

# Textbook elements

Textbook elements and styles provide structure to aid in learning. Some of these elements are what set textbooks apart from other books.

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## Openers

- overviews (previews)
- introductions
- outlines (text, bullets or graphics)
- focus questions (knowledge and comprehension questions)
- learning goals / objectives / outcomes / competences / skills
- case problem
- In addition one may use the "special features" used inside chapters, e.g. vignettes, photos, quotations...

## Closers

- conclusions and summaries (may include diagrams)
- list of definitions
- reference boxes (e.g. computer instructions)
- review questions
- self-assessment (usually simple quizzes)
- small exercises
- substantial exercises and problem cases
- fill-in tables (for "learning-in-action" books) to prepare a real world task
- ideas for projects (academic or real world)
- bibliographies and links (that can be annotated)

## Integrated Pedagogical Devices

- emphasis (bold face) of words
- marginalia that summarize paragraphs
- lists that highlight main points
- summary tables and graphics

- crossreferences that link backwards (or sometimes forwards) to important concepts
- markers to identify embedded subjects (e.g. an "external" term used and that needs explanation)
- study and review questions
- pedagogical illustrations (concepts rendered graphically)
- tips (to insure that the learner doesn't get caught in misconceptions or procedural errors)
- reminders (e.g. make sure that something that was previously introduced is remembered)
- case studies
- problem descriptions
- debates and reflections
- profiles (case descriptions)
- primary sources and data
- models

## Additional Resources

Characteristics of a textbook: video by Oxford University Press Southern Africa (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-203gwrOLo>).