

Choices for Structure in Informational Writing

Structure	How to Use It	When to Use It
Description	Introduce the topic/idea and further explain with facts and other information.	When you want to give an overview When you want to introduce a new topic or idea When you need to share an important collection of information
Cause and effect	Start with a cause, maybe as your topic sentence, and then follow with sentences and graphics that show the effect.	When you want to show how one thing impacts another When you want to show how something improved or worsened When you want to show the outcomes of certain events
Problem/solution	Make the problem or misunderstanding clear right off the bat. Then share a variety of solutions or give great detail, maybe in a step-by-step, to one big solution.	When you want to show how something could possibly be solved When you want to correct misunderstandings with facts When you want to show how a challenge was resolved
Compare and contrast	Pick two topics or ideas that you want to compare. Keep the topics near each other so the reader can look back and forth. This might be on one page from paragraph to paragraph or two pages next to each other.	When you want to share the similarities and differences of a topic or idea When it is hard to describe without sharing something very different When you want to show the "before and after"
Chronological	You may want to number the steps, use a timeline, or write this as a story.	When you want to share events as they happened When you want to show how to do something When you want to tell the story about something rather than give only facts on it