

## What Is Nonfiction?

Pat Miller

**Not from imagination Non = not, F and I in fiction = from imagination**

### Types of Nonfiction

- Biography/Autobiography
- Science
- History

### According to Melissa Stewart, author and speaker

- Life Story
- Survey Book
- Specialized Nonfiction
- Concept

### Nonfiction Writing Styles

**Narrative** - Tells a true story with an arc—beginning, middle, end. Sometimes told in first person.

**Expository** - Explains or informs a reader about a topic.

**Persuasive**- Writer uses facts to support his or her own argument while trying to influence his readers' opinions.

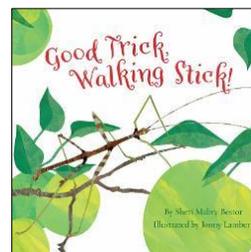
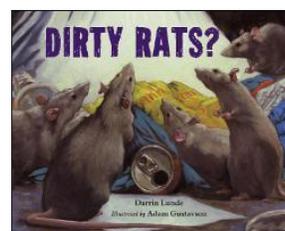
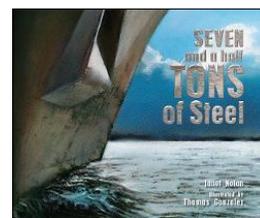
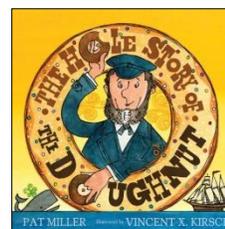
**Descriptive** Sensory language, rich details, and figurative language are methods used to achieve good descriptive nonfiction.

### Creative Nonfiction

Creative nonfiction merges the boundaries between literary art (fiction, poetry) and research nonfiction (statistical, fact-filled, journalistic). Composed of facts, but employs the same literary devices as fiction -- setting, voice/tone, character development, rich language, setting, etc.

### Historical Fiction

The work is based in history, with specific historical details, but some or much of it is made up. It may be that some dialogue is created, or a created character has been inserted. Many historical fiction works include an author note to explain what part of it is true.



*The Hole Story of the Doughnut* by Pat Miller. Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 2016.

*Seven and a Half Tons of Steel* by Janet Nolan. Peachtree, 2016.

*Dirty Rats?* by Darin Lunde. Charlesbridge, 2015.

*Good Trick, Walking Stick!* by Sheri Bestor. Sleeping Bear Press, 2016.

## Writing with Mentor Texts

### DEAL WITH READING LEVEL

*The Bumblebee Queen* by April Pulley Sayre. Charlesbridge, 2006.  
*Feathers, Not Just for Flying* by Melissa Stewart. Charlesbridge, 2014.  
*Hippos Are Huge!* by Jonathan London. Candlewick Press, 2015.

### ELICIT EMOTION

*14 Cows for America* by Carmen Agra Deedy. Peachtree, 2009.  
*Nubs: The True Story of a Mutt, a Marine & a Miracle* by Major Brian Dennis and Kirby Larson. Little, Brown and Company, 2009.

### WHAT TO LEAVE IN / TAKE OUT

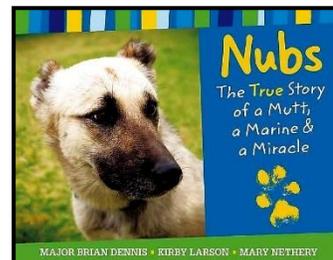
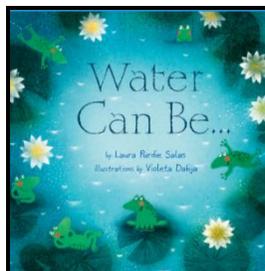
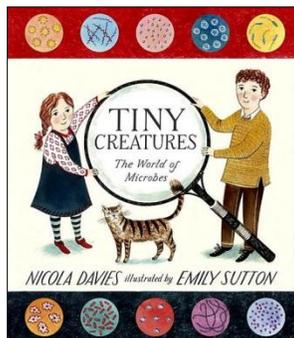
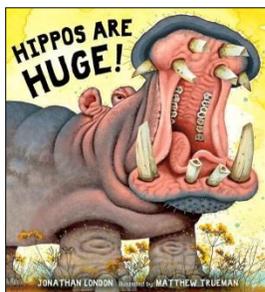
*Elvis: The Story of the Rock and Roll King* by Bonnie Christensen. Henry Holt and Company, 2015.

### REVEAL THE INVISIBLE (MAKE BORING SEEM INTERESTING)

*Jubilee! One Man's Big, Bold, and Very, Very Loud Celebration of Peace* by Alicia Potter. Candlewick Press, 2014.  
*Tiny Creatures: The World of Microbes* by Nicola Davies. Candlewick Press, 2016.  
*If You Find a Rock* by Peggy Christian. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008.  
*A Rock Can Be...* by Laura Purdie Salas. Millbrook Press, 2015.  
*Water Can Be...* by Laura Purdie Salas. Millbrook Press, 2015.  
*Water is Water: A Book about Water Cycle* by Miranda Paul. Roaring Brook Press, 2015.

### WRITE ABOUT TWO MAIN CHARACTERS

*Friends for Freedom: The Story of Susan B. Anthony & Frederick Douglass* by Suzanne Slade. Charlesbridge, 2014.  
*Mesmerized: How Ben Franklin Solved a Mystery That Baffled All of France* by Mara Rockliff. Candlewick Press, 2015.



### WRITE ABOUT A GROUP OF PEOPLE

*The Brothers Kennedy: John, Robert, Edward* by Kathleen Krull. 2010.  
*Lives of the Presidents: Fame, Shame (and What the Neighbors Thought)* by Kathleen Krull. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011.

*Wild Women of the Wild West* by Jonah Winter. Holiday House, 2011.

### SPECIFIC MENTORING

*Those Rebels, John & Tom* by Barbara Kerley. Scholastic, 2012.

*The Worst of Friends: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and the True Story of an American Feud* by Suzanne Jurmain. Dutton Children's Books, 2011.

*For the Birds: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson* by Peggy Thomas. Calkins Creek, 2011.

### TEXT FEATURES

*At Home in Her Tomb: Lady Dai and the Ancient Chinese Treasures of Mawangdui* by Christine Liu-Perkins. Charlesbridge, 2014

### FRESH APPROACH

*A Strange Place to Call Home: The World's Most Dangerous Habitats & the Animals That Call Them Home* by Marilyn Singer. Chronicle Books, 2012.

*What to Expect When You're Expecting Larvae: A Guide for Insect Parents (And Curious Kids)* by Bridget Heos. Millbrook Press, 2011.

*How They Croaked: The Awful Ends of the Awfully Famous* by Georgia Bragg. Walker & Company, 2011.

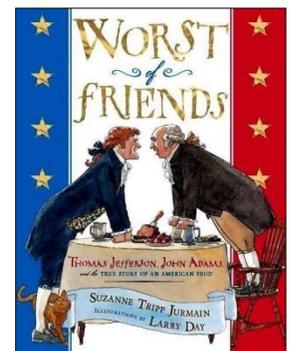
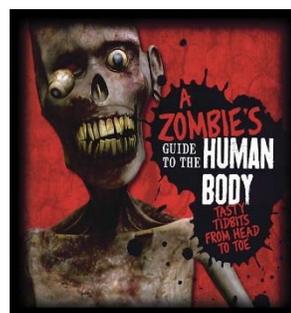
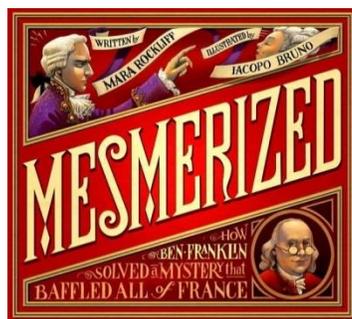
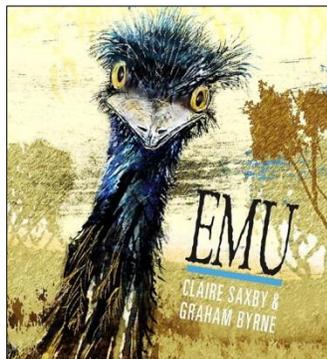
### VOICE

*Dirty Rats?* by Darrin Lunde. Charlesbridge, 2015.

*Disgusting Hagfish* by Meish Goldish. Bearport, 2009.

*Emu* by Claire Saxby. Candlewick Press, 2014.

*A Zombie's Guide to the Human Body: Tasty Tidbits from Head to Toe* by Tom Becker. Scholastic, 2010.

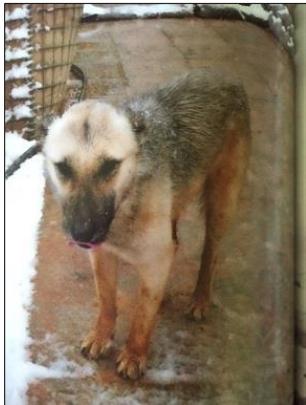


### QUOTATIONS / DIALOGUE

*Henry and the Cannons: An Extraordinary True Story of the American Revolution* by Don Brown. Roaring Brook Press, 2013.

*Henry Knox: Bookseller, Soldier, Patriot* by Anita Silvey. Clarion Books, 2010.

*Mountain Chef: How One Man Lost His Groceries, Changed His Plans, and Helped Cook Up the National Park Service* by Annette Bay Pimental. Charlesbridge, 2016.



## Creating Emotional Response

*Nubs: The True Story of a Mutt, a Marine & and Miracle*  
(Nubs: The True Story of a Dog, a GI, and a Happy Day)

Nubs hung back, gaunt and weak from a deep wound in his side. Shivering from pain, Nubs allowed Brian and the team medic and to clean the wound and apply antiseptic ointment. But Nubs refused to eat or drink. It hurt so much, he tried to sleep standing up.

When Brian got up at 4 a.m. for his turn at watch, Nubs stiffly padded into place beside him. Head and tail drooping, he faithfully made the rounds with Brian.

[Brian has to leave in a large Humvee for the far Jordanian border.]

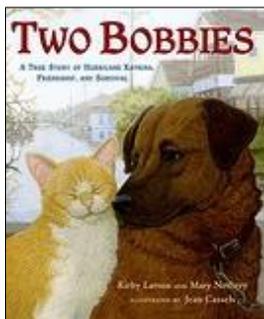
Nubs cried as he chased them across the cold, coarse sand. Because of his wound, he could not keep up. He dropped to the ground, exhausted and completely alone.

When Nubs sat up, Scout, Boss, and Chuck [names of the Humvees] were out of sight. He struggled to his feet and began walking.

Nubs trekked mile after treacherous mile across the desert, shivering through frozen days and nights. There was little to eat and even less to drink. Nubs pushed on.

Two snowy days and 70 miles later, Nubs limped into the Iraqi battalion headquarters, where Brian was working. When Nubs saw Brian, he ran with his tongue out and tail wagging, right into his arms.

Also recommended for examination: *Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival* by Kirby Larson



“During Hurricane Katrina, evacuating New Orleans residents were forced to leave their pets behind. Bobbi the dog was initially chained to keep her safe, but after her owners failed to return, she had to break free. For months, Bobbi wandered the city's ravaged streets-dragging her chain behind her-followed by her feline companion, Bob Cat. After months of hunger and struggle, the Two Bobbies were finally rescued by a construction worker helping to rebuild the city. When he brought them to a shelter, volunteers made an amazing discovery about the devoted friends. Bob Cat was actually blind! He had survived the aftermath of the storm by following the sound Bobbi's chain made as she dragged it along the ground.”

## Shopping for a Nonfiction Text

A mentor text is a book or article that you can use to help with your writing, especially of a similar piece. Here are three ways to examine a text you can use as a private writing instructor or model.

### I. How Is the Information Presented?

#### Jacket Flaps

1. Read the summary for an idea of what the book is about
2. Read about the author and illustrator on back flap

#### Title Page and Verso (copyright) Page

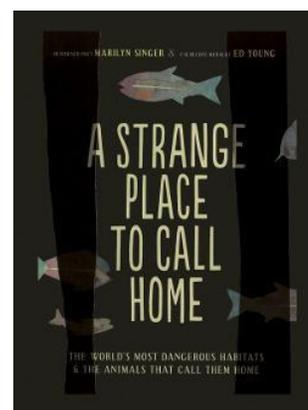
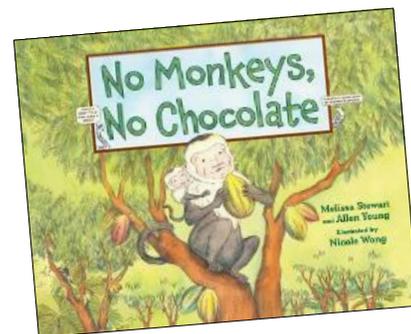
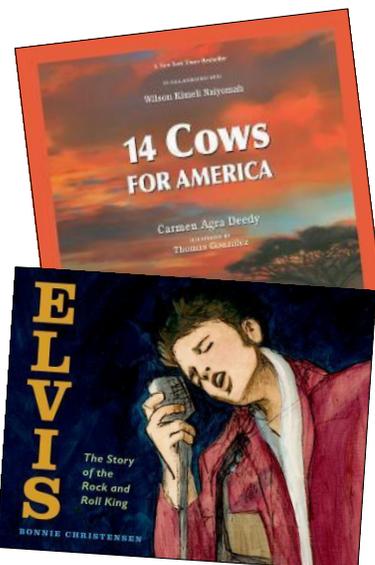
1. Publishing company? Location?
2. Verso: copyright date, Dewey Number classification, subject headings

#### Back Matter – may be in the front

1. Acknowledgments – were experts consulted?
2. Bibliography of sources – are they primary, secondary, or missing?
3. Author Note to further explain the bigger picture or subsequent action
4. Quotation notes – if dialogue is used, is its source noted?
5. Index
6. Glossary
7. Timeline
8. Map
9. Appendix
10. Additional reading – this is for the reader

#### Text Features – help to break up the text and provide additional information

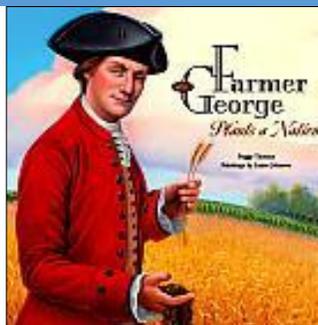
1. Table of Contents
2. Graph
3. Chart
4. Timeline
5. Sidebar
6. Captioned photos – should add info, not repeat text
7. Comparison
8. Diagram
9. Cutaway
10. Map
11. Lists



## II. What Information Is Presented?

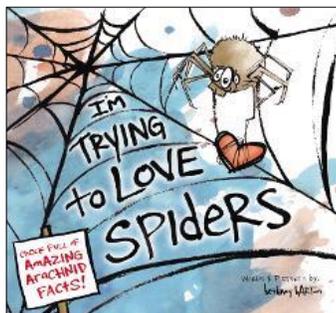
### Biography

1. Birth to death
2. Childhood
3. Slice of life
4. Comparison biography
5. Group biography



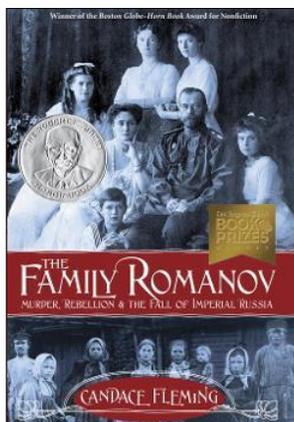
### Science

1. Up close
2. Comparative
3. Detailed
4. Why should we care?
5. Humanized



### History

1. What's in? What's left out?
2. You are there
3. Overview
4. Other format



## III How Is It Presented?

1. Rhyming
2. Humorous
3. Compendium of facts
4. Craft
  - a. Word choice
  - b. Reading level – two?
  - c. Reads like a story
  - d. Figurative language
  - e. Intentional repetition
5. Use of dialogue
6. Smorgasbord

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

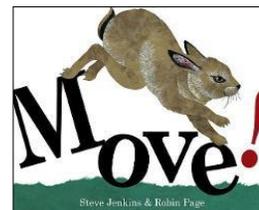
Jenkins, Steve, 1952-

Move! / written by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page; illustrated by Steve Jenkins

p. cm.

ISBN 0-618-64637-X (hardcover)

1. Animal locomotion—Juvenile literature I. Page, Robin, 1957 II. Title  
QP301.J44 2006 573.7'9—dc22



## Examining a Mentor Text

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Copyright \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher \_\_\_\_\_ Genre \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Level \_\_\_\_\_ Word Count \_\_\_\_\_ Pages \_\_\_\_\_

Illustrations \_\_\_\_\_

Table of contents

Index

Glossary

Side bars

Captions

Diagrams

Author note

Timeline

Bibliography

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Acknowledgement

Footnotes

Voice \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What I liked/disliked \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Good to know \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Research Resources

### Is there a book on my topic?

Before you begin your research, see what's already in print. Be especially mindful of the past five years. Is there room for another on the topic? Is your slant different enough to warrant publication?



[www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org) - The world's largest library catalog and its services are free. 72,000 libraries Video Tutorial:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vos5ivBeZ5c>

### Where to begin?

- Public and academic libraries include monster databases that are free to users, often grouped by topics like biography and history, encyclopedias, health and medical, etc.
- JSTOR is available through academic libraries, and through consortiums with public libraries. Digitized content includes more than 2300 academic journals and thousands of monographs.
- Wikipedia—use with caution, check everything with another source, helpful because of the references at the bottom of each article.
- Information Please Almanac - [www.infoplease.com](http://www.infoplease.com)



Search full-text reference books covering a wide range of information.



**How can I find sources and primary documents?**  
**How do I create my bibliography and track sources?**

Easy Bib – [www.easybib.com](http://www.easybib.com)

Cite *everything*, from grave marker to photograph, interview to article, website to museum—even e-mails. Easier to keep track as you go along.



Archival Finding Aids at LOC - [findingaids.loc.gov](http://findingaids.loc.gov)

Search the Library of Congress by general collection, Geography and Map, Recorded Sound, Moving Images, Manuscript, Rare Book, and more. Also search by date, name, subject, title, or thousands of specific collections.



### **How can I locate old newspapers?**

- America – Library of Congress – [www.chroniclingamerica.loc.gov](http://www.chroniclingamerica.loc.gov) America's newspapers from 1836-1922
- U.S. Newspaper Directory – LOC - [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/titles](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/titles) American, from 1690-present
- Newspaper Archive – [newspaperarchive.com](http://newspaperarchive.com), back to the 1600's (fee)
- Your public library

### **Are there places I can visit for information?**

- Historical societies and/or museums in the town or city of interest  
Ex: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Austin  
[Cah.reference@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:Cah.reference@austin.utexas.edu)
- Area historical cemeteries or [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com).



**Smithsonian** Nineteen museums, nine research centers, affiliates around the world.

### **Where can I get photographs?**

- Prints and Photographs Online Catalog - [www.loc.gov/pictures](http://www.loc.gov/pictures)  
Catalogs about half of the Library's pictorial holdings with over 1 million digital images at Library of Congress



- Digital Public Library of America (7,793,304 items from libraries, archives, and museums) [dp.la](http://dp.la)

### **What about vital statistics?**

- Family Search – free official Genealogy site of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons)
- [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- Top 10 US Databases for Tracing Your (or others) Family Tree  
[genealogy.about.com/od/internet/tp/best\\_databases.htm](http://genealogy.about.com/od/internet/tp/best_databases.htm)  
Includes Ancestry.com, which can often be accessed for free at public