Identify the Sequential Text Structure

1. Focus

Review Text Structures

Say: Nonfiction texts can be organized by sequential, problem-and-solution, cause-and-effect, compare-and-contrast, or descriptive text structures. Most texts actually include more than one text structure. For example, biographies are mostly written in a sequence but sometimes you will find other text structures in a biography. For example, biographies often use a descriptive text structure to provide the details and specifics that bring the events in a sequence to life for the reader. Signal words can help the reader identify which text structures an author is using.

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</td>
<td></td>
<td>words for:</td>
<td>when in (date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different from</td>
<td></td>
<td>- size</td>
<td>meanwhile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>however</td>
<td></td>
<td>- location</td>
<td>promptly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- shape</td>
<td>then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- age</td>
<td>now</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Signal Language Anchor Chart

Model Identifying the Sequential Text Structure

Ask students to listen as you read (or reread) the first two paragraphs on page 20 of “Cleopatra.” Point out places where it is obvious that time is being discussed.

Say: Biographies tell about a person’s life over time. Certain words and phrases help the reader understand the order of the events in the person’s life. In this example, the words “When Cleopatra was 18” helps me identify the time line of Cleopatra’s life. The next event is when Cleopatra’s brother forces her to leave Egypt. The author begins her description of the following event with the signal word Meanwhile, which tells me that Pompey’s murder occurred during the same time that Cleopatra was driven out of Egypt. Then the author gives the year in which Pompey died: 48 B.C.E. Biographies often state the exact date when something happened. I can compare this to other years mentioned in the text to understand the order of events, and to the dates of other events in history. The words Four days later tell me that the next event happened shortly...
after Pompey’s murder. 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.

**Say:** The author also uses a cause-and-effect structure. When Caesar arrives in Egypt, he learns that Cleopatra’s brother is planning to kill him. The text says, “So he sent for Cleopatra, probably with the intention of forming an alliance with her.” The signal word so tells me that the plot to kill Caesar causes him to send for Cleopatra. Cause-and-effect signal words show why certain events occurred.

### 2. Rehearse

#### Practice Identifying Sequential Language

Read aloud, starting with the last paragraph on page 20 and continuing through the first full paragraph on page 21. **Say:** Listen for words and phrases that show sequential order and help you understand the events in Cleopatra’s life.

Work with students to expand the “Sequential” column on the Signal Language anchor chart you started earlier.

#### Practice Using the Sequential Text Structure

**Turn and talk.** Invite students to work with partners to orally describe a series of events in their own lives. 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.

### Strategies to Support ELs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Intermediate and Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Meet with beginning ELs one on one while other students work with partners on the turn-and-talk activity. Ask students to tell you several things they did the previous night, in any way they can—with words, gestures, or drawings. Expand on their ideas with simple sentences using signal words such as first, next, and last. | Provide the sentence frames below to help students tell about a series of events in their lives:  
First, I ______.  
After that, I ______.  
Then, I ______.  
Next, I ______. |