

Readers use the **organization** of a text to understand what the text is about. Organization is the way an author chooses to share information.



To know a text's **organization**, pay attention to the words the author uses.

This text has a question-and-answer organization.

Name: _____


SCIENCE
Getting to Know Snakes

Getting to Know SNAKES

Say the word snake among a group of friends, and you'll probably see panic on at least a few faces. Learning about these legless reptiles can lessen the fear of them. Read about where snakes live, how they move and hunt, and their role in nature. Finally, learn how to stay safe around snakes.

→ **Where do snakes live?**
Snakes live on almost every continent, but mostly in warm climates. In places with cold winters, snakes stay underground and conserve energy until spring. They move and eat very little during cold months. This is because snakes, like other reptiles, need sunlight or another heat source to keep their bodies warm. Even during warmer months, it is common to find snakes napping on rocks in the sun. They may also rest under a warm rock or underground where a patch of soil has been warmed by sunlight.

→ **How do snakes move around?**
Snakes get around by using the muscles and scales of their long, limbless bodies. They propel themselves forward or sideways using their strong muscles. Their scales help them grip surfaces and also protect their bodies as they move over rough ground. All that motion wears out the scales, though, so snakes grow replacement scales. This is



Organization of Text

Key Words and Phrases to Look for

Cause and Effect	leads to, result, cause, effect, impact, outcome
Sequence	first, second, third, fourth, etc..., next, then, after, before, last, finally
Compare and Contrast	like, alike, in contrast, similarly, different, unlike, on the other hand
Main Idea and Details	for example, also, one reason is, for instance, specifically
Question and Answer	who, what, where, when, why, how

Organization

By looking at how a passage or selection is organized, students can better understand the author's intent, as well as predict what information is likely to appear later in the text. Texts are often organized sequentially, around main ideas and details, according to causes and effects, or by comparison and contrast.

DAY 1

Reproduce the *Organization* visual aid and distribute it to students. Then introduce the *Organization* strategy to students. Explain: **Authors can organize nonfiction information by listing problems and solutions, causes and effects, or main ideas and details. They can also compare similarities and differences or tell a story in sequence.** Tell students they are going to read about an infamous fire in a New York clothing factory. Say: **As you read, think about the sequence and the causes and effects of this tragic event. Pay attention to how the author has organized the important details about the fire and its aftermath.** When students have finished reading the passage, direct them to complete the strategy and skill practice activities. Review the answers together.

DAY 2

Remind students of the *Organization* strategy. Tell students they are going to read a passage about World War II. Remind students of the various ways a passage can be organized (by cause and effect, problem and solution, compare and contrast, main idea and details, or sequence). Say: **Good readers use the organization of a passage to help figure out what the author wants you to know. Pay attention to the focus of each paragraph.** Have students read the passage. When students have finished, direct them to complete the strategy and skill practice activities. Review the answers together.

DAY 3

Remind students of the *Organization* strategy. Say: **The author of this passage has divided information about the Puppies Behind Bars program into sections that have their own headings. As you read, think about the main points under each heading.** Have students read the passage independently. When students have finished, direct them to complete the strategy and skill practice activities. Review the answers together.

DAY 4

Remind students of the *Organization* strategy. Explain: **Some authors write about historical events by using chronological order. What should you look for to track the chronological order in a passage?** (dates, time-order words) Remind students that some authors use general time periods instead of exact days or years. Say: **Even if an author does not list specific dates, you can still use general time periods to keep track of the order of events.** Have students read the passage. When students have finished reading, direct them to complete the strategy practice activity on a separate sheet of paper. Have volunteers share their timelines with the class. Then direct students to complete the skill practice activity. Review the answers together.

DAY 5

Remind students of the *Organization* strategy. Say: **You are going to read a fiction story that is organized by problem and solution. Look for the problem at the beginning of the passage. Look for the solution toward the end.** Have students read the passage independently. When students have finished reading, direct them to complete the strategy and skill practice activities. Review the answers together.

READ THE PASSAGE Look for the causes and effects of a fire at a clothing factory.

The Factory Fire

New York factories in the early 1900s were busy and dangerous places to work. Most factories were housed in brick buildings that were overly hot in the summer and extremely cold in the winter. Workers at the time often toiled for more than 12 hours each day, receiving few breaks and no overtime pay. The floors were crowded with people and equipment, and the doors were often locked to prevent employees from leaving early. In fact, most factory owners and managers mistreated those who asked for changes—or outright fired them. The people in charge believed that they did not owe anything more than a paycheck to their workers.

Everything changed when a fire erupted at the Triangle shirtwaist factory in 1911. During that tragic event, about a quarter of the workers (mostly young immigrant women) lost their lives. The factory workers, located on the ninth floor of the building, could not get the door open. The fire escape led only to flames below. The fire truck ladders were not long enough, nor were the water hoses. Fire nets were inadequate.

After the fire, people marched and protested in order to change conditions in factories. Many large protests took place in New York. Eventually, politicians took up the cause, and legislators passed workplace laws regulating child labor and the number of workers allowed on a floor. They also called for sprinkler systems to be placed in all factories. The rights of workers were now important and valuable.

Today, working in a factory is still a demanding, difficult, and often dangerous job. The victims of the Triangle shirtwaist factory did not die in vain, however. Because of their experience, the workplace was forever changed for the better.

STRATEGY PRACTICE How did the author organize the information about the Triangle shirtwaist factory fire?

SKILL PRACTICE Read the item. Write your response.

1. What is the purpose of the first paragraph?

2. Give three reasons why so many workers died in the Triangle factory fire.

3. How did this tragic fire change conditions for workers?

READ THE PASSAGE Think about how the author presents the information in the passage.

The Terrifying Night Witches

During World War II, the Nazis invaded Russia in June 1941, catching the Russians off guard. Less than three years before, Hitler had signed a treaty saying that he wouldn't attack their nation. As the Germans marched deeper and deeper into Russian territory, the Russians grew desperate. Who would help to halt the German onslaught? The Night Witches.

The Night Witches were the most feared of all nighttime air raiders. The Nazis gave them the name because they seemed to appear suddenly, drop their bombs, and then vanish. The Night Witches went up against the most modern war machinery of the time in crop-duster planes made of canvas and plywood. Their planes were so fragile that when one was hit by antiaircraft fire, it would burn as quickly as a sheet of paper. Yet, starting in early 1942, they came out to harass the Germans every single night.

The Night Witches flew in the dark without lights. They had only two tools for finding the enemy: a map and a compass. The planes flew in formations of three. Two of the planes would swoop in and try to draw enemy fire while the third plane would drop its bombs. But first, the bombing pilot would turn off the motor and glide toward the target. The lack of engine noise made the plane almost impossible for the Germans to detect. They were so stealthy and so feared that if a Nazi managed to destroy one, he earned the Iron Cross, which is the highest German military honor.

In 30,000 missions over four years' time, the Night Witches dumped 23,000 tons (20,865 metric tons) of bombs on the German troops. They were fearless. And they were all women.

STRATEGY PRACTICE How does the organization of the passage help you understand the author's main points?

SKILL PRACTICE Read the item. Write your response.

1. Quote the sentence from the passage that explains why the Russians were stunned by the German invasion.

2. What is the purpose of the third paragraph?

3. How does the text's organization lead to a surprise ending?

READ THE PASSAGE As you read, think about the main points the author is trying to make.

Puppies Behind Bars

For soldiers returning from wars in the Middle East with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), life can be very difficult. PTSD leaves men and women more than just depressed and anxious; loud noises can set off flashbacks to violent or threatening situations. Many soldiers with PTSD isolate themselves because they feel unsafe or misunderstood. The Puppies Behind Bars organization can help make a difference.

A Meaningful Beginning

Founded in 1997, Puppies Behind Bars began as an organization that teaches prison inmates to train service dogs for the blind. Inmates work with the dogs every day from the time they are puppies until they are adult dogs at 18 months. The dogs learn up to 80 individual commands, including how to phone 9-1-1.

A Worthy Mission

In 2006, Puppies Behind Bars started a new program called Dog Tags: Service Dogs for Those Who've Served Us. Dogs trained through this program help veterans who have PTSD or other disabling physical or emotional wounds. The dogs provide companionship and remind veterans to take needed medications. They alert their owners to other people's arrival and provide physical affection, which helps to reduce flashbacks. When necessary, dogs also wake veterans from terrifying nightmares.

A New Start for All

The prison inmates involved in the program often speak about having a new purpose in their lives, happy that the dogs they have trained help others lead better, safer lives. One veteran who received a Dog Tags dog thanked his dog's inmate trainer in person. He said his dog is his "rock" and listed all the things he can now do again. Overwhelmed and moved, the inmate spoke of the patient, responsible person he has become. For veterans and prison inmates alike, the program is changing the world for the better.

STRATEGY PRACTICE How do the headings help you understand the passage?

SKILL PRACTICE Read the item. Write your response.

1. What evidence does the author include to support the claim that Puppies Behind Bars is a valuable organization?

2. What effect does training the service dogs have on the prison inmates?

3. How is the Dog Tags program related to Puppies Behind Bars? Be specific.

READ THE PASSAGE As you read, think about the sequence of events in William Powell's life.

A Golf Course for Everyone

During World War II, William Powell served in Europe as a soldier in the United States Army. Golf was Powell's hobby, and he played at some of the most popular courses in Scotland. However, upon his return home, Powell was discouraged to find that he was not allowed to play golf at local courses because he was an African American. Powell took a unique approach to solving his problem: He built his own golf course.

Beginning in 1946, Powell moved rocks and spread grass seeds to build a golf course in Canton, Ohio. He convinced two African American doctors to invest in the course and continued to build it for the next year and a half. Powell did all of this without the help of a golf course designer, and he did it while working nights as a security guard. In 1948, the Clearview Golf Course opened, and business is still flourishing today.

In 1967, Powell's daughter, Renee, became a professional golfer on the Ladies' Professional Golf Association (LPGA) tour and now serves as Head Professional at her father's golf course. As of 2001, the Clearview Golf Course is one of 15 golf courses listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is the only course owned, built, and run by African Americans.

In 2009, the Professional Golf Association of America (PGA) honored William Powell with a Distinguished Service Award. Powell, then 92 years old, accepted the award graciously: "I have had so many special things happen to me, I believe, because golf sees no color."

STRATEGY PRACTICE On a sheet of paper, create a timeline that shows the important events in William Powell's life that are described in the passage.**SKILL PRACTICE** Read the item. Write your response.

1. What important event occurred after Clearview Golf Course was added to the National Register of Historic Places?

2. Where and when did Powell begin building Clearview Golf Course?

3. How did Clearview Golf Course receive a place on the National Register of Historic Places?

READ THE PASSAGE Look for the problem and the solution in the passage.

Jamie's Video Game Problem

By mid-August, after a long summer during which she felt she had barely heard a word from her son, Mrs. O'Malley had had enough. "Jamie," she said, "you need to stop spending all of your time playing video games. I'm taking the player away."

Fourteen-year-old Jamie begged his mother not to do it. "I'll work hard in school, Mom," he said. "Video games just help me relax, and they're more fun than television."

Mrs. O'Malley would not yield. "You don't seem relaxed at all while you're playing those games! You seem obsessed. Try life without the obsession." It was true that Jamie usually jumped and shouted while he was playing games, but he still didn't agree with his mother. He also didn't know how to spend his time. The school year didn't start for another week, and there was no one he could call.

On the first day of school, Jamie took the bus with another kid from his neighborhood. Jamie usually had a handheld game for the bus ride, but his mother had taken that, too. To pass the time, Jamie started talking to his neighbor, Eduardo. They found out that they had the same homeroom teacher, and that they both wanted to play on the school's basketball team. Every day, the two boys talked, and they often met after school to play basketball with some of Eduardo's friends. When it came time to try out for the team, both Eduardo and Jamie made the cut. Once, when he caught himself laughing with his friends, he thought, "Hmm, maybe Mom was right." He smiled and felt thankful, but he kept that thought to himself.

STRATEGY PRACTICE How can recognizing the passage's organization, such as problem and solution, help a reader better understand a story?

SKILL PRACTICE Read the item. Write your response.

1. What happened before Jamie's mother took away his video games?

2. What happened once Jamie started the school year?

3. What evidence shows that Mrs. O'Malley was right to take away her son's video games?
