

Recognizing Internal Text Structure & Developing Academic Language

Internal text structure can include:

- Cause and Effect – The purpose of the passage is to show the cause or causes of an outcome OR to show the effect(s) of an event. Signal words: as a result of, consequently
- Compare/Contrast – The purpose is to show similarities and differences between two things. Signal words: similarly, on the other hand
- Concept/Definition – The purpose is to define a concept using appropriate supporting details. Signal words: refers to, thus
- Chronological – The purpose is to explain the sequence of events. Signal words: dates used in text
- Generalization or principle – The purpose is to organize information into general statements with supporting details. Signal words: always, In fact,
- Listing or Enumeration – The purpose is to list specific points or examples about a topic. Signal words: first, three
- Problem/Solution – The purpose is to describe a problem and its solution(s).
- Process – The purpose is to delineate the procedure or process for how something is done/created, e.g. cookbooks, science labs, Signal words: begins with, in order to

Words and phrases that signal an author's organizational pattern to aid comprehension are as follows:

- Chronological/Sequence: after/afterward. As soon as, before, during, finally, first, following, immediately, later, meanwhile, next, not long after, on (date), second, soon, then, third, today, until, when
- Comparison-Contrast: although, as well as, as opposed to, both, but, compared with, difference from, either...or, even though, however, instead of, in common, on the other hand, otherwise, similar to, similarly, still, yet
- Process/Cause-Effect: accordingly, as a result of, because begins with, consequently, effect of, finally first, for this reason, how to/how, if...then, in order to, is caused by, leads to, may be due to, next, so that, steps involved, therefore/thus, when...then
- Description: above, across, along, appears to be, as in, behind, below, beside, between, down, in back of, in front of, looks like, near, on top of, onto, outside, over, such as, to the left/to the right, under
- Generalization/Principle: additionally, always, because of, clearly/consequently, first/second, for instance/for example, furthermore, generally, however, if...then, in fact, it could be argued, moreover, most convincing, never, not only...but also, often, therefore, third, truly, typically
- Concept/Definition: characterized by, for instance, in other words, put another way, refers to, that is, thus, usually