

Text Structure

Examining Sequence of Events

NAME: _____

CLASS: _____

What does it mean to follow the order of events in a text? It means you keep track of what happens when. It can help to make a list. Certain questions can help you. Ask yourself, “What happened first? What happened next, and then next after that? What happened last?” Knowing the order of events can help you better understand the text.

Some texts tell you how to do something. Other texts explain how something works. These types of texts often use certain words. They may use “first,” “second,” and “third.” Or they may use “to start,” “then,” “after,” and “last.” These words help you follow the order of events. What if the events are not listed in the correct order? What if the last step were listed first? Or if the steps in the middle were all mixed up? These texts would not make much sense.

► For example, read the following paragraph. Pay attention to the words that are underlined.



Do you like cake? Most of us do. How do you bake a cake? There are a few things you need to do. First, choose a cake recipe. A recipe tells you what you need to bake a cake and how to do it. Second, read the recipe from beginning to end. Make sure you understand it. Third, get everything that you need to bake the cake. Get the flour, sugar, eggs, and anything else the recipe lists to bake the cake. Get a mixing bowl and a spoon. Get the right size baking pan. Then follow the recipe carefully. Soon you will be eating a delicious cake that you made.

The words “first,” “second,” “third,” and “then” help you follow the order of events. If these events are not done in the correct order, something might go wrong. It might take longer to bake the cake. Or the cake may not come out the way it should.

Now suppose you are asked to complete this task:

► The paragraph above explains how to bake a cake. Put these events in the correct order from first to last.

- A. Get everything you need to bake the cake.
- B. Choose a cake recipe.
- C. Read the recipe from beginning to end.
- D. Follow the recipe carefully.

These answer choices do not have the words “first,” “second,” “third,” or “then” listed with the events. However, go back to the text. These words are used in the paragraph. They helped you follow the order of events as you read. First, choose a cake recipe. Second, read the recipe from beginning to end. Third, get everything that you need to bake the cake. Then follow the recipe carefully.

Because you followed the order of events in the paragraph, you have the information you need to put the answer choices in the correct order from first to last here. The correct order of events for these answer choices is B, C, A, D.

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 Read these paragraphs and answer the questions that follow.

Do you want to earn some money? Do you like children? Then maybe you should try babysitting. It means you take care of children while their parents are away for a short time. How do you start? The first thing you should do is take a babysitting class. The next thing to do is simple but very important! Tell everyone you know you are ready to babysit. Tell your neighbor. Ask them to tell other people. Soon parents will want you to babysit their children. Find out how old their children are. Ask what they expect you to do. What if this job is not a good one for you? You can tell the parents no. What if you want to take the job? Then tell the parents yes! Be sure to write down the day and time you will be working. You do not want to miss your first day of work!

1. If you want to babysit, how do you start? Put these events from the paragraph above in the correct order from first to last.



- _____ A. Tell the parents no if you do not want the job or yes if you do.
 _____ B. Tell everyone you are ready to babysit.
 _____ C. Take a babysitting class.
 _____ D. Find out how old the children are and what you are expected to do.



A fish can be a good pet to get. Many people like to watch fish swim. Fish are also very quiet. They will not wake you up at night. If you want a fish as a pet, where do you start? First, choose a fish. Then choose a tank. A small fish can live in a small fish tank. But a larger fish will need a bigger fish tank. Next, get equipment for the tank. A tank will need things such as an air pump and a filter. A person at a pet store can help you find everything you need. Finally, get some fish food. Don't forget to feed your new pet!

2. What are the steps to getting a fish as a pet? Put these events from the paragraph above in the correct order from first to last.



- _____ A. Get some fish food and feed your new pet.
 _____ B. Choose a tank.
 _____ C. Get equipment for the tank.
 _____ D. Choose a fish.

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► Read these paragraphs and answer the questions that follow.



A fossil is part of an animal or a plant that lived long ago. There are different types of fossils. One type is called a body fossil. How does a body fossil form? First, an animal dies. Then the animal's body is covered by mud or wet sand. Many, many years pass. Some soft parts of the animal rot. But the hard parts, like bones or teeth, do not rot. These parts change very slowly into something hard, like rocks. Then the bones and teeth become fossils.

3. How does a body fossil form? Put these events from the paragraph above in the correct order from first to last.



- _____ A. An animal dies.
- _____ B. The bones and teeth change into something hard, like rocks.
- _____ C. The animal's body is covered by mud or wet sand.
- _____ D. The soft parts of the animal rot.



Trees grow almost everywhere. They grow in dry places and wet places. They grow in warm areas and cold areas. Like all living things, trees have a life cycle. A tree starts from a seed. The roots grow first. They dig into the ground to get water and food from the soil. Then a stem grows out of the seed and up through the ground. At this point, the young tree is called a seedling. Then the seedling grows leaves. The leaves help the seedling get more light from the sun. The seedling gets bigger and becomes a sapling. After a few years, the sapling grows and becomes an adult tree. An adult tree can have flowers, nuts, or seeds. These fall to the ground and grow into new trees.

4. Put these events from the life cycle of a tree in order from first to last.



- _____ A. The seedling grows leaves.
- _____ B. The roots dig into the ground to get water and food from the soil.
- _____ C. The sapling grows and becomes an adult tree.
- _____ D. A stem grows up through the ground.