Identify the Sequential Text Structure

1. Focus

Review Text Structures

Say: We have looked at many kinds of nonfiction text structures. We know that some texts are organized by sequence, while other texts may have a problem-and-solution, cause-and-effect, or compare-and-contrast text structure. As we read more and more complex texts, we often find that the text we are reading actually includes more than one text structure. For example, biographies are mostly written in a sequence, from the birth of a subject to the end of his or her life. But sometimes you will find other text structures in a biography. Signal words can help the reader identify the text structure. Let’s review signal words for the different text structures.

Display a four-column chart like the one below on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Invite students to help you generate a list of common signal words for each text structure. Use this as an opportunity to review the nonfiction text structures students should be familiar with.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compare-and-Contrast</th>
<th>Problem-and Solution-or Cause-and-Effect</th>
<th>Descriptive</th>
<th>Sequential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>similar to different from however</td>
<td>because so that if ... then as a result</td>
<td>words for: size, location, shape, age</td>
<td>first In (date) after many months for thirteen years during the summer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Signal Language Anchor Chart

Say: Today we will focus on the sequential text structure in biographies.

Model Identifying the Sequential Text Structure

Ask students to listen as you reread page 23 from “Sojourner Truth.” Point out places where it is obvious that time is being discussed.

Say: Biographies tell about a person’s life over time, using a sequential structure. Certain words and phrases help readers understand the order of the events. In this example, the phrase for one year tells me how long Bell lived with the Van Wagenens. The second sentence starts with the word then, which indicates a change in events. Then is followed by the phrase in 1827, which tells when things changed. The phrase after many months establishes a time line for how long it took for Bell to win her case. The phrase now at last emphasizes when she moved to New York City and joined a church. Unlike procedural texts where sequential language is often one or two words such as first, next, or after that, biographies often use longer phrases to show time passing. They also use dates to establish a time line.
2. Rehearse

Practice Identifying Sequential Language

Read aloud the paragraphs in the section “Her New Life Begins” on page 24.

Say: Now I’ll read these paragraphs. Listen for dates and phrases that show a passing of time in Sojourner’s life. Students should notice the phrases “in the winter of 1843,” “for thirteen years,” “while she was living there,” and “in 1850.”

Work with students to expand the “Sequential” column on the Signal Language anchor chart you started earlier. Point out that higher-level texts include many phrases as well as words. Note that students may hear clue words and phrases of other text structures. If so, include them on the anchor chart.

Practice Using the Sequential Text Structure in Oral Conversation

Turn and talk. Invite students to work with partners. Ask partners to orally describe a series of events in their own lives. Remind them to use the anchor chart to help them get ideas for helpful signal words and phrases.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Share Ideas

Bring students together and invite volunteers to share some of the signal language they used to describe events in their lives.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Remember, every text is organized into text structures. Look at the signal language to help you understand the text structure. As a writer, you need to organize your texts and use signal language so that your readers can follow your ideas. In a biography, you will use sequential language often.

Encourage students to write a paragraph using sequential language. If possible, have them use an event in the life of the subject they have chosen to write about.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite two or three students who used sequence of events signal language effectively to read aloud their paragraphs to the rest of the class.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Meet with beginning ELs one on one while other students work with partners. Display photographs of Mohammed Ali (available using the interactive whiteboard resources) at three different times in his life. Use the photos to model how you use simple sequential language. For example: First, he was a baby. Next, he was a boy. Then, he was a man.

Intermediate and Advanced

Provide the sentence frames below to help students tell about the major events in their lives.

First, I ______.
After that, I ______.
Next, I ______.
When, I ______.

All Levels

Display pictures of children at different ages (using the interactive whiteboard resources) to visually support students’ descriptions of their major life events.