Objective
Students learn strategies for close reading that provide valuable information about organization that will later inform their writing.

Strategies include:
- skimming and scanning for an overview of the entire text
- recognizing the importance of headings, keywords, diagrams, illustrations
- writing a summary based on information provided (text conventions)

Important Vocabulary
*title, topic, headings, bold-face print, italicized print, key words, diagram, photograph, illustration, caption*

Procedure
1. Explain to the class that they will be reading a selection titled Bears and that they’ll be learning some strategies for how read more effectively in order to glean the most information from the piece.

2. Photocopy pp.39-40 and distribute copies to the class and project it on the white board. To build context and background begin by showing the students numerous online images of a variety of bears (or, for the following lessons, The Giant’s Causeway, Scarecrows, Ice) and discuss what, if any, prior knowledge they might have. Then, ask them to listen carefully as you read the piece aloud to them. (This is particularly important for students who may have difficulty reading the piece independently.) This will give them a sense of what the text is all about.

3. Explain that, before they read an expository piece, it’s important to look for certain cues that can provide valuable information to aid the reader’s understanding. Direct their attention to the piece and ask them to annotate it together, labeling the important parts. Use the guided questions below to inform your discussion.

4. First, circle the **title**. Ask them what the **title** reveals. (the **topic**). Remind them that the topic tells the reader what the entire piece will be about. **Model** this for students and have them do the same.

5. Next, for reference purposes, number each paragraph.

6. Point out and underline the **headings**. Explain that the headings allow you to quickly skim and scan the piece and get a sense of the **main ideas** of the piece.

7. Ask them to help you fill in the summarizing framework, based solely on the title and headings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOPIC:</strong> Bears</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Main Idea #1:</strong> Kinds of Bears and Where they Live</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Main Idea #2:</strong> Common Traits</td>
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<td><strong>Main Idea #3:</strong> Bear Behavior</td>
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(continued)
Discuss the way that identifying the topic and headings can set a purpose for learning. As readers they already have a good idea what they’ll be reading about, which aids in comprehension. Discuss how a summary such as this might be an excellent way for an author to begin. (Helps with organization and focus.)

8. Next, in each paragraph, have them locate all bold-faced or italicized words. Explain that these are key vocabulary words that might be new to the reader. These keywords are usually either preceded or followed by a definition to aid in understanding. Point out that these specially marked words indicate some of the important details in the piece.

   (Option: For homework, have students create a key word vocabulary chart, listing each key - words followed by a definition they craft from the information provided in the text.)

9. Point out the photograph and its caption. Ask students why both are important.

10. Next, on the white board or chart paper, translate the information on the summarizing framework into an extended summary using the following sentence starters:

    This expository text provides information about __bears__. We’ll discover __where different types of bears live__, learn about __their common traits__, and become familiar with __bear behavior__.

    Or…

    This expository text provides information about __The Giant’s Causeway__. We’ll discover __the unusual land forms__, learn about __the geology of the region__, and become familiar with __the legend of Finn MacCool__.

    This expository text discusses __scarecrows, past and present__. The author explores __the need for scarecrows__, investigates __scarecrows around the world__, and reveals __all the ways to have fun with scarecrows__.

    This informative piece is all about __ice cubes before the age of freezers__. The author delves into __the use of ice in the olden days__ and uncovers __how harvesting ice became a business__.

11. Finally, have them read the text independently. Discuss how examining the following text conventions: title, headings, bold or italicized key words, photographs and captions guide their reading – think about how much they’ve learned before they’ve even started reading! Also point out the way that the author organized the information made it more accessible to the reader.

   NOTE: Approach the articles on pp. 41-47 in the same fashion. You may also use any high quality magazine article or textbook chapter in the same way.
Bears

It’s hard to believe that these large, often ferocious relatives of the dog, raccoon, and panda are the inspiration for millions of cuddly soft stuffed toys! There are many kinds of bears, living in numerous places the world over. Their behavior and shared traits fascinate their human neighbors all around the globe.

Kinds of Bears and Where They Live

Many kinds of bears can be found in a wide variety of places, mostly in wild mountain, forest, and arctic areas. In fact, bears inhabit every continent except Africa, Antarctica, and Australia. The largest bear, the Kodiak, which weighs almost a ton is found in the wilderness and wide open grasslands of Alaska. The Kodiak is related to the Grizzly. Grizzly bears, with their dark fur edged in white, live in many areas of the United States and Canada. Brown Bears, which are smaller than the Kodiak and Grizzly, and the North American Black Bear (which isn’t always black, but brown, white, gold, even bluish tinted) also live in the United States and Canada. The coast of the Arctic Ocean is home to the distinctive white Polar Bear, thriving in the snow and ice. Asia is where the slow-moving Sloth Bear is found, with its short black fur and bib of light colored fur.

Common Traits

What do all bears have in common? Scientists group them into a family of creatures called Ursidae. All bears are classified as caniforms meaning “dog-like” creatures. They have long snouts and non-retractile claws, just as dogs do.
Of course, bears are larger than dogs. These large furry mammals have thick, weighty bodies and can stand on their hind legs. You can recognize bears by their rather squared off snouts, short rounded ears, and short stubby tails. Their feet are similar to human feet, complete with a heel and a sole. In fact, bears’ hind feet also have five toes. Their long curved sharp claws are used to tear food and to move nimbly - they can even climb trees. Bears are carnivores meaning that they eat mostly meat. This is why they have numerous large teeth that can grind, crush, and tear meat. However, bears also eat vegetation.

**Bear Behavior**

Bear’s behavior has always interested people. Some bears hibernate, retreating to their dens, doing without food, and entering a deep sleep state in which their metabolism (body function) slows down dramatically. These large animals, which may appear rather clumsy and slow, are actually very fast runners. A mother bear may charge at any threat to her cubs, human or animal. In order to fuel their hefty bodies bears must eat a lot. They’ve been known to raid campsites and cottages, foraging or digging through supplies and trash in order to find something edible. Bears also love honey and have no problem batting down a bee’s nest, swiping at it with their claws, and scooping out gobs of thick, sweet, honey. Their thick fur makes it difficult for bees to sting them, although bears gladly endure stings in order to eat the bee larvae in the honey. These amazing creatures communicate through a complicated marking system in which they claw, gnaw, or chew at tree trunks as a means of warning other bears to stay clear of their territory.

In your world travels, if you ever find yourself in a National Park, or hiking in a nature preserve, keep your eyes open for a member of the Ursidae family. If you spot any type of bear, stay calm and move quietly away. These beautiful, yet sometimes menacing creatures, and the habitats they live in certainly deserve our respect.