5 Kinds of Nonfiction and Student Purpose

In writer’s workshop, students are often asked to think about “author purpose.” But when it comes to reading and writing and thinking and learning, it’s also important to consider the student purpose.

How can the 5 Kinds of Nonfiction classification system help students work more enthusiastically and efficiently?

How can it help them interact more successfully with nonfiction as they conduct research, craft nonfiction writing, and explore the topics that interest them most?

5 Kinds of Nonfiction includes a plethora of examples, strategies, and classroom-ready activities that address these important questions. But because we know your time is precious, the quick-reference table below, found on page 49, summarizes all that information one place.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Purpose</th>
<th>Nonfiction Category</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn about a broad topic in a systematic way</td>
<td>Traditional nonfiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn about a broad topic in digestible chunks or with an emphasis on visuals</td>
<td>Browseable nonfiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share fascinating facts with friends</td>
<td>Browseable nonfiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand a past time and place</td>
<td>Narrative nonfiction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand how the personality and experiences of a person contributes to their accomplishments</td>
<td>Narrative nonfiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the processes scientists use to understand the world and how it works</td>
<td>Narrative nonfiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand a focused idea, such as a STEM concept</td>
<td>Expository literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn a new skill</td>
<td>Active nonfiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather research</td>
<td>Early in the process: Traditional nonfiction Later in the process: Browseable nonfiction, expository literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use as a mentor text for writing</td>
<td>Procedural writing: Active nonfiction Personal narratives: Narrative nonfiction Informational writing: Expository literature, browseable nonfiction</td>
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</tbody>
</table>