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# Organizational Structure

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**Skill 17:** The student will identify the organizational structure of a nonfictional passage.

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## Instructional Preparation

Duplicate the following (one per student unless otherwise indicated):

- “How Nonfiction Is Organized” reference sheet
- “How Is This Organized?” handout

Prepare a transparency of the following:

- “How Nonfiction Is Organized” reference sheet
- “How Is This Organized?” handout

## Recall

Before beginning the **Review** component, facilitate a discussion based on the following questions:

- \* What is nonfiction? (*Appropriate responses are as follows: writing that describes something that is not made-up; writing that is about something real.*)
- \* What are some patterns of organization found in nonfiction? (*Appropriate responses are as follows: comparison; description; time order; problem and solution; cause and effect.*)
- \* Why is it important to know how a nonfiction piece of writing is organized? (*An appropriate response is as follows: it can help you understand the passage.*)

## Review

1. Distribute copies of the “How Nonfiction Is Organized” reference sheet and display the transparency. Ask volunteers to read aloud each section of the reference sheet. After each section has been read, ask students to give an example of each organization type from a nonfiction passage they have read recently.
2. Distribute copies of the “How Is This Organized” handout and display the transparency. Read “Elizabeth Blackwell” aloud as the students follow along silently. Then ask the following questions:
  - \* How is this passage organized? (*Time order*)
  - \* How do you know? (*An appropriate response is as follows: it gives the events of a person’s life in the order in which they happened.*)

Model for students how to write their answers in the appropriate boxes on the handout. Have the students do the same on their copy.

# Organizational Structure *(cont.)*

3. Read the “April Fools’ Day” passage aloud as the students follow along silently. Then ask the following questions:

- \* How is this passage organized? (*Description*)
- \* How do you know? (*An appropriate response is as follows: it describes how a holiday came to be.*)

Write the appropriate responses in the corresponding boxes on the handout. Have the students do the same on their copy.

4. Have the students get into groups of three to complete the remainder of the handout. The students may discuss their answers, but each student is responsible for completing his or her own copy of the handout.
5. Return to a whole-group setting and ask volunteers to share their answers for the remaining three passages. Record the appropriate information on the transparency while discussing how each passage is organized.

## Wrap-up

To conclude this lesson, have the students use the reverse side of their “How Nonfiction Is Organized” reference sheet to respond to the following prompt:

- \* Write a short paragraph using one of the nonfiction organization strategies we have discussed today.

Allow adequate time for the students to write their responses. Ask several volunteers to read their paragraph aloud. Ask another volunteer to tell how the paragraph is organized and how he or she knows this. Use the responses as an opportunity to review the different ways to organize nonfiction.

# Organizational Structure *(cont.)*

## How Nonfiction Is Organized

The author puts events in the order in which they happen.

Time Order

Description

The author describes a subject by using traits, features, and examples.

The author tells how two or more things are alike and/or how they are different.

Comparison

Cause and Effect

The author gives reasons for an action, event, or decision and the results.

The author states a problem and then gives ways to solve the problem.

Problem and Solution

# Organizational Structure *(cont.)*

## How Is This Organized?

### Elizabeth Blackwell

Today there are a lot of female doctors. Your doctor might even be a woman. However, did you know there was a time when there were no female doctors? That all changed with Elizabeth Blackwell.

Blackwell was born February 3, 1821, in England. She was the third of nine children. In 1832, her family moved to America.

In 1847, Blackwell tried to get into medical school. Sixteen schools would not accept her, but Geneva College in New York let her in. Blackwell did well in school. She was granted a degree on January 23, 1849. She was the first woman to get a medical doctor's degree. At the time, doctors had to have more training, yet many hospitals would not let her train. She ended up going to Paris. Hospitals there did not accept her. This was because she was a woman. Then she went to London, where she was able to study with a doctor.

Later, Blackwell went back to New York City. She opened a practice in her own home. At first she had only three patients. In just two years, she opened a bigger practice. It was for poor women and children. In 1857, she opened a hospital. This hospital helped the poor too. It served as training ground for new female doctors. In 1868, the Women's Medical College opened. This was the first school that taught women to be doctors.

Blackwell felt she had done a lot in America. She went to England in 1869. She wanted to help women doctors there. However, her health was getting worse. By 1879, she had given up her practice. Elizabeth Blackwell died on May 31, 1910.

**How is this organized?**

**How do you know?**