About the Genre: Report

What is it?
Explanatory writing uses facts to tell the reader true information or present new knowledge about a topic. Explanatory writing can also tell how to do something.

A report is a text that uses explanatory writing to give true information about an event or topic. For example, a report might tell how plants and animals live in the desert. The report will explain different ways plants and animals live with little water. A report also often presents the results of research. Research reports tell facts that scientists learned. They then tell conclusions based on these facts.

To help the reader understand ideas better, explanatory writing and reports explain the relationship between ideas. To do this, the author uses signal words such as but, however, because, as a result, and for example. Explanatory writing is found in many places such as academic essays, textbooks, newspapers, magazines, and websites.

What is the purpose?
The main purpose of a report is to inform the reader. A report helps the reader understand a topic better. Though the author usually doesn’t give his or her opinion, a report may give a recommendation about an action the reader should take.

What is the structure?
A report can be as short as a few paragraphs or as long as a book. The introduction to a report tells the topic. It also tells the purpose of the report and why the topic is interesting or unusual. A research report tells where the research was done in the first paragraph.

The body of a report gives more information about the topic. The body is organized into paragraphs. Each paragraph describes one part of the topic.

Reports can also include charts, graphs, maps, or timelines. These show information using a picture or drawing and make some kinds of information easy to understand.

A report ends with a conclusion. The conclusion repeats the most important information from the body. It may describe other research to follow this report.

Comprehension Questions
1. A report might tell about which of the following? Choose two.  
a. true information about an event  
b. research on a topic  
c. a writer’s opinion of a new book
2. What is one purpose of a report?  
a. to help a researcher get support for his or her next project  
b. to give the researcher’s opinion  
c. to inform the reader
3. A report usually includes three main parts. What are they?