play and stanzas add ideas step by step in a poem [2].
4. Hand out Slide 12 exit tickets and collect them at the door.

STUDENTS DO

1. Think, pair, and share answers about missing Chapter 2.
2. Tell how scenes or stanzas would work the same way by adding step by step.
3. Complete the exit ticket on their own.

Say: Think, then tell your partner: if Chapter 2 was missing, would the ending still make sense? Use the words chapter and builds on. Then finish your exit ticket to show how parts make the whole.

Ask: If Chapter 2 was missing, would the ending still make sense? Why? (No, because without the tiny door clue the danger in Chapter 3 would have no setup.) · What do chapters, scenes, and stanzas all do? (They are parts that build on earlier parts to make one whole story, play, or poem [2].)

Check understanding: Read exit tickets for I can label parts and tell their job; pull small group tomorrow if most miss Chapter 2 link.

Support: Allow exit ticket as talk to partner first, then write with word bank: chapter, scene, stanza. **Stretch:** Ask which form would best tell a power outage story and why based on structure.

Use: Slides 10-12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Thinking each chapter is a separate story	Student retells chapters with no links between them	Point to Paragraph 2 line This part builds on the first part and have them name the repeated key [2].
Mixing up chapter, scene, and stanza	Student calls a poem part a chapter or a play part a stanza	Sort three labels to story, drama, poem and use each term when speaking about the text [2].
Saying order does not matter	Student says any order works as long as all parts are there	Remove Paragraph 2 and show the ending danger has no setup, so larger portions must lead to the next [1].

Support

- Give a version with first-line clues underlined to show setting and problem in order.
- Provide sentence starters and a word bank with chapter, scene, stanza to organize ideas.

Stretch

- Have students write one sentence to predict what a fourth chapter would add to the overall structure.
- Have students add one line that would make the link between two parts stronger.

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit with target groups in main activity; help order strips using underlined clues, prompt 2-sentence talk, and scribe the prediction sentence if needed.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
What is the job of Chapter 1 in The Lighthouse Key?	Paragraph 1 meets the girl and learns the place and the problem.
How does Chapter 2 build on Chapter 1?	Paragraph 2 tries the key and adds the clue of the tiny lighthouse door.
How do all the chapters make overall structure?	Each successive part builds on earlier sections until Paragraph 4 makes one complete story.

Homework

Complete Worksheet Task D questions using The Lighthouse Key Paragraphs 1-4.

Sources

1. College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading · thecorestandards.org · https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/
2. Tennessee English Language Arts Standards - TN.gov · tn.gov · https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/stateboardofeducation/documents/massivemeetingsfolder/meetingfiles4/10-20-17_III_J_Non-Substantive_Changes_to_Math_ELA__Science_Standards_Attachment_2_-_ELA.pdf
3. Story Structure – The Narrative Transformation Lab · tntlab.carterschool.gmu.edu · https://tntlab.carterschool.gmu.edu/learn/narrative-transformation-resources/narrative-themography/story-structure/
4. Storytelling: Story Structure - CMU School of Computer Science · cs.cmu.edu · https://www.cs.cmu.edu/~jparise/research/storytelling/structure/
5. The Structure of Narrative · cseweb.ucsd.edu · https://cseweb.ucsd.edu/~goguen/papers/story.html
6. The Inverted Pyramid Structure - Purdue OWL® · owl.purdue.edu · https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/journalism_and_journalistic_writing/the_inverted_pyramid.html
7. How to structure a story - BBC Bitesize · bbc.co.uk · https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zk8qnrd
8. How is a story structured? - BBC Bitesize · bbc.co.uk · https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zf8vwsg/articles/zwmt4qt
9. Story Structure for Kids: a Step-by-Step Guide - BookBildr ... · edu.bookbildr.com · https://edu.bookbildr.com/story-structure-for-kids-a-step-by-step-guide-for-teachers-and-students/
10. Story structure - Wikipedia · en.wikipedia.org · http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrative_structure
11. Step-by-Step Guide to Teaching Kids Story Structure · magicalstories.ai · https://magicalstories.ai/articles/step-by-step-guide-to-teaching-kids-story-structure/
12. Plot Diagram for Kids: Easy Story Structure Guide · prodigycreekside.com · https://prodigycreekside.com/plot-diagram-for-kids-story-structure-guide/
13. Story Structure | Night Zookeeper · nightzookeeper.com · https://www.nightzookeeper.com/worksheets/story-writing/structure
14. Story Structure Worksheets | Reading Activities · ereadingworksheets.com · https://www.ereadingworksheets.com/free-reading-worksheets/story-structure/story-structure-worksheets/
15. How To Structure Plot – Core Story Elements - Wiki - Twinkl · twinkl.com · https://www.twinkl.com/teaching-wiki/story-structure
16. Story Structure - The National Children's Book and Literacy ... · thencbla.org · https://thencbla.org/story-structure/
17. Fiction Story Elements and Text Structure - This Reading Mama · thisreadingmama.com · https://thisreadingmama.com/comprehension/text-structure/fiction-text-structure/