UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATION
Good Reading means more than just recalling facts. It takes many skills. One skill is the ability to see how the writer organizes facts.
Writers organize details in a pattern. They try to use a pattern that suits the topic. They also want the pattern to help them achieve their purpose for writing. Writers do not let their thoughts wander aimlessly. They try to think logically.
There are six key patterns for details:

- Simple listing
- Order of importance
- Chronological order
- Spatial development
- Cause and effect
- Comparison and contrast
A simple list of details is the easiest pattern for the writer to use. A simple listing is the least structured pattern. One fact or detail after another is listed to support the main idea.

For example:

The Supreme Court has nine judges. They are appointed by the president with the approval of the Senate. They serve as justices for life. One of the justices is selected to head the court. He or she is the chief justice. The other justices are called associate justices.
When writers want to stress some details over others, they use order of importance. Major ideas call for more emphasis than minor ideas. Usually, the most important detail is stated first. Minor ones follow.

For example:

Three kinds of honeybees live in a beehive: the queen, the workers, and the drones, or male bees. They are divided into these classes by the type of work they do. At the top of the bee social ladder is the queen. The only job the queen bee does is lay eggs. The workers are really other females. They defend the hive and bring food to it. Drones are the bottom class. They do no work. They mate with the queen and so guarantee that the hive will continue to exist.
Time order, or chronological order, is used for history, novels, and news stories. Anyone who writes to tell “what happened when” uses time order. Events are usually stated in the order in which they occurred.

For example:

Florence Nightingale was born on May 12, 1820. She lived with her family on a large estate in England. When she was 16, she decided to become a nurse and was determined to improve health care in England. During the Crimean War, which began in 1853, Nightingale organized hospital care for wounded soldiers. Her efforts saved countless lives.
The word *spatial* refers to space. This is the form most often used to describe. The writer states details as they are seen from a vantage point. The point is to shape the description so that the reader may follow it.

For example:

Some people live in strange places, but about the strangest of all is a town of 1500 souls high in the crater of an extinct volcano on the island of Saba in the West Indies. The island, quite barren on its slopes, rises steeply out of the ocean. To land on it is so hazardous few pilots care to take the risk. Another discouraging feature is the climb up the “Ladder,” an almost vertical flight of stone steps 800 feet high.
CAUSE AND EFFECT

- A cause is an event that makes another event occur. An effect is the result. The cause brings about the effect.

For example:

As a result of the Great Depression, Hollywood flourished. Cheap tickets, free time, and the lure of fantasy brought 60 million to 80 million Americans to the movies each week.
A comparison shows how things are alike. Comparison is very good for explaining the unfamiliar. A contrast shows how things differ. To enrich your understanding of a topic, items are paired and their similarities or differences are listed.

For example:

Although both artists lived in Spain, Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali had styles that differed dramatically. Picasso depicted his subjects in abstract terms whereas Dali painted the stark reality of the image.
ADDITIONAL PATTERNS

- We have covered six frequently used patterns of organizations but there are others, such as:

  - Classification
  - Definition
  - Description
  - Example
  - Problem-solution
  - Process
  - Reasons (reasons why)
REMEMBER

- Being familiar and able to recognize the common patterns of organization will help you be a more efficient reader.
REFERENCES

Breaking Through: College Reading, Eighth Edition, by Brenda Smith