Patterns of Organization

Objectives:
Recognize various patterns of organization
Identify transitions and other clues to recognize patterns

Organizational Patterns

• Chronological
• Narrative
• Definition
• Classification
• Cause and effect
• Process
• Problem and solution
• argument

Patterns

• Patterns of organization are ways a writer chooses to organize his or her materials to help us understand the relationships between ideas.

Transitions

• Transitions are words or phrases that link ideas and/or identify relationships.

Chronological Order and Narration

• Chronological order organizes information in time order.
  - Chronological order is a pattern used in history.
• Narration organizes information to tell a story.
  - Narration is a similar pattern using chronological or time order to answer the question, “What happened?”

Transitions and Clues

• Transitional words used in chronological and narrative patterns are then, when, after, before, while, during, earlier, meanwhile, until, now, finally, next, and last.

• (Alexander 231)

Definition and Classification

• Definition is a pattern of organization that answers the question, “What is it?”
• Classification is information organized into categories or groups.

Transitions for Definitions

• Could be defined as
• Refers to
• Means (Alexander 234)

Transitions for Classification

• First type
• Second kind
• Third variety
• Fourth category
• Another group (Alexander 234)

Cause and Effect

• Cause
  - information that answers the question, “Why?”
• Effect
  - Information that explains results or outcomes
• Causal analysis
  - a lengthy discussion of causes or reasons for an event or trend

Transitions for Cause-and-Effect

• Causes
  - The reason why, because, and since
   - therefore, a result, subsequently, so, hence, consequently (Alexander 241)

Comparison and Contrast

• Comparison is information that explains how two things or people are similar.
• Contrast is information that explains how two things or people are different.

Transitions

• Transitional words used with comparisons are similarly, likewise, also, alike, same, and in comparison.
• Transitional words used with contrast are yet, contrasts, nevertheless, in contrast, on the other hand, however, but, conversely. (Alexander 242)

Process
• Process is information organized to show how something is done step-by-step. An organizational pattern that answers the question, “How?” and “In what sequence?”

Transitions
• Transitions used to identify process are how to, in the process of, the steps to follow.
• Transitions to identify steps are begins, continues, end, first, second, and third. (Alexander 245)

Problem and Solution
• Problem
  - In problem solution organization, a writer first presents a problem and explains in detail the issue that needs to be resolved.
• Solution
  - A way of resolving issues or solving problems. (Alexander 252)

Transitions
• To identify a problem, writers use terms like problem, need, difficulty, dilemma, challenge, and issue.
• To present solutions, writers use terms like propose, suggest, indicate, solve, improve, rectify, plan, and respond to a need. (Alexander 253)

Argument
• Argument is information intended to convince a reader to believe or act in a certain way.

Transitions
• Arguments use terms like agree, in support of, therefore, persuade, convince, thus. (Alexander 256)