



Storytelling in Science Writing

EXERCISE: EXPLORE THE ABT STRUCTURE

The [AND, BUT, THEREFORE](#) (ABT) structure is a useful writing strategy that provides the simplified structure of most stories (books, TV, films). Using the ABT structure in scientific writing is useful for producing engaging writing where the points and arguments can be easily understood.

This table outlines the purpose for the AND, BUT, and THEREFORE sections of the ABT structure for a story and a scientific article.

ABT	GENERAL PURPOSE	STORY	SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE
AND	Known facts.	Introduce main	Known facts in scientific
BUT	Establish tension, conflict, or problem.	Problem that characters must solve. Journey to solve problem.	Knowledge gap (a problem) that must be solved. Methods.
THEREFORE	Solution to tension,	Problem solved.	Results. Solution to the

INSTRUCTIONS

On the following two pages, complete **STEP 1** and **STEP 2** to gain an understanding of how the ABT structure works and how it can be effective for organizing key information in a scientific article.

STEP 1: Summarize the ABT structure of your favourite story (book, TV, film).

STEP 2: Summarize the ABT structure of a (provided) scientific article.

STEP 1: Summarize the ABT structure of your favourite story (book, TV, film).

1. Describe the **AND** part of your favourite story. Hint: How does the story begin? How does the story set up the characters and situation?
2. Describe the **BUT** part of your favourite story. Hint: What is the major problem that the main character/s have to solve?
3. Describe the **THEREFORE** part of your favourite story. Hint: How do the character/s solve the problem? How does the story end? Does the story end with a teaser?

STEP 2: Summarize the ABT structure of this scientific article "[Hardwood content impacts the parasitoid community associated with Eastern spruce budworm \(Lepidoptera: Tortricidae\).](#)" We recommend that you read the abstract, introduction, and the first and last paragraph of the discussion.

1. Describe the **AND** part of the article. Hint: What does the article state about what is already known? (Look at the introduction.)

2. Describe the **BUT** part of the article. Hint: What does the article state that is unknown that needs to be researched? (Look at the abstract & introduction. Look for the use of "yet" or "however.") What methods are stated in the introduction?

3. Describe the **THEREFORE** part of the article. Hint: What are the main results (look at the end of the introduction or at the beginning of the discussion) and main conclusions (look at the end of the discussion)? What does the article suggest for future research (look at the end of the discussion)?