Sequence

You're excited about the trip you took to Brazil. You want to share all your experiences with your classmates. You could list everything that happened from when you got off the plane to when you got back on. You could tell about the most exciting events first, followed by less exciting events. Both methods use sequence text pattern.

Recipes, science experiments, and instructions are examples of sequence text pattern. The pattern writers choose will depend on their purpose as well as the topic. Sequence text pattern is used when the purpose is to list something (events, instructions) in a certain order.

When you recognize the pattern, you will find it easier to understand the purpose of the text and how ideas are connected. Look for these characteristics of sequence text pattern:

1. There is an order to how things are listed and the order is important.
2. Events or instructions may be arranged in numbered steps (or using the letters of the alphabet).
3. Lists (sometimes with bullets) may be used.
4. Keywords may be used (for example, first, soon, initially, now, before, gradually, meanwhile, later, next, today, once, or soon after).

Events in Time Order

1. First, I met my host family.
2. Next, we went out to the tree-planting site.
3. Then, I was introduced to the international team working at the site.

Most Interesting Events First

1. I met over 20 people from 6 different countries.
2. By my last day, I had planted over 400 seedlings.
3. Every night, we had a terrific party, teaching each other new dance steps.

Transfer Your Learning

Across the Strands

Oral Communication: Would you be more likely to use sequence text pattern for a speech about a volunteer experience you have had or for an oral presentation on global warming? Be prepared to discuss your thinking.

Across the Curriculum

Health: If you were developing instructions for washing hands, how many steps would you need? What major steps would you include?
Since its beginning in 1971, Doctors Without Borders has helped countless people. Do you wonder how the organization knows where to send volunteers and how many to send? The following diary entries show how the organization went into action when large numbers of Sudanese refugees began pouring into eastern Chad in September 2003.

Day 1: Assessing the Needs

Doctors Without Borders sent an exploratory team to determine the condition of Sudanese refugees flooding into eastern Chad. The people were fleeing conflict and targeted attacks against them in the Darfur region of Sudan.

The team found about 11,000 refugees, 75 percent of whom were women and children, living in harsh conditions with little or no access to food, potable (drinkable) water, or shelter. They found no local supplies of medicine, and surveys indicated that there was a significant risk of an outbreak of measles or meningitis because very few of the refugees had been vaccinated. Many of the children suffered from malaria and malnutrition.
Day 5: Planning the Response

The assessment team started treating patients immediately, and reported back to the Doctors Without Borders team in the capital city of N’Djamena. The health priorities of the refugees had to be addressed quickly in order to save lives. An emergency intervention, including vaccinating all children for measles, providing essential health care, increasing the supply of potable water, and planning for the treatment of malnutrition, was implemented. An 11-person team, including doctors, nurses, and logisticians, was sent within days to carry out the aid operations.
Doctors Without Borders through Time

1971 A group of French doctors and journalists creates Doctors Without Borders in response to famine in Nigeria
1972 Responds to its first natural disaster, an earthquake in Nicaragua
1975 Provides medical care in its first large-scale intervention to help Cambodian refugees
1976 First major intervention in a war zone: Lebanon
1980 Programs offer medical care to civilians during Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan
1984 Starts programs to fight malnutrition in response to famine in Ethiopia
1986 Organizes mobile clinics and hospitals to aid victims of civil war in Sri Lanka; opens offices in Spain and Luxembourg
1990 Opens office in United States
1991 Runs largest emergency operation to date, providing care for Kurdish refugees in Turkey, Iran, and Jordan
1992 Informs international community of famine in Somalia; opens nutritional programs there
1993 Provides aid to victims of civil war in Burundi
1994 Issues unprecedented call for military intervention amidst genocide in Rwanda
1995 Brings medical aid to civilians in Chechnya and nearby refugee camps
1996 Launches massive vaccination and treatment program to combat meningitis epidemic in Nigeria
1997 Expands programs to help children in Madagascar, Brazil, and the Philippines
1998 Fights to help women in Afghanistan get health care
1998 Responds to famine in southern Sudan and civil war in Republic of Congo; assists victims of Hurricane Mitch in Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador
1999 Launches Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines; provides care in Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia
1999 Awarded Nobel Peace Prize
2000 Treats victims of civil war in Sierra Leone; expands programs for asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants in France, Italy, Spain, and Belgium
2001 Starts providing medicine to people with AIDS in 7 countries; expands mental health programs

Vocabulary

asylum seeker: a person who flees his or her home to gain shelter or protection in another country

genocide: the deliberate, systematic killing of a whole cultural or racial group

logistician: an expert in the coordination of a complex operation including many people and things

undocumented immigrant: a person who illegally enters a country other than the country of his or her birth
Day 12: Dispatch of Team and Supplies

A chartered cargo plane left from the Doctors Without Borders warehouse carrying 33 t of humanitarian aid and the 11 international volunteers. The cargo contained material to build two health centres, medicine and supplies to treat 10 000 people, feeding kits, and specialized food for malnourished children for a period of three months. The plane also carried three four-wheel drive vehicles and equipment to provide clean water, including pumps, pipes, tanks, and water-purification chemicals.

The plane arrived the same day in N'Djamena. The cargo was unloaded and put on another plane to the closest town, and then it was driven seven hours over very rough terrain to the refugee camp.

Day 20+: Building Health Centres

Doctors Without Borders opened its first health centres in Tine and, four days later, a therapeutic feeding centre for severely malnourished children was built. Four tents were set up to provide medical care for thousands of refugees living in camps outside the town. The tents housed a consultation room, pediatric unit, pharmacy, and in-patient areas.

Reflecting

Analyzing Text Patterns: If you wanted to arrange the timeline not chronologically but by most important events, which three events would you place first? Which three events would you place last?

Metacognition: How does knowing about sequence text pattern help you understand the selection's purpose?

Critical Literacy: What words in this selection clearly reveal the author's perspective on Doctors Without Borders?