Organize Ideas with a Sequence-of-Events Chart

1. Focus

Explain the Process

Say: We’ve chosen our idea for a personal narrative, but now we need to expand on our ideas. We need to think about the events, the order in which they happened, and the details we want to include about the events. A sequence-of-events chart can help us do this. Today I’m going to show you how to use a planning chart to help you organize your ideas before you begin your drafts.

Model Organizing Ideas

Display the planning chart on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Use some, or all, of the sample think-alouds below based on “NYC, Here I Come.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Statue of Liberty</td>
<td>Gave me chills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aroused my patriotic spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Empire State Building</td>
<td>Elevator—102 floors—went on and on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walked up last steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amazing view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Times Square</td>
<td>People everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head swiveling to catch all the sights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Record store</td>
<td>Brother wanted to go; I was bored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Toy store</td>
<td>60-foot Ferris wheel inside store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bought Alien Launcher®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dinner at theme restaurant</td>
<td>After dinner, walked around again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Night in NYC is different than day—less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>noise and fewer people; almost peaceful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Sequence-of-Events Planning Chart (BLM 4)

Sample think-alouds. Say: I’m going to use the mentor text “NYC, Here I Come” to model how to organize events for a personal narrative. I’ll imagine I’m the writer of this story and I’ll jot down ideas for details I want to include about the events.

Event 1. Say: I want to convey to my readers the feelings I had when I saw the Statue of Liberty. I felt chilled and also a feeling of warmth at the same time. It inspired my patriotic spirit. Model writing the details on the chart.

Event 2. Say: Next I’ll write about the Empire State Building. I must make sure to describe how high up it is and how that elevator ride seemed to go on and on. I must also describe how amazing the view from the top was. Model writing on the chart.
Event 3. **Say:** We went to Times Square next. I’ll write about all the people and how there was so much happening around me. **Model writing on the chart.**

Event 4. **Say:** I wasn’t very excited about our next stop, but I’ll write about it because it’s part of what we did that day. My brother wanted to go to a record store. I won’t spend a lot of time talking about this, but I’ll mention that I got bored. **Model writing on the chart.**

Event 5. **Say:** The next store was my choice. I must remember to tell about the huge Ferris wheel inside the store. Amazing! I’ll write about the neat toy I bought, too. **Model writing on the chart.**

Event 6. **Say:** The final event was at night. I want to emphasize how night in NYC is different from the day. I can’t really say it’s peaceful, but, in contrast, there are less people with less noise. **Model writing on the chart.**

**2. Rehearse**

**Practice Organizing Your Ideas**

Invite students to organize the first three events for their own personal narrative idea using the sequence-of-events chart. Reinforce the fact that writers think about the sequence of events before they begin to write.

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 the events they organized on the chart. Discuss how outlining the events in order on the chart will help them make sure to write in the correct sequence when they write their drafts.

**3. Independent Writing and Conferring**

**Say:** We just learned that we can use a planning chart to organize the events in a personal narrative before we begin drafting it. That way, we can make sure that our sequence makes sense and seems logical when we write. We can also be sure to include the important details about each event.

Make BLM 4 available to students who are ready to organize ideas for their personal narratives during independent writing time. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

**4. Share**

Bring the class together. Invite two or three students to report on their progress in organizing their ideas for their personal narrative. Encourage them to explain a few steps in their sequence of events.

**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

- Invite beginning ELs to draw the events of their personal narratives in order. Encourage them to talk about their events using words and gestures. Write sequence words such as **first**, **then**, and **after** on self-stick notes and place them on their pictures.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

- Encourage ELs to use the following sentence frames to help them talk about their story ideas:

  - My first event is ______.
  - The next event is ______.
  - After that ______.
  - An important detail about this event is ______.

**All Levels**

- If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: **organize ideas/organizar las ideas**; **sequence/la secuencia**.