

Organizational Techniques

How do I organize my ideas?

These techniques can be applied to full papers or individual paragraphs.

Chronological Order:

- Writing ideas or facts in the order in which they occur
- Especially useful for describing an event or series of events, such as an experimental procedure

Order of Importance

- Organize based on how valuable or important the information is
- Can go from most to least important or least to most
- Can be useful in descriptive or expository writing

Logical

- Organize based on the logical connections between pieces of information
- Useful for explaining why something occurs

General to Specific

- Organize your ideas from general statements to specific ideas or examples
- Using this method can help you prove a generalization or hypothesis you've made in your thesis

Problem and Solution

- Use the beginning of your paper to present an issue that is prevalent then present solutions to that problem
- You can also discuss one solution by using further paragraphs to delve deeper into the logistics of that solution or provide examples of how the solution might work

Spatial

- Organizing based on location
- Can be used for describing a place or system

- breaking down a topic into its different parts and focusing different paragraphs on those parts

Cause and Effect

- Organized based on why something happened and what were the results of that event
- Especially useful for describing a historical event or a process

Outlining Techniques

Outlining can be a good intermediate step between brainstorming and writing your first draft. You can use one or more of these techniques to refine your structure before you begin writing.

Web

- Web outlining can be a good first outline
- Similar to mind mapping, but more specific
- Branch off your main points with supporting ideas that you might include in your paper

Traditional

- Write your main thesis and topic sentences for each of your body paragraphs
- Below each topic sentence bullet point ideas and examples to support that paragraph

Roman Numeral

- This outline gives you the opportunity to flesh out your ideas
- Use full sentences or phrases to describe each of your supporting points and examples
- A good final step between outlining and writing your first draft