

“Making Tracks on Mars” by Andrew Mishkin**Model Selection: Nonfiction**

Nonfiction writing is about real people, real events, real places, and ideas. Examples of nonfiction writing include letters, memoirs, journals, Web logs (or blogs), biographies, autobiographies, media accounts, essays, and articles.

Nonfiction writers choose the method of **organization** that best fits their purpose. Methods of organization include **chronological** (presenting details in time order), **comparison and contrast** (showing how subjects are similar and different), **cause and effect** (showing relationships between events), and **problem and solution** (identifying a problem, presenting a solution). The writer of a biography, for example, would most likely present his or her subject’s life chronologically, ordering events from earliest to most recent. The writer of a book about a war might use cause-and-effect organization, showing how events led to one another and affected one another.

Nonfiction writers reveal their attitude toward their audience and their subject by using a particular **tone**. Their tone might be formal, informal, playful, or serious.

A. DIRECTIONS: Answer the following questions about “Making Tracks on Mars.”

1. How do you know that the journal is organized chronologically?

2. What is the purpose of the journal’s subheads?

3. Would you describe the author’s tone as formal or informal? Why?

4. What major historical event does Mishkin’s journal track?

5. What was Mishkin’s job at the time of the events he writes about?

B. DIRECTIONS: Andrew Mishkin posted a blog, in which he recorded the progress of the rovers Spirit and Opportunity. His online audience was able to keep track of the ups and downs of the crafts’ experiences on Mars. Was the mission that Mishkin describes in “Making Tracks on Mars” successful? Cite two examples from the selection to support your opinion.
