

Text Structures

Text structure is the term for how an author organizes information. Authors use different text structures to achieve different purposes, and there might be several types of text structures in a piece of writing.

TEXT STRUCTURE	SIGNAL WORDS AND PHRASES	WHAT TO LOOK FOR
Description or List: includes details to help you picture or get to know a person, a place, a thing, or an idea	<i>such as, for example, for instance, most important, in front, beside, near</i>	a list or set of characteristics, including specific details
Cause and Effect: explains <i>why</i> something happened (cause) and <i>what</i> happened as a result (effect)	<i>therefore, so, this led to, as a result, because, if . . . then</i>	an event is described in addition to what happened as a result of that event
Problem and Solution: presents a problem and explains how it is solved	<i>propose, conclude, a solution, the reason for, the problem</i>	a problem is described followed by one or more solutions
Compare and Contrast: presents the similarities and/or differences between two items, such as a pair of events, time periods, ideas, or places	<i>like, unlike, but, in contrast, on the other hand, however, both, also, too, while, as opposed to, yet, rather, same</i>	likenesses and differences are presented and/or discussed
Sequence of Events: describes events in the order in which they happen; also called chronological order	<i>first, second, third, before, on (date), not long after, after that, next, at the same time, finally, then</i>	a sequence of events or steps in a process is recounted