

Notes: Text Structures

Text structure refers to how writing is organized. If students can identify the text structure of a piece of writing, students can gain a deeper understanding of the purpose of the writing.

1. Sequence

This pattern often uses steps or stages to show how each step builds to produce an end result. This text pattern could be used to show how to build a model or to explain how food is digested in the body.

2. Chronological order

This structure often puts event sin order of how they happen in time. Dates might be used to show specific time. This text pattern could be used to show the events that led up the Revolutionary War, for example. This pattern could also be used for writing a narrative in which the writer structures the story based on time.

3. Comparison-Contrast

This pattern explains the likeness (comparison) and /or differences (contrast) among people, events, facts, ideas, etc. This structure can be used, for example, to show how the authors John Steinbeck and Mark Twain led different lives.

4. Cause and Effect:

This patter illustrates the causes of an event or fact and how it affects other events, facts, situations, etc (the effects). A student could take a subject like global warming to write an essay that first explains the causes of global warming and then goes into how global warming affects the weather, ecosystems, and animals.

5. Problem Solution

This patter takes a problem and explains it thoroughly. Then the essay offers several solutions to the problem. A student could use this pattern to write an essay about a major problem at their school. The student then would give solutions.

6. Proposition and Support:

This text structure uses a format that most eighth=graders have used before. The essay begins by taking a side of a position on a topic and then supports the idea with examples or facts.

7. Spatial Order:

Another principle of organization is spatial order. In this pattern, items are arranged according to their physical position or relationship. In describing a shelf or desk, I might describe items on the left first, then move gradually toward the right. Describing a room, I might start with what I see as I enter the door, then what I see as I step to the middle of the room, and finally the far side. IN explaining some political or social problem, I might discuss first the concerns of the East Coast, then those of the Midwest, then those of the West Coast. Describing a person, I might start at the feet and move up to the head, or just the other way around. This pattern might use such transitions as just to the right, a little further on, to the south of Memphis, a few feet behind, in New Mexico, turning left on the pathway, and so on (Source: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/Composition/Organization.htm>)

8. Order of Importance

This text structure often is used within text structure #1-7. Order the importance simply means that you put your details in some order of how important they are. Often writers go from least important to most important so that the reader is left with the strongest points.