# Text Structure

## Background

Text structure refers to how the information within a written text is organized. This strategy helps students understand that a text might present a main idea and details; a cause and then its effects; and/or different views of a topic. Teaching students to recognize common text structures can help students monitor their comprehension.

## Benefits

Teachers can use this strategy with the whole class, small groups, or individually. Students learn to identify and analyze text structures which helps students navigate the various structures presented within nonfiction and fiction text. As a follow up, having students write paragraphs that follow common text structures helps students recognize these text structures when they are reading.

## Create and Use the Strategy

To create the text structure strategy teachers should:

1. Choose the assigned reading and introduce the text to the students.
2. Introduce the idea that texts have organizational patters called text structures.
3. Introduce the following common text structures (see charts for more detailed information):
   o description,
   o sequence,
   o problem and solution,
   o cause and effect, and
   o compare and contrast.
4. Introduce and model using a graphic organizer to chart the text structure.

To use the text structure strategy teachers should:

1. Show examples of paragraphs that correspond to each text structure.
2. Examine topic sentences that clue the reader to a specific structure.
3. Model the writing of a paragraph that uses a specific text structure.
4. Have students try write paragraphs that follow a specific text structure.
5. Have students diagram these structures using a graphic organizer.

## Examples

Table adapted from  http://forpd.ucf.edu/strategies/strattextstructure.html

| Text Structure: | Definition/Example | Organizer |
|---|---|---|
| **Description** | This type of text structure features a detailed description of something to give the reader a mental picture.<br><br>EXAMPLE: A book may tell all about whales or describe what the geography is like in a particular region. | Descriptive Pattern<br><br>Describing Qualities |
| **Cause and Effect** | This structure presents the causal relationship between an specific event, idea, or concept and the events, ideas, or concept that follow.<br><br>EXAMPLE: Weather patterns could be described that explain why a big snowstorm occurred. | Cause-Effect Pattern<br><br>Process/Cause and Effect |
| **Comparison/Contrast** | This type of text examines the similarities and differences between two or more people, events, concepts, ideas, etc.<br><br>EXAMPLE: A book about ancient Greece may explain how the Spartan women were different from the Athenian women. | Comparison/Contrast |
| **Order/Sequence** | This text structure gives readers a chronological of events or a list of steps in a procedure.<br><br>EXAMPLE: A book about the American revolution might list the events leading to the war. In another book, steps involved in harvesting blue crabs might be told. | Sequence Pattern<br><br>Chronological Sequence |
| **Problem-Solution** | This type of structure sets up a problem or problems, explains the solution, and then discusses the effects of the solution. | Problem-Solution Organizer |