

This handout should be used in conjunction with the “Patterns of Organization 1” podcast. This podcast only includes definition, time order and simple listing thought patterns. “Patterns of Organization 2” will include cause and effect and comparison and contrast.

*It is suggested to complete the “Topic and Main Idea” and the “Supporting Detail” podcasts before beginning “Patterns of Organization 1.”

What are patterns of organization?

Patterns of organization or thought patterns show how ideas relate in a passage.

Why are patterns of organization important?

- Authors often use patterns of organization or thought patterns in their writing because it helps to support the point of their writing and make their writing clearer to the reader.
- By being able to recognize the thought pattern in a piece of writing, readers are often better able to identify the main idea and supporting details of the passage.
- Patterns of organization are often used in textbooks and therefore will help you outline and summarize more completely.

Common patterns:

1. Definition – *Definition thought patterns* define terms or ideas in paragraphs and are often found within textbooks. The word being defined is commonly highlighted in some way, such as italics, boldface or color print. The meaning of the word is made clearer in the passage and usually provides either comparisons or synonyms of the word, contexts which help to make the meaning clearer or details about the origin or history of the word. (This paragraph is an example of a definition thought pattern.)
2. Time Order – *Time order thought patterns* are passages which explain the order in which something has occurred or needs to occur. Time order thought patterns are often called process thought patterns or date and events patterns. Time order thought patterns will often give dates or steps of events which causes this pattern to be one of the easier to identify, outline and summarize.

The main idea of the time order thought pattern can be recognized by identifying the large process being described. The major details can be found by identifying the steps or events which occurred and leaving out the examples and explanations which help explain those steps or events.

Time Order Transition Words		
After	During the period between	Next
Another	Finally	Second
At the end of	First	Then

3. Simple Listing – The *Simple listing thought pattern* provides a list of items which support the main idea but do not need to be in a specific order, unlike the time order thought pattern.

Simple Listing Transition Words		
Cases	Illustrations	Studies
Characteristics	Parts	Symptoms
Examples	Qualities	Traits

Practice:

These practice examples are discussed in order on the podcast. Try them on your own before listening to the explanation. Identify the pattern of organization, main idea and major details.

1. Making a really good cup of cocoa is simple if you follow a few easy steps. First, melt a good quality chocolate. If the chocolate seems grainy once melted, the cocoa will seem grainy too. Next, pour whole milk into the melted chocolate. The fat in the milk is needed to keep the chocolate even throughout the cocoa. Skim milk allows the chocolate to sink to the bottom and should be avoided. Finally, heat the drink to the perfect temperature. Milk easily scalds and will leave an unsightly film on top of the cocoa, but no one wants cold cocoa. Now, enjoy a perfect cup of cocoa.

Pattern of Organization _____

Main Idea _____

Major Details _____

2. In order to avoid identity theft, individuals need to be constantly aware of how their information can be obtained by unscrupulous individuals. Examples would be scammers who run phishing schemes on the internet through their home computer or dig through garbage for credit card bills and bank statements. These individuals have also been known to break through business's firewalls to obtain customers' credit card and social security numbers. Criminals are always looking for easy ways to steal someone's hard earned money.

Pattern of Organization _____

Main Idea _____

Major Details _____

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3. While RSVP is often included at the end of invitations, few individuals actually know its meaning. The term **RSVP** is the French expression "répondez s'il vous plaît" abbreviated. Translated it means "please respond." This term indicates the recipient of the invitation should respond if attending or not attending the event allowing the host to obtain an accurate headcount of attendees.

Pattern of Organization _____

Main Idea _____

Major Details _____

Answer Key: Remember your answers may be worded differently but should have very similar ideas.

1. Pattern of Organization – Time Order

Main Idea – Making a really good cup of cocoa is simple if you have the follow a few easy steps.

Major Details

- Melt a good quality chocolate
- Add whole milk to the melted chocolate
- Heat the cocoa to the right temperature

2. Pattern of Organization – Simple Listing

Main Idea – In order to avoid identity theft, individuals need to be constantly aware of how their information can be obtained by unwanted individuals

Major Detail –

- Scammers phish for information on the internet
- Scammers dig through garbage for important papers
- Break through business's firewalls for credit card and social security numbers

3. Pattern of Organization – Definition

Main Idea – The term RSVP means please respond.

Major Details

- French expression "répondez s'il vous plaît"
- Requires a response of either attending or not attending