Text Structure and Language Features: Example 2

Text Structure - Information Report
Title

General statement - identifies and classifies the subject

Description - includes position, composition, climatic conditions, specific characteristics

THE PLANETS

Classification
A planet is a large round body in space which goes round a star. The star which the planets in our solar system orbit is the Sun. A star is hot, but planets have a cool surface and do not give out any light. There are nine planets in our solar system. The four inner planets are Earth, Mercury, Venus and Mars. The five outer planets are Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto.

Position
The four inner planets orbit closer to the Sun than the outer planets do. This means that they can get quite warm, although Mercury, like Mars, also gets very cold on the side away from the Sun, because they have too little atmosphere to hold the heat. The outer planets are a long way from the Sun. This makes them so cold that the gases on the planet can turn into liquids or solids.

Composition
Each of the four inner planets has a hard surface, unlike the outer planets, which are balls of gas. Earth has a central core of melted rock and a hard surface. Much of this surface is covered in the waters of the Earth's oceans. Mars is known as the Red Planet because of the red dust which covers much of its surface. Venus is the planet which is closest to Earth and is the hottest of any planet. Mercury has a surface which is covered with craters, or holes. The outer planets all have a small core or centre of iron and rock, but they are mostly gases.

Characteristics
Earth is the only planet which we know for certain has life forms on it. We humans are one of these life forms. Space probes that have been sent to Mars show that there may be water deep under the surface of the planet. Venus cannot sustain life as we understand it because it's too hot and the atmosphere is so thick that it would crush a house flat. Mercury also gets very hot, but it can get very cold as well. Its temperature can vary between 430ºC and minus 180ºC.

All the outer planets except Pluto are surrounded by rings. These rings are made of tiny particles of rocks and gas. Most planets have moons, which are small objects that travel round a planet. Earth has one moon and we can see this at night at different times of each month. Earth's moon controls the tides of the oceans through gravity.

Language Features
Use of timeless present, typical of much scientific writing, e.g. The four inner planets orbit closer to the Sun than the outer planets do.

Use of word chains to build topic information, e.g. solar system, orbit, atmosphere

Use of action verbs, e.g. orbits, controls, travels, turn into

Use of relating verbs, e.g. Earth has a central core of hard rock. The outer planets are a long way from the Sun.

Use of passive voice, e.g. have been sent

Use of general nouns, e.g. a planet

Use of comparative and superlative forms
e.g. closer, closest

Use of technical language, e.g. craters, core,

Use of detailed noun groups, e.g. a central core of melted rock, Each of the four inner planets

Use of compound and complex sentences

Use of topic sentences to organise bundles of information, e.g. All the outer planets except Pluto are surrounded by rings.