K-2 Informational Text Elements

Literary Text Element	Anticipated Challenges	Example
Density of facts and ideas	Students may feel overloaded and lose the main idea.	A passage about whales lists traits and facts, but students can't identify the main idea that ties them together.
Text structure (chronology, cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution)	Students miss relationships between ideas.	In a text about plants, students recall that plants need water but miss how water helps them grow or make food.
Author's purpose (inform, explain, argue, describe)	Students fail to identify or evaluate stance/purpose.	A nonfiction book about space is read as "just a story," not as informational text meant to teach facts.
Domain-specific and technical vocabulary	Students struggle to understand or use terms	Words like *habitat* or *pollen* are read correctly but not understood in context.
Graphics, charts, maps, timelines, captions	Students ignore or misinterpret visuals.	A picture of a beehive is noticed, but students don't connect it to the text explaining how bees live.
Headings, subheadings, bold/italicized words	Students skip organizational cues.	Bold headings like "Food" and "Home" are overlooked, so students miss how the sections organize information.
Signal words and transitions	Students overlook connectors, miss logic.	In "Plants need water because it helps them make food," students focus only on "plants need water," missing the cause-and-effect link.
Layers of explanation (definitions, examples, elaborations)	Students fail to distinguish main ideas from details.	In "A nest is a bird's home. For example, robins build nests out of sticks," students focus on robins instead of the general idea that all birds build nests.