

Module: Reading

Lesson Title: Informational Text: It Reads Differently

Objectives and Standards

Students will:

- Identify different organizational structures in informational/workplace documents
- Read with better comprehension
- Identify purpose of informational texts

Florida Adult Basic Education Reading Standards	Level Expectation
Read and comprehend complex literary and informational text independently and proficiently. (CCR.RE.ABE.10)	NRS Level 3 - Read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, of appropriate complexity for NRS Level 3, independently and proficiently. a) Read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science and technical texts, of appropriate complexity for NRS Level 3.

Materials

- Handout A: Informational Text Structures
- Handout B: Text Structure Outline
- Handout C: Samples of Informational Text
- Handout D: Text Structure Graphic Organizers

Instructional Plan

Overview

Text features are to non-fiction what story elements are to fiction. Text features help the reader make sense of what they are reading and go hand-in-hand with comprehension. If students know something about the organization of a text before they begin the reading process, their minds will begin to make sense of what they are about to read. The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with questions to ask when determining text structure. Although the literature identifies various text structures for nonfiction text, this lesson will use the following informational text structures: description, problem and solution, compare and contrast, and sequence/chronological.

Process

Introduce the lesson by asking students if they have ever experienced frustration with trying to read something that they did not understand. What happened? Answers may include that they tried to tackle it or

that they became discouraged and gave up because the material was too difficult or that they were confused about what they had read. Discuss that new reading tasks are generally difficult and confusing. However, once a reading type is practiced and mastered, the task becomes much easier and even enjoyable.

Have students brainstorm the types of clues that they use when they begin to read new material. Answers should include: connect new material to what they know or have read before; preview the text by scanning introductions, head notes, footnotes, and illustrations; thinking about the titles and making assumptions about the reading; highlighting or underlining words or phrases not understood.

Discuss with students that the organizational structure of a document is another important skill for better comprehension. Unlike narrative text, or stories, that have one predominant structural pattern; informational text has several possible organizational structures.

Write the following words on the board: **Description, Problem and Solution, Compare and Contrast, Cause and Effect, Sequence.**

Share with students that when reading nonfiction, they should first look at the text and determine its organizational structure. Provide students with a brief overview of the different types of text structure. You may wish to provide a real-life example to show students the types of reading they may encounter with a specific structure. An example is provided for your use.

The following is a brief overview of each type of text structure and an example of where it may be used.

1. **Problem/Solution**

The author introduces a problem and tells us how the problem could be fixed. There may be one solution to fix the problem or several different solutions mentioned. Example: Advertisements in magazines for products (problem-pain; solution-aspirin)

2. **Cause and Effect**

The author describes something that has happened which has had an effect on or caused something else to happen. It could be a good effect or a bad effect. There may be more than one cause and there may also be more than one effect. This may look something like problem/solution, but it doesn't provide a solution. Example: A newspaper article about a volcano eruption which had an effect on tourism.

3. **Compare/Contrast**

The author's purpose is to tell you how two things are the same and how they are different by comparing them. Example: A bargain hunter is writing on her blog about buying store-brand items and how it compares with buying name-brand items.

4. **Description/List**

Although this is a very common text structure, it may be difficult to identify because the author sometimes provides lots of information or facts about a subject. When reading a description type of passage, it is up to the reader to determine what he/she thinks is important and sometimes even interesting enough to remember. Example: A soccer coach's letter describing to parents exactly what kind of cleats to buy for their kids.

5. Sequence (Chronological)

Texts are written in an order or timeline format. Remember that sequence doesn't necessarily deal with time. Sequence often provides the reader with steps for doing something. Example: Recipes, directions, events in history or science.

After you have provided an overview of each of the structures, teach each individually by showing students an example and identifying the different traits of the text by looking for signal words and asking the leading question.

- Provide students with a copy of **Handout A: Information Text Structures**.
- Project writing sample (or write the sample on chart paper).
- Read the text aloud to the students.
- Identify the signal words and circle them.
- From the different signal words selected, identify the lead question to ask and read the question aloud. (Questions are under the Tips section of **Handout A**. Additional questions are located on **Handout B**)
- When you have completed modeling each type of text, divide the class into small groups of 3-4 students. Provide the students with sample texts. You may wish to use samples from **Handout C: Samples of Informational Text**. Cut out different samples to give to each group. Make sure to provide students with different types of texts.
- Have each group circle the signal words on each text sample and answer the tip question.
- Have students share their answers with the group, including identifying the signal words and answering the key question. Have each group describe how the ideas were organized and why the author used this method. If there is disagreement, have students defend their choice.

Note to Teachers: *A word of caution: Identifying patterns of organization is not the ultimate goal of text structure teaching. This ability is only beneficial as students internalize knowledge about text structure and subsequently use it to enhance their comprehension. Teach students to use the patterns of organization to improve their comprehension.*

Sample Debriefing Questions

- How did identifying text structure help you to better understand what you read?
- Which text structure was the most challenging for you to identify? Why?
- Did you identify additional signal words while reading? What were the signal words and which text structure did they support?
- How will you use text structure in your daily life at home and in the workplace? How will it assist you in reading different types of documents?
- How did you like working in groups when identifying text structure? Was it helpful or not? Why?

Modifications for Different Levels

This lesson focuses on lower level readers. For students who are at higher readability levels, provide students with **Handout B: Sample Questions Focusing on Patterns of Organization** and the selected graphic organizer from **Handout D: Text Structure Graphic Organizers**. Model for students how to complete each of the graphic organizers and how the information is useful when reading more complex nonfiction text. It is

recommended that students master each type of organizational structure prior to going on to the next type of text.

Example: Provide students with a text that uses sequence, such as the one included in **Handout C: Samples of Informational Text**, or you may wish to use reading examples at a higher complexity level. Students should scan the text and answer the questions from **Handout B: Sample Questions Focusing on Patterns of Organization**. Give students only those questions that support the particular type of informational text being used. Example: Cut out the section of the handout that includes those questions that reference sequential order when providing text that uses sequential order.

Once students have answered the questions, have them complete the graphic organizer for that specific text (**Handout D: Text Structure Graphic Organizers**). Discuss as a group the primary characteristics of informational documents that use sequential order. Have students locate additional workplace/information documents that fit this structure and share them with the class.

Once students are comfortable in identifying sequential order in texts, complete a similar process for problem and solution, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and description.

Assessments/Extensions

Provide students with sample informational texts and have them identify the organizational structure of each. Teachers may wish to use examples that students have provided.

Have students determine the type of organizational structure of informational texts prior to reading. Upon completion of the reading, discuss whether or not their predictions were correct. Students may identify different text structures, dependent on the reading. Remember that paragraphs or readings may not have a readily discernible text structure. However, where more than one text structure is present, a major or overall structure usually can be identified. Have students discuss why they selected a particular structure as the primary organizational structure of the text and how it assisted them in better comprehending necessary information.

Handout A: Informational Text Structures

Description



Signal Words:

such as, for instance, in addition, also, specifically

Tips:

Ask yourself: what specific person, place, thing, or idea is being described?

Look for a topic word or phrase and for synonyms.

Problem and Solution



Signal Words:

problem, issue, since, as a result, solution, idea, so, leads to, causes

Tips:

Ask yourself: what is the problem and what is the solution?

Look for the problem first, and then the solution.

Compare and Contrast



Signal Words:

similar, same, alike, both, as well as, unlike, as opposed to, on the other hand, in contrast, instead

Tips:

Ask yourself: what is being compared?

How are they the same? How are they different?

Cause and Effect



Signal Words:

since, because, if, due to, as a result of, causes, leads to, consequently, then, therefore

Tips:

Ask yourself: what happened and why did it happen?

Remember, you are looking for a cause, not a solution.

Sequence



Signal Words:

such as, for instance, in addition, also, specifically

Tips:

Ask yourself: is this event taking place over time?

Look for steps or references to time, such as dates.

Handout B: Sample Questions Focusing on Patterns of Organization

Description

- What is being described by the author?
- What are the supporting ideas?
- Why is sequence important or not important?

Problem and Solution

- What is the problem that the author is addressing?
- Why is this a problem according to the author?
- What is being done to try to solve the problem?
- What is the end result?

Comparison/Contrast

- What is the author comparing/contrasting?
- Why is the author comparing/contrasting these things?
- Why did the comparison/contrast structure emerge?
- What are the advantages of...? the disadvantages of...?

Cause and Effect

- What is the cause/effect process the author is describing?
- Why did a cause/effect structure emerge?
- What is the cause?
- What is the effect?

Sequence

- What is being described in sequence?
- Why did a chronological order pattern emerge?
- What are the major steps in this sequence?
- Why is the sequence important?

Handout C: Samples of Informational Text

Description Text Samples

Have you ever wondered what the inside of a volcano looks like? Deep underground is a magma chamber. The magma chamber is under the bedrock of the earth's crust. The conduit or pipe runs from the magma chamber to the top of the volcano. The conduit connects the magma chamber to the surface. Most volcanoes also have a crater at the top. Volcanoes are quite a sight, and you can enjoy this site all over the universe. Volcanoes are found on planets other than Earth, like the Olympus Mons on Mars.

How is the text structured?

All crocodilians are reptiles with long snouts, long tails, four short legs, tough skin, and sharp teeth. Members of the crocodilian family include alligators, crocodiles, caimans, and gavials. Crocodilians live in warm weather throughout the year, and they spend part of their time in the water and part of their time on land. Almost all crocodilians grow to be very large, with the largest more than twenty feet long. There are two kinds of alligators, 14 kinds of crocodiles, eight kinds of caimans, and one kind of gavial.

How is this text structured?

Would it surprise you to learn that corn is also a type of grass? It was first grown in Central America thousands of years ago. Its seeds are called kernels. Very few kernels grew on wild corn grass. It took thousands of years of choosing the corn grass plants with the biggest seeds, or kernels, to make what we enjoy today as corn on the cobb.

Ken Cameron, Plant Genetics, 2002, p. 11 ISBN 1-58344-938-8

How is this text structured?

Cause and Effect Text Examples

The surface of the Earth is divided into pieces called "tectonic plates." These plates move or shift. When the plates rub against each other, they do not move smoothly. When the plates do not move smoothly, earthquakes result. Some parts of the world get more earthquakes than other parts. The parts of the earth that get most earthquakes are near the edges of these plates.

How is this text structured?

Many people think that they can get sick by going into cold weather improperly dressed; however, illnesses are not caused by temperature- they are caused by germs. So while shivering outside in the cold probably won't strengthen your immune system, you're more likely to contract an illness indoors because you will have a greater exposure to germs.

How is this text structured?

Avalanches (when a lot of snow falls from a mountain) may bury people under them. If the people are not found rapidly enough by rescue teams they will die of suffocation (not getting enough air) or of hypothermia (freezing cold). The chance of surviving an avalanche is as follows:

- 92% if found within 15 minutes
- 30% if found within 35 minutes (victims die of suffocation)
- nearly zero after two hours (victims die of injuries and hypothermia)

How is this text structured?

Fire needs three things to burn: oxygen, fuel, and heat. Fuels can be wood, tinder, coal, or any other substance that will easily oxidize. Therefore, a fire can be stopped in three different ways, by removing any of the three things it needs to burn.

The fuel can be removed. If a fire burns through all of its fuel and extra nearby fuel is removed, the fire will stop burning.

The oxygen can be removed. This is called "smothering" a fire. Fires cannot burn in a vacuum or if they are covered in carbon dioxide.

The heat can be removed. The most common way to remove heat is to use water to absorb that heat, putting the fire out.

How is this text structured?

Chronological/Sequential Order Text Samples

This morning was crazy. My alarm clock was set for PM instead of AM, so I woke up really late. I just threw on some clothes and ran out the door. I rode my bike as fast as I could and thought that I was going to be late for sure, but when I got there everyone was outside and there were fire trucks all lined up in front of school. I guess somebody pulled the fire alarm before class started. It worked out though, because nobody really noticed or minded that I was tardy.

How is this text structured?

Hurricane Katrina began as Tropical Depression Twelve over the southeastern Bahamas on August 23, 2005. The depression later strengthened into a tropical storm on the morning of August 24 where the storm was also named *Katrina*. Katrina continued to move into Florida, and became a Category 1 hurricane only two hours before it made landfall around Hallandale Beach on the morning of August 25. The storm weakened over land, but became a hurricane again while entering the Gulf of Mexico.

How is this text structured?

Screen Protector

Before applying the screen protector, clean the surface of your phone's screen with a soft cloth. Once the surface of your screen is clean, remove the paper backing on the screen protector. Evenly apply the sticky side of the screen protector to your phone's screen. Smooth out any air bubble trapped on surface of the screen protector.

How is this text structured?

Tsunamis are very long waves in the ocean, sometimes hundreds of miles long. Tsunamis usually start suddenly. They may begin as normal waves and change to big waves very quickly. After this change, tsunami waves will travel at great speed across the ocean with little energy loss. Just before they hit land, the water will draw back off of the coast. If the slope of the coast is shallow, the water may pull back for many hundreds of feet. People who are unaware of the danger may be drawn by this strange site and remain on the shore. When the tsunami finally hits, it may remove sand from beaches, destroy trees, damage houses and even destroy whole towns. Tsunamis are tremendously powerful.

How is this text structured?

Problem and Solution Text Samples

Some countries, such as Japan, or parts of a country, like California in the United States, have a lot of earthquakes. In these places it is a good practice to build houses and other buildings so they will not collapse when there is an earthquake. This is called seismic design or "earthquake-proofing".

How is this text structured?

When a river receives a lot of extra water it may flood. During a flood there is plenty of water, and most people wouldn't think that dehydration was a serious risk, but flood waters are mostly polluted and not safe to drink. People who drink the contaminated water may suffer from illnesses or diseases such as typhoid. You can prepare for flooding by filling many containers with fresh clean drinking water. You can also use sandbags to protect your house and to soak up the water. Be prepared and be safe.

How is this text structured?

In most parts of the world there are not as many crocodiles as there used to be. This is a problem because crocodiles are becoming endangered and also crocodiles are necessary to the balance of nature. Many crocodiles have died because people dried up the swamps and marshes where the crocodiles lived. Poachers have also contributed to the dilemma as crocodiles have been desired for their strong, smooth, leathery skins. In order to preserve these mighty creatures, people must take care of the crocodiles' environment and help put a stop to the needless shooting of these animals.

How is this text structured?

Cooking the perfect pizza at home can be quite a challenge. You may find that it's difficult to get your oven to the right temperature. If the oven is too hot the crust will burn, become hard, and taste bad. If your oven isn't hot enough, the crust may get soggy. Even at the perfect temperature, extra moisture from your ingredients may prevent the bottom of the crust from fully cooking, but don't let oven temperature stop you from building the pizza of your dreams. Get yourself a pizza stone. A pizza stone will get very hot when preheated and will allow your crust to fully cook without burning it. Then you can pile the ingredients on your pizza and have a crispy crust that isn't burned. That's the way to go.

How is this text structured?

Compare and Contrast Text Samples

A hurricane is a large storm with heavy winds and rain that begins in the ocean and builds up strength as it moves across the water. While some of the damage caused by hurricanes is from high winds, most of it is usually from tidal surge, flooding entire cities, and killing large numbers of people. A tornado is a storm that develops on land, with no warning, and moves in a circular motion with heavy winds with a funnel shape, picking up and carrying dirt, dust, and even objects. The damage caused by tornadoes is from the high velocity winds, which are extremely destructive and deadly. They can demolish entire neighborhoods in a matter of a few seconds to a few minutes. Tornadoes can form when hurricanes make landfall, as their winds at ground level slow down, while the winds near the top keep their momentum, but a hurricane cannot be created by a tornado.

How is this text structured?

Lightning and thunder are related events. Lightning is a sudden, violent flash of electricity that occurs between a cloud and the ground or between two clouds in the sky. A lightning bolt can be several miles long and can be straight or forked. It is very hot, with an average temperature of 34,000 degrees Celsius. This causes the air around the electric bolt to expand, producing lots of sound energy. It is this sound energy that we hear as thunder. So, lightning and thunder are caused by the same event, but lightning is light energy, or electromagnetic energy, whereas thunder is sound energy. Thus, we see lightning and hear thunder.

How is this text structured?

Most people have had red pizza, or pizza covered with red sauce, but have you ever had white pizza? White pizza is made in almost the same way as red pizza: the dough rises and is rolled out, toppings are applied, and it is cooked in an oven, but the key difference is that white pizza does not have any tomato sauce on it. Instead, a white pizza may have olive oil or no sauce at all. I like white pizza more than red pizza because you can really taste the ingredients. Adding some fresh tomatoes to a white pizza will give it that tomato flavor without the completely overwhelming taste of the red sauce that covers most pizzas. If you have not had a white pizza, I recommend that you order or make one today.

How is this text structured?

Handout D: Text Structure Graphic Organizers

Description Graphic Organizer

DETAILS

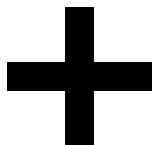
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CENTRAL

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IDEA

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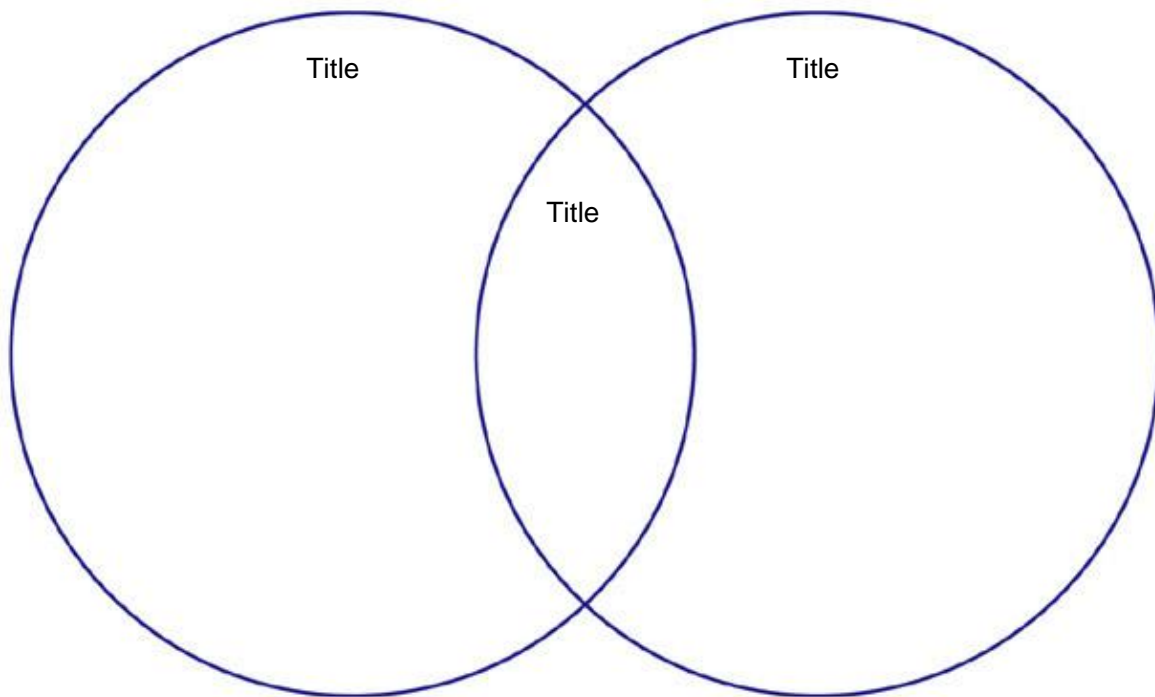
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Sequence Graphic Organizer

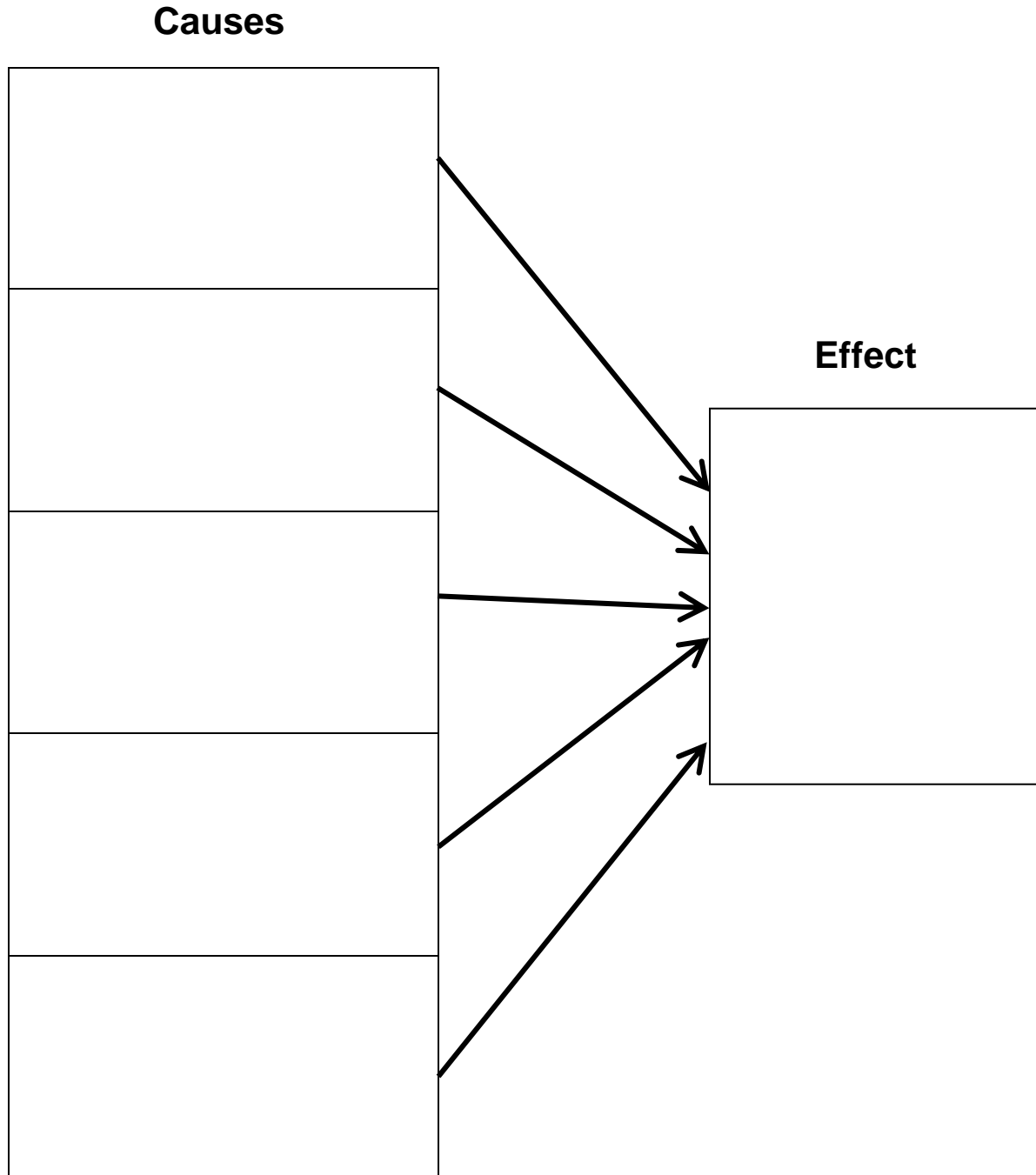
Sequence
The first part of the process is
The next step in the process is
The third step in the process is
Summary Sentence

Compare and Contrast: Venn Diagram Graphic Organizer

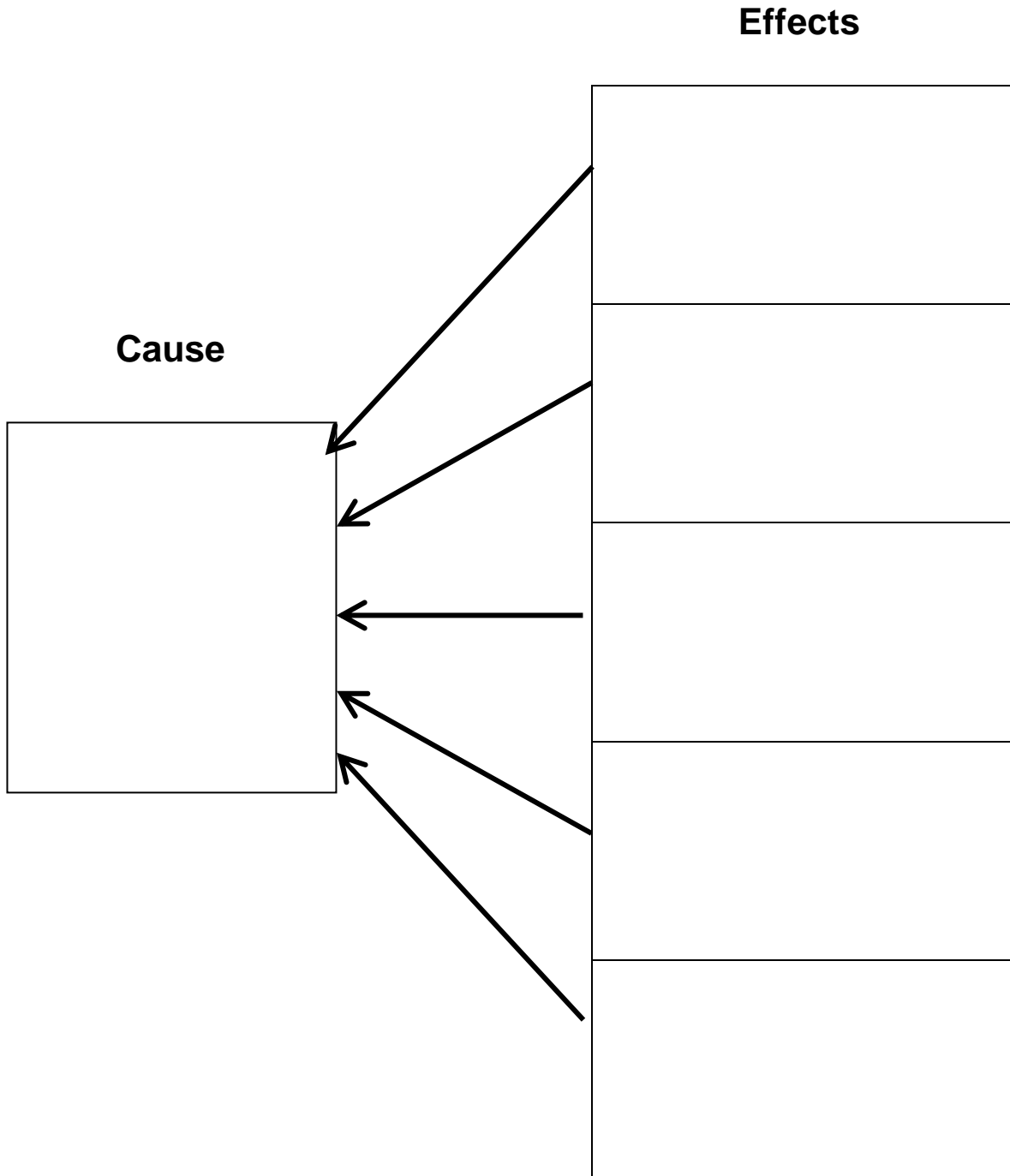
Topic _____



Cause and Effect: Multiple Causes Graphic Organizer



Cause and Effect: Multiple Effects Graphic Organizer



Problem and Solution Graphic Organizer

Problem/Solution requires that you identify a problem, solutions, and possible results.

Who _____

Problem

What?

Solution

How?

End Results