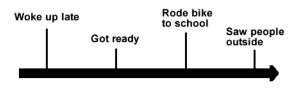
Text Structures

Text structure is how information is organized in writing. Text structures, or patterns of organization, not only vary from writing to writing, but text structures may also change frequently from paragraph to paragraph within a single piece of writing.

Chronological

When information in a passage is organized by the time in which each event occurred, it is organized chronologically. Nonfiction passages that are organized chronologically often contains dates. Fiction passages or narratives are more subtle and are organized chronologically but usually have no dates. A narratives or story is a journey through time, and all of the events are arranged in order of time; therefore, every story has a beginning, middle, and end. Even if an author uses flashbacks, flash-forwards, or otherwise manipulates the time in his or her text, the events still occur along a timeline. Stories require the passage of time; therefore, all stories are organized

Chronological Order



chronologically. Sometimes time will stop in a narrative. Certain passages in a story may focus on describing scenary or spaces, and use a descriptive or spatail method of organization. The conflict of a story may be discussed in terms of problem and solution or cause and effect, but the text in a story is *still* mainly organized chronologically.

Remember:

Chrono = Time Logic = Order

Stories are told chronologically or in order of time.

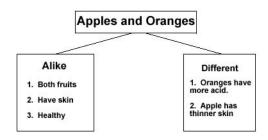
Example: This morning was crazy. My alarm clock was set for PM instead of AM, so I woke up really late. I just threw on some clothes and ran out the door. I rode my bike as fast as I could and thought that I was going to be late for sure, but when I got there everyone was outside and there were firetrucks all lined up in front of school. I guess somebody pulled the fire alarm before class started. It worked out though, because nobody really noticed or minded that I was tardy.

Compare and Contrast

Compare and Contrast is a text structure or pattern of organization where the similarities and differences of two or more things are explored. It is important to remember that with the compare and contrast text structure the text should be discussing similarities and differences. If the text only discusses similarities, it is only comparing. Likewise, if it only discusses ways that the things are different, it is only contrasting. The text must do both to be considered compare and contrast.

Example: Apples and oranges are both fruits, which means that they have seeds inside of them. Each has a skin, but orange skins are thick and easy to peel.

Compare and Contrast



Apple skins are thinner and do not peel easily. Oranges also contain more acid than apples, but both fruits are delicious.

Identifying when the writer is comparing and contrasting is usually not difficult because the

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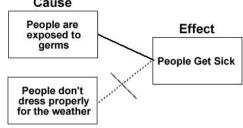
speaker will bounce back and forth between two subjects and this pattern is generally pretty easy to recognize. However, here are some **signal words** that may indicate that the text is written using the compare and contrast organizational pattern: **like, unlike, both, neither, similar,** and **different.**

Cause and Effect

Cause and effect is a common way to organize information in a text. Paragraphs structured as cause and effect explain reasons why something happened or the effects of something. These paragraphs can be ordered as causes and effects or as effects and then causes. The cause and effect text structure is generally used in expository and persuasive writing modes.

To put it another way: when an author gives reasons why something happened, he or she is explaining what caused an effect (reasons are causes and the thing that happens is the effect). Also, when a writer explains the results of an action, he or she is

Cause and Effect Cause People are Effect



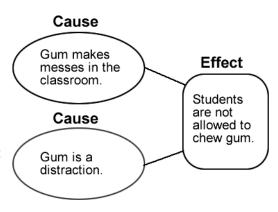
explaining the *effects* of acause (results are *effects* and the thing that occurs is the *cause*). The cause and effect text structure is used so commonly that you have probably written a paragraph using it and not noticed.

Example: Many people think that they can get sick by going into cold weather improperly dressed; however, illnesses are not caused by temperature- they are caused by germs. So while shivering outside in the cold probably won't strengthen your immune system, you're more likely to contract an illness indoors because you will have a greater exposure to germs.

In the above example, the paragraph explains how germs cause illnesses. The germs are the cause in the paragraph and the illness is the effect.

Here is another example of a paragraph that is written using the cause and effect text structure:

Another Example: Students are not allowed to chew gum in my class. While some students think that I am just being mean, there are many good reasons for this rule. First, some irresponsible students make messes with their gum. They may leave it on the bottoms of desks, drop it on the floor, or put it on other people's property. Another reason why I don't allow students to chew gum is because it is a distraction. When they are allowed to chew gum, students are more worried about having it, popping it, chewing it, and snapping it then they are in listening, writing, reading, and learning. This is why I don't allow students to chew gum in my class.



Identifying a text written using the cause and effect pattern of organization can be tricky. In most stories, events in the plot occur for various reasons, This can be mistaken for the cause and effect text structure; however, stories are organized chronologically, and the information in each passage is more likely to be organized by the time in which each event occurred. Contrarily, cause and effect passages usually focus on explaining the reason why something occurs or occurred, and time will usually not pass in these paragraphs.

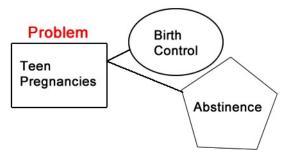
Here are some **signal words** that may indicate that information in a paragraph is organized as cause and effect: **because, as a result, resulted, caused, affected, since, due to, effect**.

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Problem/Solution

Problem and Solution is a pattern of organization where information in a passage is expressed as a dilemma or concerning issue (a problem) and something that was, can be, or should be done to remedy this issue (solution or attempted solution). The problem and solution text structure may seem like it would be easy to recognize, but it can be moderately difficult to identify because it is frequently confused with the cause and effect pattern of organization, as they both have relational structures; however, if you read the passage and look specifically for both a problem and a solution to the problem, you should find it pretty easy to distinguish from cause

Problem and Solution



and effect, as cause and effect passages do not propose solutions to any negative occurrences within the passage but rather just explain why or how they happen.

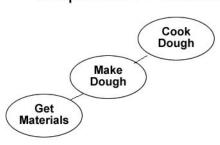
Example: It seems like there has been a surge in teen pregnancies these days. Teen pregnancies make it very difficult for young mothers to pursue their dreams and meet the demands of an infant. Fortunately, most teen pregnancies can be easily prevented by using birth control; however, even birth control is not 100% effective. The most effective way to prevent teen pregnancies is abstinence, which is 100% effective.

There are also a few **signal words** which may indicate that information in a passage is ordered in the problem and solution pattern of organization: **propose**, **solution**, **answer**, **issue**, **problem**, **problematic**, **remedy**, **prevention**, and **fix**.

Sequence/Process

Sequential order, or process writing as it is sometimes called, is when information in a passage is organized by the order in which it occurs. This method of organizing text is generally used for instructions or directions, but it can also be used to explain processes in nature or society, such as how a president is elected. Sequential organization is frequently confused with chronological order. To further confound the issue, sometimes people refer to chronological order as chronological sequence. But there is a key difference that distinguishes the two patterns: texts organized chronologically occur at a specific time and setting, whereas texts describing processes or

Sequence / Process



sequences do not occur at any specific time and place. To elaborate, if I tell the story of how I came home and made cookies, that information is organized chronologically. The story took place in my kitchen sometime in the past. Alternately, consider instructions on how to make cookies. When did that occur? That could happen at anytime or no time at all. This is because a recipe describes a process or sequence, one which is not attached to any specific chronology.

Unlike chronologically ordered texts, information organized sequentially does not occur at any specific time but, rather, anytime.

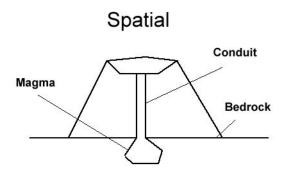
Signal Words: First, next, before, lastly, then

Example: How to Make Cookies. First, get your materials. Then, make your dough. Lastly, cook your dough at 400 degrees for 10 minutes.

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Spacial

Spatial organization is when information in a passage is organized in order of space or location. If you were to describe the room in which you were sitting right now, you would be using spatial organization. Spatial organization may also be called descriptive writing and it is most frequently used when the narrator describes how something looks. Spatial organization is generally pretty easy to identify, but be aware that spatial organization is used in both fiction and nonfiction texts. Most fictional passages are organized chronologically, but in paragraphs where the narrator is describing a setting or the appearance of a character, the information may be organized spatially.



Example: Volcanoes are a feared and destructive force for good reason. A volcano is like a pressure valve for the inner earth, but they can also be very beautiful. One part of the volcano that people rarely see is the magma chamber. The magma chamber is way beneath the Earth's bed rock. It is tremendously hot. Running from the magma chamber to the crater of the volcano is the conduit. The conduit connects the magma chamber to the outer world. At the top of the volcano is the the crater. This is where the magma exits. Volcanoes are a beautiful yet dangerous natural phenomenon.

There are many different graphic organizers you can use to represent the information in a spatially ordered passage. You could draw whatever information is described in the passage.

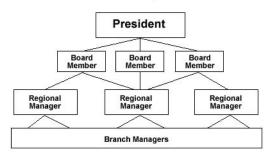
Some **signal words** that might indicate that the writer or speaker is following the spatial pattern of organization include a wide sweeping array of prepositions, some of which I will now list: **next to, behind, across from, below that, above that, to the right of** and so forth.

Order of Importance

Ideas or steps are prioritized by the writer or speaker according to a hierarchy of value. When using the order of importance pattern of organization, information can be structured from most important to least important or least important to most important. Both structures would be considered as the order of importance text structure.

Example: The company has a clearly laid out hierarchy. All major decisions go through the president, who controls the entire operation, but most daily decisions go to the board. Beneath the board members are the regional managers, who oversee the branch managers, who run each local branch.

Order of Importance



The Order of Importance organizational pattern can be difficult to identify alongside cause and effect and sequence text structures. In fact, in some cases one could use the same graphic organizer to represent information from an order of importance and sequence passage. The difference is subtle and must be inferred at times, but generally a sequential passage explains the steps that occur in a process.

Source: http://www.ereadingworksheets.com/text-structure/patterns-of-organization/

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