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Using titles, subtitles and paragraphs to structure and design a text

Goal

The students should learn how to write clear and appropriate titles and how to create paragraphs for clarity in their writing. Titles, subtitles and paragraphs all contribute to the attractiveness and enhance the readability of a text. Illustrations and presentation (layout) serve the same purpose, and the students should also gain experience with these elements.

1. Creating precise and attractive titles: didactic ideas

3rd–9th grade

20 minutes



Materials:
Picture book stories, newspaper reports or similar (see right).

Variants:

- The instructor reads a short story to the class and then asks what kind of title would be suitable for the text. Each student writes one or two title suggestions on a strip of paper. The suggestions are then discussed: which titles are attractive and why? Which ones are rather boring, and why?
- The instructor then presents a (fictitious) project of creating a poster or flyer for tourism in their native country (its capital city or areas of natural beauty, etc.). What would be an attractive title or eye-catching slogan for this poster? (If there is time to complete the task, the idea should naturally be implemented.)
- The instructor distributes a picture story, a newspaper report, or a short story without a title to the class. The students should consider clear, attractive titles for the story, either in pairs or as individuals. The suggestions are then written on strips of paper and discussed.
- Discussions (whole class or at group level) of the question: to which given title would you like to write a text? Think about exciting titles and topics! The suggestions are then discussed, collected, and put into practice, if possible.
- From the 4th grade on: the instructor collects examples of attractive book titles (with the class, if at all possible), and invents a few boring titles, such as ("Susi, the lovely girl", "Flower poems"). The titles are then discussed and the students try to determine what makes a title boring or exciting.

2. Structuring a text with subtitles and paragraphs

3rd–9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
Prepared texts (see right).

Variants:

- The instructor prepares two texts that are photocopied (A4 size each): Text A lacks the title and subtitles, and has no paragraphs either (or hardly any). Text B (e. g. a factual text about a country or an animal) is structured with a clear title, paragraphs and subtitles. Discussion: why is text B easier to read and what is the purpose of the subtitles and paragraphs? How could this be improved still (e. g. with illustrations)?

