

Writers think logically; they organize details in patterns. Patterns are meant to help readers follow ideas easily and improve understanding of the text. Transition words and phrases are also used to create patterns within the text. Below are some of the most common patterns of organization:

Time Order/Process

Ideas are presented in the order they occur. Sequences are told through times, numbers, and dates. Processes are explained through different steps or stages.

Example: *When Jack **first** decided to drink alcohol, he did not know the risks of drinking. **Over time**, drinking slowly took control of his life.*

Listing

In this pattern, the order of details is unimportant; items are listed to introduce details to the reader in a structured manner.

Example: ***One way** of passing a class is to attend it and read the material **after** the instructor has presented it; **another way** is to read the material well in advance **before** it is presented in class.*

Addition

Changing the order of details does not change their meaning; the writer can use transitions to introduce a second idea to add it to the first one. The second and/or third idea should clarify and deepen the first idea.

Example: *Athletics tones muscles; it **also** builds bone density.*

Definition

A definition is used to explain a new, difficult term; then, examples are provided to clarify the definition.

Example: *A car is a type of transportation that is used to cover long distances faster than a horse does. **For example**, a car may go from DC to Baltimore in 50 minutes whereas a horse may need an hour and a half.*

Generalization

The writer gives a general statement that is supported by one or more examples. Usually, the topic statement is the generalization that is supported by specific examples.

Example: *Many students have classes on Saturdays; Jack has classes on Saturdays and on Sundays.*

Classification

In this pattern, ideas are sorted out into small groups, and then the traits of each group are described. Ideas may be grouped in types, varieties, kinds, and divisions.

Example: *The Internet users have two types of access choices to surf the web. The first type is the phone line; the second is high speed broadband through TV cable or high speed DSL.*

Comparison-Contrast

This pattern emphasizes similarities or differences between two or more items. Writers show how two or more items are the same or are different. A combination of similarities and differences is also possible.

Example: *All new cars have similar safety features today; however, some cars still use old-fashioned features.*

Spatial/Space Order

This pattern presents the physical location or position of objects in a given space.

Example: *In a big house, some rooms are situated above the living room on the second floor; others are beside or next to the family room on the first floor.*

Cause and Effect

This pattern discusses the reason why some events take place and the consequence(s) of their happening.

Example: *It was snowing this morning, so I missed the bus, and therefore, I could not take the final exam.*