

# PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION

## WHY STUDY PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION?

Patterns of organization indicate the direction and blueprint of the author's thinking. The point or main idea the author wants to get across is inexorably linked to the pattern. Authors select organization patterns that reflect the purpose of the communication and best present the main ideas and the supporting details. For college students, recognizing the patterns of organization helps the comprehension of reading materials, leading to improved understanding and to better test scores.

The following are examples for ten different patterns of organization.

1. Simple listing: I attended Georgia State University (GSU) for many different reasons.
2. Classification: The disciplines at GSU are organized into seven colleges, each of which has many departments that offer a variety of courses within a particular discipline.
3. Definition: A university is an institution that grants both undergraduate and doctorate degrees.
4. Description: GSU is a loose connection of tall buildings located in downtown Atlanta.
5. Time order, sequence, or narrative: My first day at GSU started with a late shuttle bus ride and then things got worse before they got better.
6. Comparison-contrast: GSU which is located in downtown Atlanta is vastly different from its sister institution in the state, the University of Georgia (UGA), which is located in the small town of Athens.
7. Cause and effect: Because I wanted to major in business and live in a big city, I chose to attend GSU.
8. Generalization and example: The term *urban university* goes beyond a geographic location and extends, for example, into a university's commitment, philosophy, and programs.
9. Addition: In addition to the previous information provided about GSU, the university also has a strong public policy program addressing environmental issues through government regulations.
10. Location or spatial order: The GSU Administration Building is two blocks east of Peachtree Street overlooking Hurt Park and situated beside the new Student Center.

## Pattern Exercise: Varying Organizational Patterns for Message

Write a topic sentence that uses each of the ten organizational patterns listed. Underline the transitions used.

The subject of each of the ten main idea statements will be:

### **Information about My College**

1. Simple listing
2. Classification
3. Definition
4. Description
5. Time order, sequence, or narrative
6. Comparison-contrast
7. Cause and effect
8. Generalization and example
9. Addition
10. Location or spatial order