

Understanding Patterns of Organization

In order to understand sequence or what signals to look for, students must understand how the selection is organized.

- Chronological order refers to when things take place and is most commonly found in narrative writing. Chronological organization involves the passage of time, but may include flashbacks. To understand sequence in a chronologically ordered selection, readers should look for time cues: before, after, next, today, then, etc.
- Spatial order refers to how items are arranged. It is most commonly found in descriptive writing. Spatial organization includes right to left, left to right, front to back, back to front, or any other directionally possible description. To understand sequence in a spatially organized selection, readers should look for spatial cues: next to, to the left, in front of, behind, etc.
- Order of importance organization is commonly found in persuasive and informational writing. It can be arranged from least important to most important or most important to least important. To understand order of importance organization, readers should look for comparative cues: more important, less important, greater, lesser, etc.
- **Cause and effect** refers to one event causing another and is commonly found in all types of writing. It can be organized by listing one cause and several effects or one effect and several causes. To understand cause and effect organization, look for the following cues: because, as a result, due to, etc.

