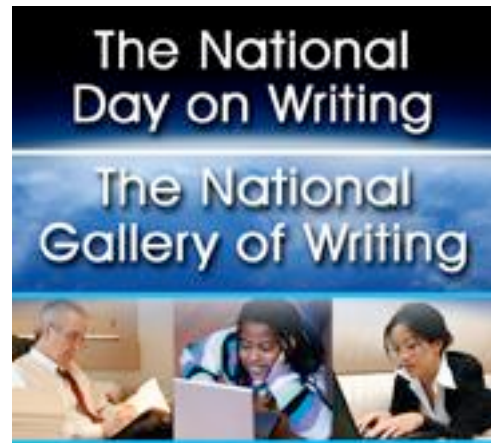


## Organizing Your Writing

Once you've decided upon your topic and your audience—and possibly brainstormed some ideas or even completed your first draft—you'll want to revise by reorganizing your thoughts into a structure or format that works best to convey your message. This doesn't mean having a certain number of sentences or paragraphs; it simply means having an organization that matches the purpose of your writing so that your audience can more easily follow along.

Here are a few organizational patterns you might consider:



- Sequential—This style is particularly conducive when telling a story or relaying events chronologically. Simply double-check that your events are written in the order in which they happened.
- Spatially—This arrangement is a perfect fit when describing a scene. Depending upon what works best, you can describe from left to right, bottom to top, center to edge, near to far, or the opposite. These structures will help you take your reader along with you as you explore your observations.
- Importance—When writing persuasively or trying to make a point, you'll first want to consider what works best: hooking your reader with your main point and then following up with supportive details, or setting the reader up with the details to lead to your main point. Similarly, do you want to move from your most to your least important point, or vice versa?
- Comparison—When comparing two objects or situations to each other, there are two basic organizational patterns. One is to focus on the separate items, describing them in their entirety based on individual characteristics that they have in common. A second pattern is to focus on the characteristics themselves, describing the items as they apply to those characteristics.
- Cause and Effect—To explain the connections between an event and what caused it, you can begin with a general statement (either the cause or the effect) and then support that statement with details that represent the other.

For additional information on organizing your writing, including some graphic organizers that will help you see these patterns more concretely, explore the following resources:

Comparison and Contrast Guide: <http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/comcontrast/>

How to Organize Your Writing: <http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/processes/organize/list6.cfm>

How to Organize Ideas for Writing:

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_4897696\\_organize-ideas-writing.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_4897696_organize-ideas-writing.html)

How to Organize Your Ideas:

<http://www.articlesbase.com/writing-articles/how-to-organize-your-ideas-402183.html>

Tools for Reading, Writing & Thinking:

<http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Tools/Index.htm>

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