

# 13

## Text Organization

# S.O.S.



### Getting the Idea

When you read texts, you may notice certain patterns in the sentences and paragraphs. Texts can be organized in different ways.

**RI.3.3** Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific events or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

A text can be organized by time order, or sequence. A **sequence** is an order of events. Words like *first*, *next*, *then*, *before*, *after*, *later*, and *finally* all help to tell the order of events. When events happen at the same time, words like *while*, *as*, and *at the same time* can give you clues about sequence. Some texts, like recipes and instructions, need to be organized by sequence because they show specific steps. A recipe must be followed in the correct order for the food to cook or bake **correctly** and **taste good**. **Look at this example.**

Here are suggested directions for making blueberry muffins.

- **First**, have an adult preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
- **Then**, place paper liners in cup sections of a muffin pan and set aside.
- **Next**, in a large bowl, mix together butter, eggs, salt, and sugar. In a separate bowl, blend flour and baking powder. Sift flour mixture into butter mixture a little at a time, alternating with milk, until flour mixture and milk are thoroughly blended into butter mixture. Add vanilla, and mix well. Gently mix in blueberries.
- **Finally**, pour batter into muffin cups, and place on center oven rack. Bake for 25 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean when inserted in center of muffin.

Other texts, like texts about people or events in **history**, are organized by sequence to help show you the order of events. They usually show a beginning, a middle, and an end. As in the example above, pay attention to sequence words such as *first*, *then*, and *next*.

## Sequencing

## Compare & Contrast

Another way of organizing a text is by **comparing** and **contrasting**. To **compare** things means to show how they are alike. To **contrast** things means to show how they are different. Words such as *however*, *like*, *unlike*, and *although* can give you clues about comparing and contrasting. Read this paragraph.

Apples and oranges are two kinds of fruit. Apples are usually red, yellow, or green in color and have thin skin. Oranges are orange in color. **Like** apples, oranges grow on trees. **Unlike** apples, oranges have thick skin. **Although** they are different, they **both** taste good and are good for you.

Comparing and contrasting helps authors talk about two or more things and show how they are similar or different. Authors can also talk about one thing and compare and contrast over time to see how it has changed.

Authors will also sometimes organize a text by **cause and effect**. This shows how one event makes another event happen. A **cause** makes something happen. An **effect** is the result of a cause.

Mark woke up late for school. He hurried out the door and forgot his umbrella. Later that day it rained hard. Mark got wet on his way home. The next day, Mark woke up with a cold.

The first cause in the paragraph is that Mark forgets his umbrella. What is the effect? He gets wet when it rains later that day. Getting wet is also a cause. What is the effect? He wakes up the next morning with a cold.

### Cause & Effect Key Words

SO  
because  
caused  
due to

AS A RESULT  
since  
therefore  
then

Read the first two paragraphs of a science passage about the food people eat in space.

Genre: Science

## Space Food

by Claire Daniels

Astronaut food has changed over the years. In the early days of space exploration, astronauts traveled in small spacecraft, where there was little room for food. Fresh foods in early space travel were not practical. They spoiled, took up too much space, and were too heavy.

As a result, astronauts in space ate freeze-dried foods. Freeze-dried foods don't spoil. They don't weigh much, and they don't take up much space. Add water and you have "fresh" peas, mashed potatoes, steak, or macaroni and cheese. There is even freeze-dried ice cream!

(continued)

Explore how to answer this question: "How are the two paragraphs in this passage connected?"

What is the most important idea in each paragraph? Think about the main thing you learn in each paragraph. Circle signal words to help you see how the paragraphs are connected.

Read the chart below. It shows the relationship between the most important ideas in the paragraphs.

Why It Happened (Cause)	What Happened (Effect)
"Fresh foods in early space travel were not practical."	"As a result, astronauts in space ate freeze-dried foods."

Fill in the blanks below to write about how the two paragraphs are connected.

Paragraph 1 tells the cause, or why astronauts didn't eat fresh foods in space. Paragraph 2 tells the effect, or what happened as a result: Astronauts ate freeze-dried. The paragraphs are connected by Cause and effect.