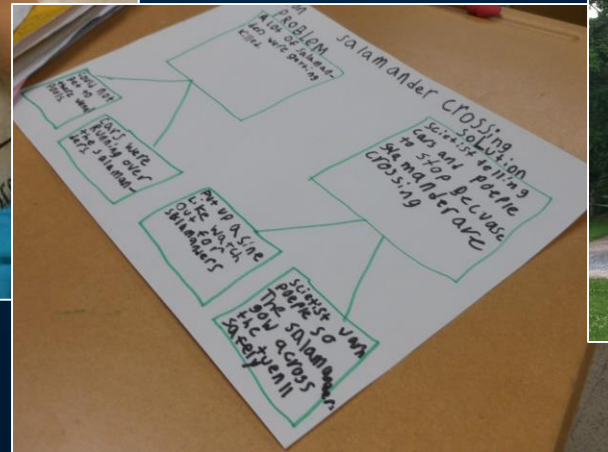
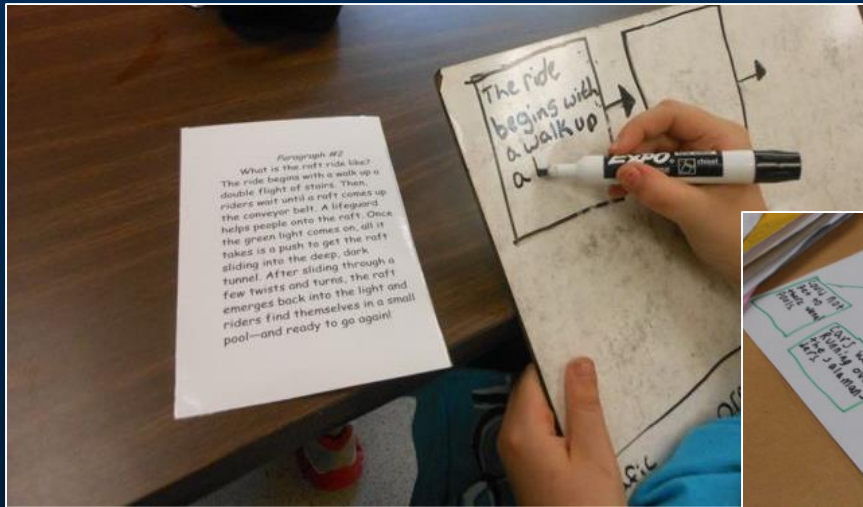


# Understanding Text Structures



# What is a text structure?



A “structure” is a building or framework.



“Text structure” refers to how a piece of text is built.

# What is a text structure?

Builders can use different kinds of structures to build different things.



A skyscraper, for example, is a different kind of structure from a house.

# What is a text structure?



Writers use  
different structures  
to build their ideas.

Each text structure  
communicates ideas  
in a different way

# Chronological order

Authors use chronological order to explain how things happen in order

Chronological order is also called sequence or time order



Why might an author use chronological order to write about this frog?

# Chronological order



You will know that you are reading a text in chronological order because you will see words like *first*, *next*, *later*, *then*, and *finally*

# Chronological order

You will often see chronological order in directions:

Have you ever made macaroni and cheese? It's simple! First, boil some water and make some macaroni. Then, make your cheese sauce. After the cheese sauce is ready, mix it with the macaroni. Bake the entire thing in the oven. Finally, it's time to eat!

# Chronological order

Notice the transition words that connect the events in these directions.

Have you ever made macaroni and cheese? It's simple! **First**, boil some water and make some macaroni. **Then**, make your cheese sauce. **After** the cheese sauce is ready, mix it with the macaroni. Bake the entire thing in the oven. **Finally**, it's time to eat!



# Which paragraph is in chronological order?

Pennsylvania has many historic sites. You can visit Revolutionary war sites, like Valley Forge. You can also visit important locations from the Civil War, like Gettysburg. Finally, you can also see the site of the first oil well in Titusville. Pennsylvania has many neat places to visit!

Through the ages, Pennsylvania has seen many interesting events. The state was founded in 1681 by William Penn. Later, Pennsylvania was the site of important Revolutionary War battles. After that, Pennsylvania was home to new factories during the Industrial Revolution. Today, Pennsylvania continues to make history.

# Which paragraph is in chronological order?

This is the paragraph in chronological order. Can you find the clue words that show this order?

Through the ages, Pennsylvania has seen many interesting events. The state was founded in 1681 by William Penn. Later, Pennsylvania was the site of important Revolutionary War battles. After that, Pennsylvania was home to new factories during the Industrial Revolution. Today, Pennsylvania continues to make history.

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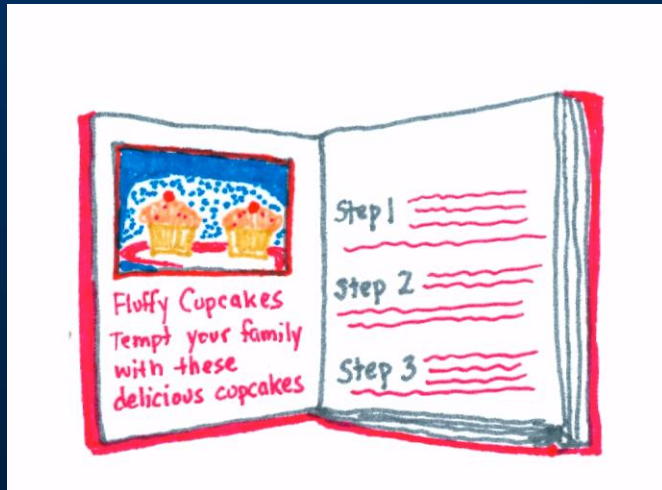
Through the ages, Pennsylvania has seen many interesting events. The state was founded in 1681 by William Penn. Later, Pennsylvania was the site of important Revolutionary War battles. After that, Pennsylvania was home to new factories during the Industrial Revolution. Today, Pennsylvania continues to make history.

# Think about it!

- What is a structure?
- What does *chronological order* mean?
- What are some clue words that show chronological order?



# Another text structure



- But what if an author doesn't want to show how something happened in sequence?
- The author would need to use another text structure!

# Compare and contrast



Suppose an author wanted to explain how these two birds are similar and different.



Chronological order wouldn't work---there is no order of events. The author would need to use **compare and contrast**.

# Compare and contrast



The cardinal and the goldfinch are two common birds. Both are brightly colored. Both are common at birdfeeders. But the birds have some differences. The male cardinal is a bright red, while the male goldfinch is yellow. Cardinals like shrubs and trees, while goldfinches prefer open meadows.

# Compare and contrast clue words



When authors use the text structure of compare and contrast, they often use special clue words to show this text structure.

Can you find the clue words in the paragraph?





# Can you find the clue words?



The cardinal and the goldfinch are two common birds. Both are brightly colored. Both are common at birdfeeders. But the birds have some differences. The male cardinal is a bright red, while the male goldfinch is yellow. Cardinals like shrubs and trees, while goldfinches prefer open meadows.



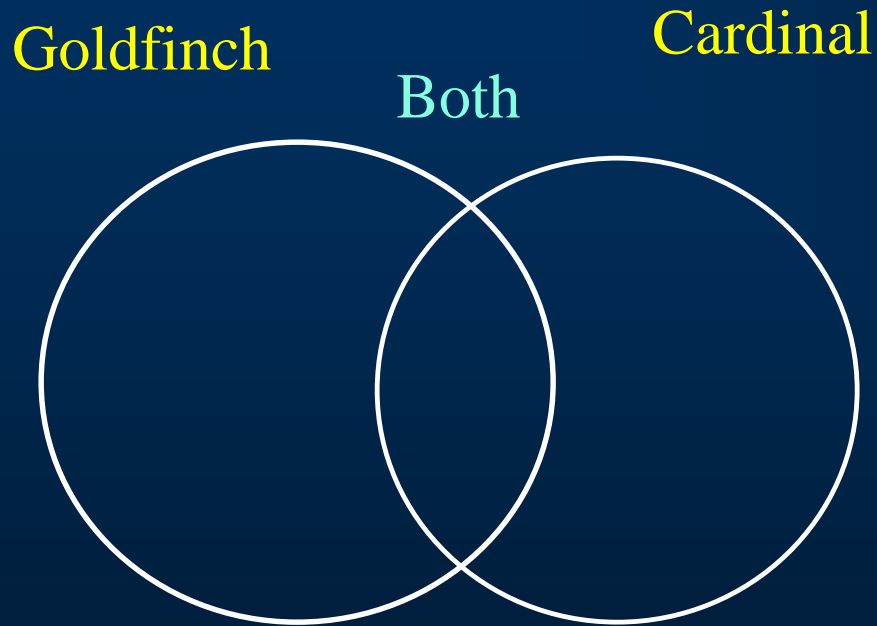
# Here they are!



The cardinal and the goldfinch are two common birds. **Both** are brightly colored. **Both** are common at birdfeeders. **But** the birds have some differences. The male cardinal is a bright red, **while** the male goldfinch is yellow. Cardinals like shrubs and trees, **while** goldfinches prefer open meadows.



# Graphic Organizers



Details from a text written as compare and contrast can be organized as a Venn diagram.

# Graphic Organizers

We can also use a chart to show the details.

	Goldfinch	Cardinal
Colors		
Habitat		

# Graphic Organizers

- Can you explain the difference between chronological order and compare and contrast?
- How can clue words help you as a reader?



# Another text structure

Sometimes, a writer wants to explain how one event leads to another.

This kind of text structure is called **cause and effect**.



# Cause and Effect

When authors write paragraphs to show causes and effects, they use words like *cause*, *effect*, *as a result*, *consequently*, and *so*.



# Can you find the clue words?

The night's snowstorm had many effects. People were out shoveling snow from their sidewalks. The power lines were draped with ice. Snow plows drove down every street. Children were the happiest of all. The unexpected snow caused school to be cancelled!



# Can you find the clue words?

The night's snowstorm had many **effects**. People were out shoveling snow from their sidewalks. The power lines were draped with ice. Snow plows drove down every street. Children were the happiest of all. The unexpected snow **caused** school to be cancelled!

# More with cause and effect

Baby painted turtles spend all winter in their nests. They have special chemicals in their blood that can keep their blood from freezing. As a result, baby painted turtles can survive freezing temperatures!

Can you find the causes and effects in this paragraph?



# More with cause and effect

Baby painted turtles spend all winter in their nests. **They have special chemicals in their blood that can keep their blood from freezing** As a result, baby painted turtles can survive freezing temperatures!

**This is the cause.**



# More with cause and effect

Baby painted turtles spend all winter in their nests. They have special chemicals in their blood that can keep their blood from freezing. **As a result, baby painted turtles can survive freezing temperatures!**

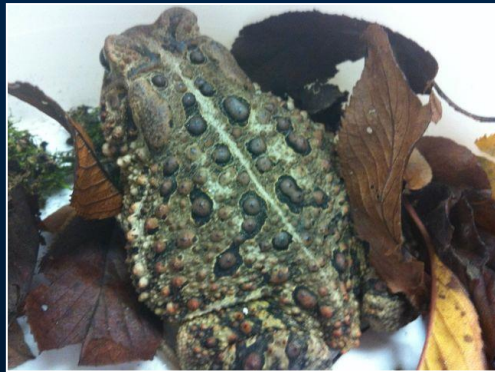


**This is the effect.**

# Review

Which text structure tells about how things are similar and different?

Compare and contrast



How does the text structure of compare and contrast relate to these pictures of a frog and a toad?

# Review

Which text structure explains how things happen in time order?

## Chronological Order



How do these pictures relate to chronological order?

# Problem and Solution Text Structure

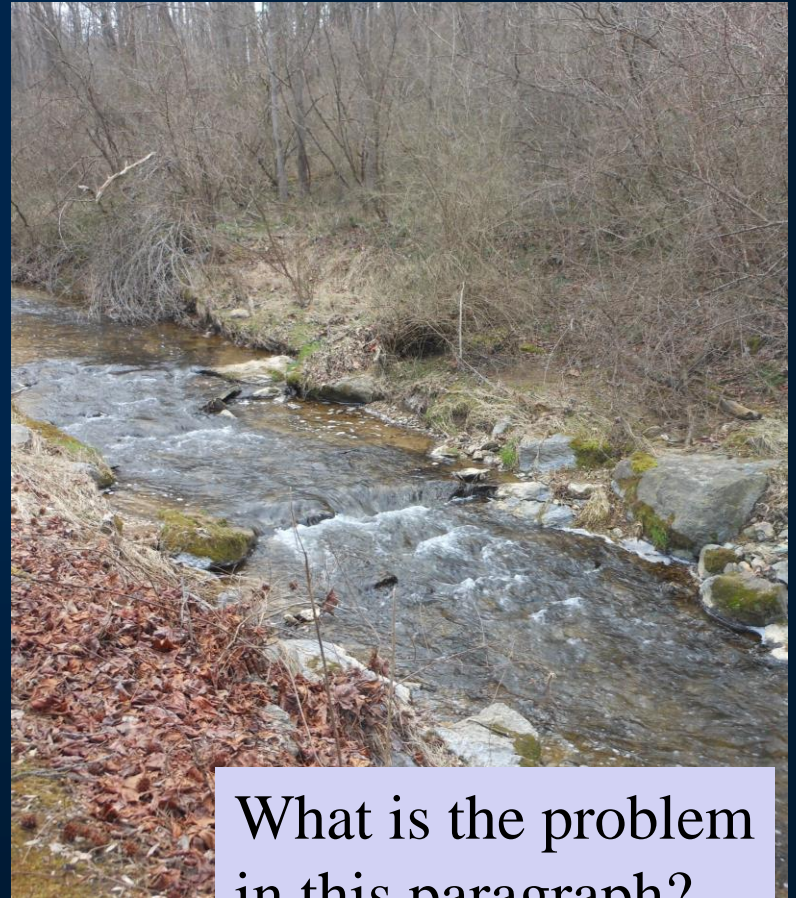
Sometimes, an author will want to explain a problem, and then show one or more solutions.

This kind of text structure is called *problem and solution*.



# An example of problem and solution

Heavy rains can cause flooding in small streams. For weather forecasters and local authorities, this flooding can be difficult to predict. Fortunately, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) has more than 7,000 streamgages that measure water flow. These streamgages help scientists to monitor water levels in good and bad weather.

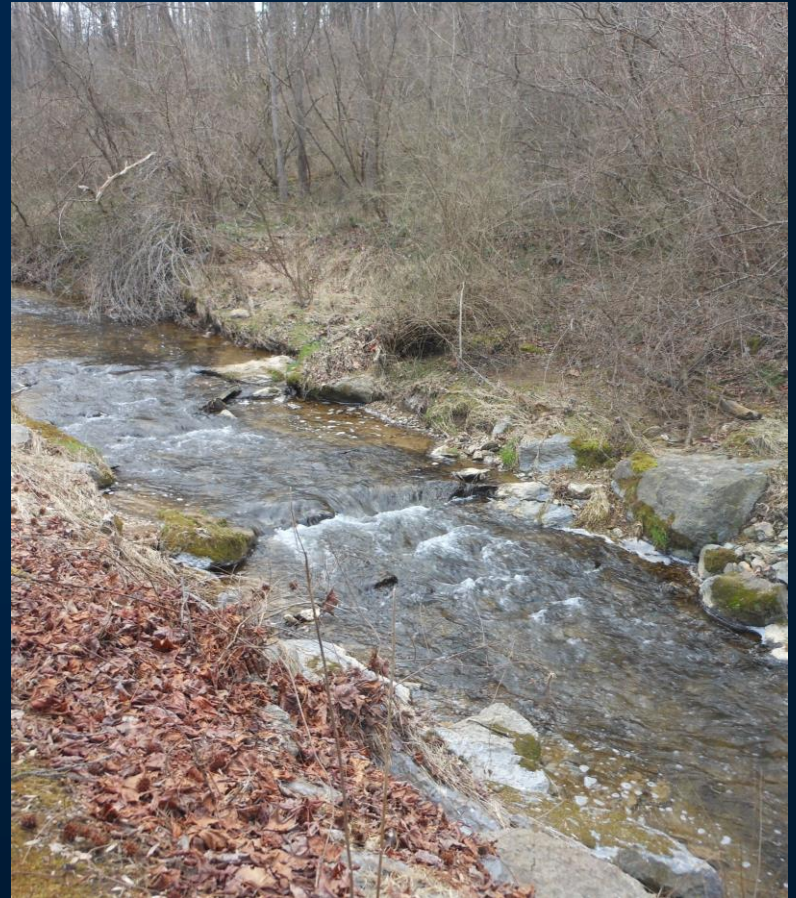


What is the problem in this paragraph?



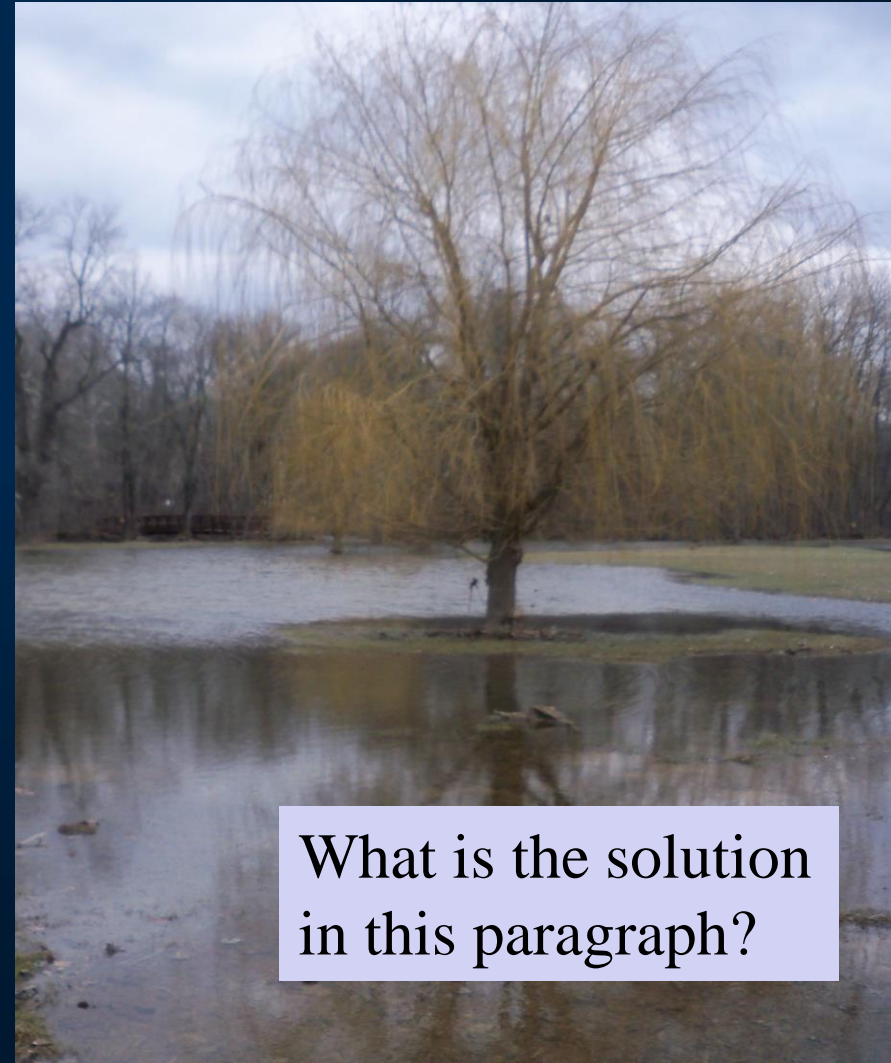
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# An example of problem and solution

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What is the solution in this paragraph?

# An example of problem and solution

Heavy rains can cause flooding in small streams. For weather forecasters and local authorities, this flooding can be difficult to predict. Fortunately, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) has more than 7,000 streamgages that measure water flow. These streamgages help scientists to monitor water levels in good and bad weather.



# Problem and Solution

Often, authors will signal problem and solution structure with clue words like **problem** and **solution**.



# Problem and Solution

Synonyms for **problem** include *difficulty, struggle, uncertainty, worry, threat, and trouble*



Synonyms for **solution** include *possibility, hope, bright spot, answer, and future*

# Can you find the problems and solutions?



What is the problem?

Brown marmorated stinkbugs have caused many problems since they were accidentally introduced to North America. They damage fruit, bother people, and harm crops. Scientists are trying to find a solution. One promising possibility is a species of wasp that originally comes from Asia. This wasp is a predator of stinkbugs. Scientists hope that this wasp could solve the stinkbug problem.

# Can you find the problems and solutions?



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# Can you find the problems and solutions?



What is the solution?

Brown marmorated stinkbugs have caused many problems since they were accidentally introduced to North America. They damage fruit, bother people, and harm crops. Scientists are trying to find a solution. One promising possibility is a species of wasp that originally comes from Asia. This wasp is a predator of stinkbugs. Scientists hope that this wasp could solve the stinkbug problem.



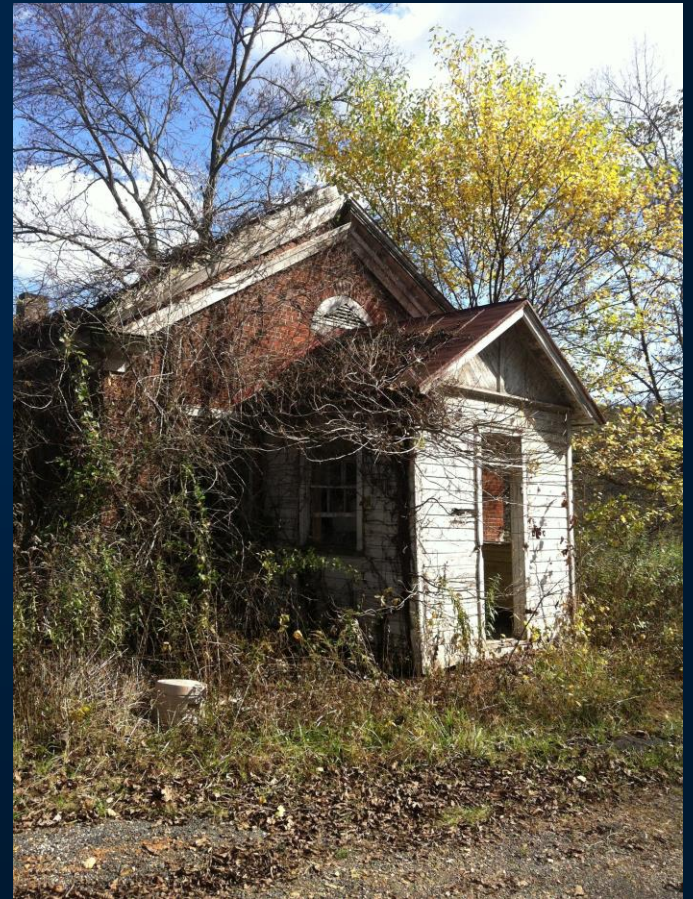
# Can you find the problems and solutions?



Brown marmorated stinkbugs have caused many problems since they were accidentally introduced to North America. They damage fruit, bother people, and harm crops. Scientists are trying to find a solution. **One promising possibility is a species of wasp that originally comes from Asia. This wasp is a predator of stinkbugs.** Scientists hope that this wasp could solve the stinkbug problem.

# Text structures we've learned so far

- Chronological order
- Compare and contrast
- Cause and effect
- Problem and solution



# Match the clue words!

Can you figure out the text structure that these clue words point to?

however, on the other  
hand, similarity, like,  
unlike

Compare and  
contrast

# Match the clue words!

Can you figure out the text structure that these clue words point to?

as a result,  
consequently,  
therefore, so, cause,  
effect

Cause and effect

# Match the clue words!

Can you figure out the text structure that these clue words point to?

problem, solution,  
threat, difficulty, hope,  
answer, possibility

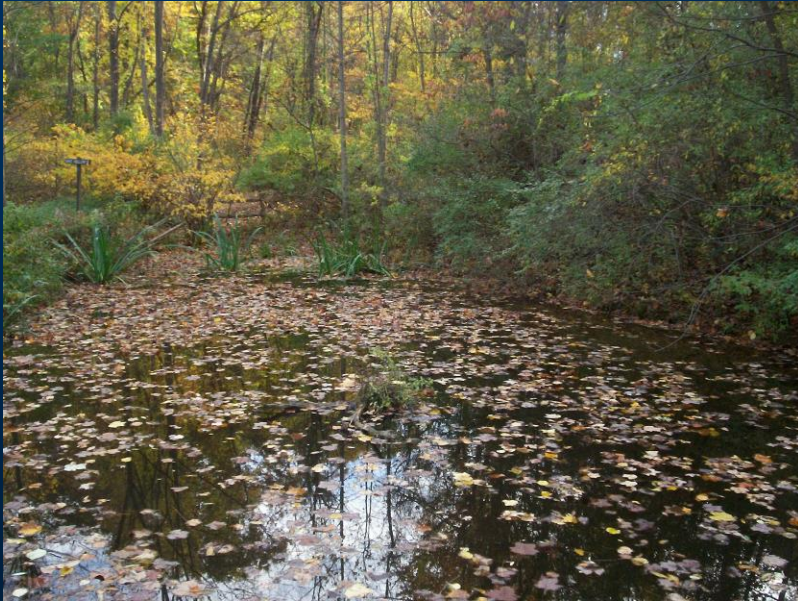
Problem and  
solution

# Description

This text structure is used to describe a location, idea, or event.



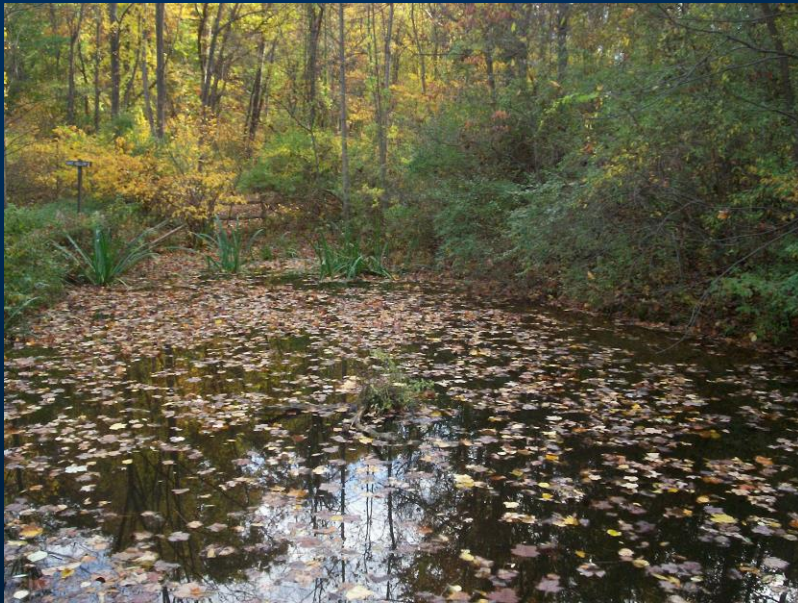
# Description



The pond was a beautiful place to visit. The falling leaves, all different colors, decorated the surface of the water. At the edges of the pond, small wildflowers grew. The golden forest glowed faintly in the distance.

# Description

Main idea

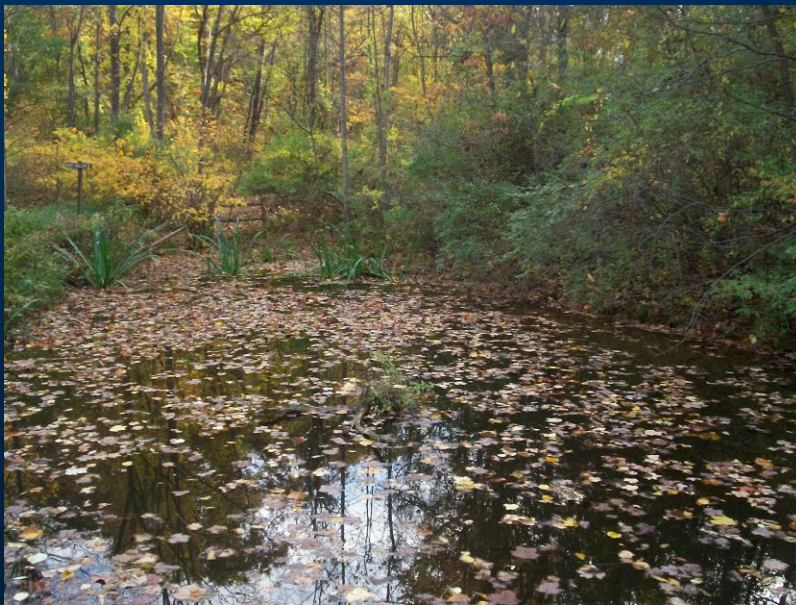


*The pond was a beautiful place to visit. The falling leaves, all different colors, decorated the surface of the water. At the edges of the pond, small wildflowers grew. The golden forest glowed faintly in the distance.*



# Description

Main idea



*The pond was a beautiful place to visit. The falling leaves, all different colors, decorated the surface of the water. At the edges of the pond, small wildflowers grew. The golden forest glowed faintly in the distance.*

*All of the other sentences support the main idea and describe the pond.*

# Description

Clue words in these paragraphs may include:

*One reason, another reason, and for example*



# Description

These paragraphs may also include spatial order words to show how details relate to each other:

*next to, by, along, in, above, and so forth*



# Now it's your turn!

On the next few slides, you will read some paragraphs about the Great Chicago Fire.

Your task is to identify the text structure for each one.



# What's the text structure?

- Chronological order
- Compare and contrast
- Cause and effect
- Problem and solution
- Description

Daniel Sullivan was the first to notice the flames coming from the O'Leary barn at around 8:30 pm on October 8. A problem with the alarm box made it impossible for the people in the area to call for the fire department. By 9:30 pm, the entire block was blazing. In another 3 hours, there were fires all over Chicago. The heavy wind coming from the lake only made the fire bigger. It would be another day before the fire would be completely out. By that time, 17,500 buildings had been burned.

# What's the text structure?

- Chronological order
- Compare and contrast
- Problem and solution

Daniel Sullivan was the first to notice the flames coming from the O'Leary barn at around 8:30 pm on October 8. A problem with the alarm box made it impossible for the people in the area to call for the fire department. By 9:30 pm, the entire block was blazing. In another 3 hours, there were fires all over Chicago. The heavy wind coming from the lake only made the fire bigger. It would be another day before the fire would be completely out. By that time, 17,500 buildings had been burned.

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- Chronological order

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# What's the text structure?

- Chronological order

Daniel Sullivan was the *first* to notice the flames coming from the O'Leary barn *at around 8:30 pm* on October 8. A problem with the alarm box made it impossible for the people in the area to call for the fire department. *By 9:30 pm*, the entire block was blazing. *In another 3 hours*, there were fires all over Chicago. The heavy wind coming from the lake only made the fire bigger. It would be *another day* before the fire would be completely out. By that time, 17,500 buildings had been burned.



# What's the text structure?

- Chronological order
- Notice how the paragraph shows how events happen in time order

Daniel Sullivan was the *first* to notice the flames coming from the O'Leary barn *at around 8:30 pm* on October 8. A problem with the alarm box made it impossible for the people in the area to call for the fire department. *By 9:30 pm*, the entire block was blazing. *In another 3 hours*, there were fires all over Chicago. The heavy wind coming from the lake only made the fire bigger. It would be *another day* before the fire would be completely out. By that time, 17,500 buildings had been burned.

# What's the text structure?

Understanding that this text is written in chronological order can help you to understand how the Great Fire started.

Daniel Sullivan was the *first* to notice the flames coming from the O'Leary barn *at around 8:30 pm* on October 8. A problem with the alarm box made it impossible for the people in the area to call for the fire department. *By 9:30 pm*, the entire block was blazing. *In another 3 hours*, there were fires all over Chicago. The heavy wind coming from the lake only made the fire bigger. It would be *another day* before the fire would be completely out. By that time, 17,500 buildings had been burned.

# Try another!

- Chronological order
- Compare and contrast
- Cause and effect
- Problem and solution
- Description

Why was the Great Chicago Fire so disastrous? After all, Chicago had fire departments and fire alarms. One reason for the terrible fire is that the alarm malfunctioned. The local fire company noticed the fire by accident as it was returning from another fire. As another problem, a watchman who saw the flames directed other fire companies to a location that was nearly a mile away from the fire. Because of these two problems, a fire that could have been controlled rapidly spread across the city.

# Try another!

- Compare and contrast
- Cause and effect
- Problem and solution

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# Try another!

- Cause and effect

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# Try another!

- Cause and effect
- Notice how the causes (in blue) lead to the effect (in yellow)

Why was the Great Chicago Fire so disastrous? After all, Chicago had fire departments and fire alarms. *One reason for the terrible fire is that the alarm malfunctioned.* The local fire company noticed the fire by accident as it was returning from another fire. *As another problem,* a watchman who saw the flames directed other fire companies to a location that was nearly a mile away from the fire. *Because of these two problems, a fire that could have been controlled rapidly spread across the city.*

# What text structure is here?

- Chronological order
- Compare and contrast
- Cause and effect
- Problem and solution
- Description

After the fire, thousands of people were left homeless. Many escaped the fire with nothing except the clothes on their backs. Providing all of these people with food, clean water, and shelter was a huge task. Luckily, the city quickly formed a Relief and Aid Society. This group started giving out the food donations that were pouring in from other cities. The society built places for people to live, gathered the tools that people needed to rebuild their houses, and even vaccinated 64,000 people against smallpox.

# What text structure is here?

- Chronological order
- Cause and effect
- Problem and solution

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# What text structure is here?

- Problem and solution

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# What text structure is here?

- Problem and solution
- Here is the *problem*

After the fire, thousands of people were left homeless. Many escaped the fire with nothing except the clothes on their backs. *Providing all of these people with food, clean water, and shelter was a huge task.* Luckily, the city quickly formed a Relief and Aid Society. This group started giving out the food donations that were pouring in from other cities. The society built places for people to live, gathered the tools that people needed to rebuild their houses, and even vaccinated 64,000 people against smallpox.

# What text structure is here?

- Problem and solution
- Here is the *solution*

After the fire, thousands of people were left homeless. Many escaped the fire with nothing except the clothes on their backs. *Providing all of these people with food, clean water, and shelter was a huge task.* Luckily, the city quickly formed a Relief and Aid Society. This group started giving out the food donations that were pouring in from other cities. The society built places for people to live, gathered the tools that people needed to rebuild their houses, and even vaccinated 64,000 people against smallpox.

# Can you find the text structure?

- Chronological order
- Compare and contrast
- Cause and effect
- Problem and solution
- Description

Chicago changed in many ways after the fire. Before the fire, most of the buildings were less than five stories high. The buildings that were constructed after the fire, however, were some of the first skyscrapers in the country. Before the fire, most of the houses were made of wood. After the fire, people chose to build their houses out of stone or brick. There were changes in where people lived, as well. The poor people in the city lived close to the center of the city before the fire. After the fire, they moved into neighborhoods that were farther away from the downtown area.

# Can you find the text structure?

- Compare and contrast
- Cause and effect
- Description

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# Can you find the text structure?

- Compare and contrast

Notice how this paragraph is comparing Chicago BEFORE the fire to Chicago AFTER the fire.

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# Can you find the text structure?

- Compare and contrast

Notice how this paragraph is comparing

Chicago

BEFORE the

fire to Chicago

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# One more paragraph!

By Monday night, the town of Chicago was burning. People described it as terrible, but amazing. The flames were brighter than anything people had ever seen. The harsh winds swept the fire across the city with terrible speed. For many who watched, it was a sight to remember for the rest of their lives.

- Chronological order
- Compare and contrast
- Cause and effect
- Problem and solution
- Description

# One more paragraph!

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- Compare and contrast
- Cause and effect
- Description

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- Description

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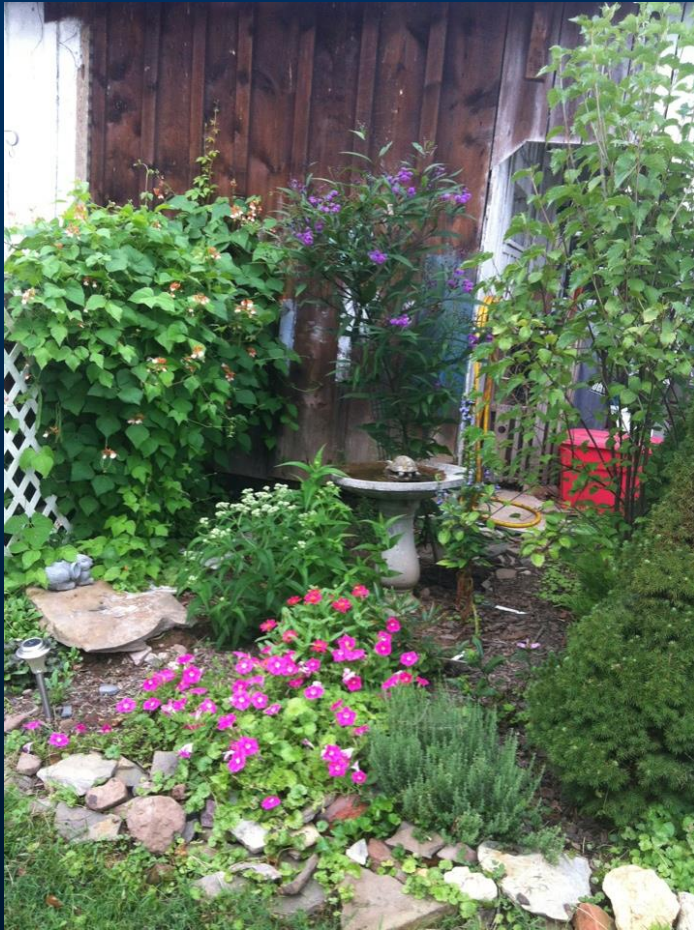
- Description
- Notice the main idea that drives the description.

# Reflect on what you have learned



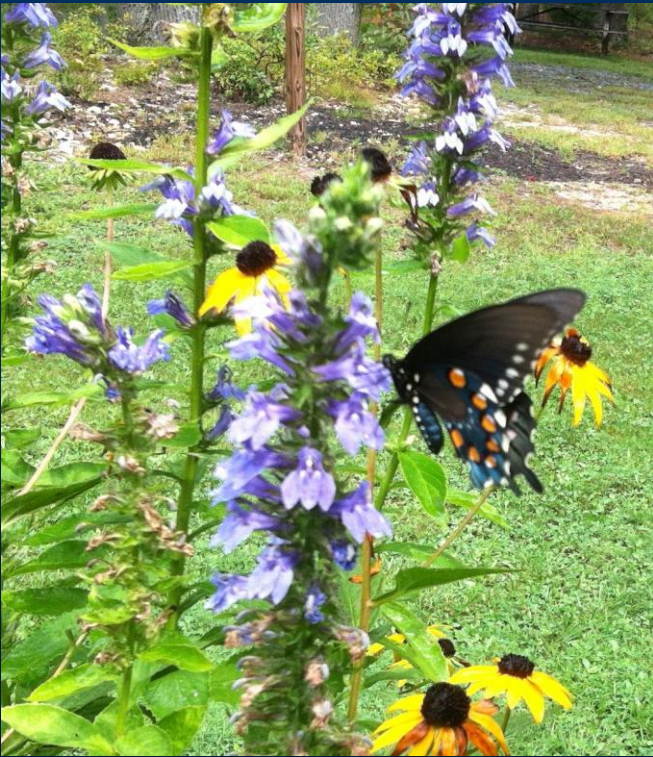
Which text structure  
do you find most  
interesting to read?  
Why?

# Reflect on what you have learned



Usually, authors use many different text structures in one text. Can you explain an example of how two text structures could work together?

# Reflect on what you have learned



What other questions do you have about text structures?

Adapted from  
[emilykissner.blogspot.com](http://emilykissner.blogspot.com)