

## ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS

Organization is a crucial part of writing a paper. You want to make sure that your paper follows a logical order. You can accomplish this in a variety of ways:

- **Chronological Order**

- If you're writing about a book and find that your arguments can be arranged in order of the book's events, you may want to consider organizing your paper chronologically. For example:
  - Your beginning paragraph(s) would address the contents of the early portions of the book
  - Your middle paragraph(s) would address the middle of the book
  - Your ending paragraph(s) would address the end of the book
- This method of organization makes it easier for your audience to follow along with the plot of the book, even if they haven't read it before.

- **Paragraph Theme**

- If you have multiple pieces of evidence for one of your arguments, you may want to group your paragraphs by theme.
  - For example, if you were writing a paper on *The Giver*, you could have one paragraph about its dystopian elements with pieces of evidence from multiple places in the book.
- This method of organization is preferable for literary analysis.

- **Compare and Contrast**

- If you want to compare and contrast two or more texts, you may want to group your paragraphs by their similarities and differences.
  - For example, if you were comparing and contrasting *The Hunger Games* and *The Giver*, you could contend that they are similar because they both take place in a dystopia, go into detail about how they overlap, and then talk about how their portrayals of these dystopian elements are different.
- It may be helpful to have the beginning half of your paper reveal similarities and the other half of your paper reveal differences.
- This method of organization is preferable for synthesis essays.

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- **Synthesis**

- The goal of a synthesis essay is to highlight meaningful connections between multiple works.
- When you are evaluating your sources, it may be helpful to write a brief summary of it or highlight relevant sections for easy reference; by doing this, you won't have to reread the entire source to know how it fits into your argument and will be able to pick out the most relevant sources for your paper with ease.
- When writing your paper, ask yourself:
  - Where do the authors agree?
  - Where do the authors disagree?
  - Does one author expand on or challenge another author's ideas?
  - What can I add to this scholarly conversation?

### **Changes in Organization**

- When you are organizing your essay, keep in mind that different genres have varied organizational patterns. It is important when writing to keep this in mind. When writing an essay or another piece of writing, consider the following questions:
  - What portions of this are necessary for the genre?
    - Ex.: An argumentative essay always contains a persuasive claim, which should always be included.
  - Are there portions of the genre that are optional?
    - Ex.: Argumentative essays usually contain a minimum of three supporting pieces of evidence for the main claim, but it can contain more if needed.
  - Are there elements of an essay that should not be included in this genre?
    - Ex.: Normally, argumentative essays do not contain ethos as an element of argument.

*Keep in mind that your essay does not have to fit into a standardized set of paragraphs in a particular order. When writing an essay, often it is reinforced that an essay must follow a five paragraph organizational format. However this is not the case. Five paragraph essays often do not work for all genres or pieces of writing.*

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