



## Focused Lesson Plan

## Understanding Text Structure: Chronological Sequence

## Preparation

**Learning Objective**

Students will improve their understanding of a news article by learning to understand text structure that follows chronological sequence (strategy).

**Brief Definition**

Text structure includes both the organization of ideas within a text and the instructional design features and format of the text. In *chronological sequence* text structure, events are put in the order in which they occur in time. In expository texts, chronological sequence is often used with history, procedures, biography, and autobiography.

**Why use this lesson plan?**

This lesson plan suggests an instructional sequence that *focuses* on understanding chronological sequence text structure. Although you and your students will be employing other strategies as you read, the purpose of this lesson plan is to intensify your students' awareness and understanding of this single strategy so they are prepared to use it in combination with other strategies when they read independently.

Knowledge of text structure can guide students to understand the relationships among ideas in a text and is linked to improved comprehension. It requires direct instruction in recognizing the organization and features of multiple structures. Teaching expository text structure is particularly important because most students are exposed only to the structure of narrative text.

**Do before teaching**

1. Read through the lesson plan.
2. Select a news article that follows a text structure based on chronological sequence. Keep in mind that events may be described out of order.
3. Print a copy the news articles for each of your students. Optionally, print a copy of the *Sample Chronological Sequence Paragraph and Chronological Sequence Questions*. (See below.)
4. Write the *Sequence Questions* on the board. (See below.)

# Teaching Routine

## Before Reading

### Introduce Lesson

- Explain that in this lesson, students will understand text structure that uses chronological sequence to help them understand a news article.
- Pass out printed copies of the news article.

### Teacher Direct Instruction/Modeling

- Explain understanding text structure improves understanding. In a text with chronological sequence structure, readers put events into the order that they occurred in time.
- Read the paragraph, *Fifty Years of UFOs*, out loud to your class, or ask your students to read the paragraph. (See below.)
  - Review the answers to the *Chronological Sequence Questions* with your students.
  - Explain that in articles that follow a chronological sequence, events are often described in order. Sometimes, however, events may be described out of order.
  - Ask students to put the events from *Fifty Years of UFOs* in order. Use a list or a simple timeline.
- Tell students that you are now going to read a news article that uses chronological sequence text structure. The sequence in the news article may not be as obvious as it is in *Fifty Years of UFOs*.
- With the class, preview the article by reading titles, headings, graphics, captions, and the first paragraph. Point out the highlighted vocabulary words and their definitions at the end of the article. This will activate students' prior knowledge and allow them to begin looking for events.
- Briefly discuss what students think the article is about.

### *Chronological Sequence Questions*

- What signal words indicate that this might be a chronological sequence text?
- What pattern does the article follow (in order, out of order)?
- What is the first event?
- What are the other events?
- How do the events lead to one another?
- Which events are difficult to place in time? Which events might have occurred but are missing from the article?
- What is the final outcome?

### Student Practice

Ask students which of the chronological sequence questions they can answer at this point.

## During Reading

### Teacher Direct Instruction/Modeling

- Explain that good readers look for patterns in the text while they read. Remind them that the chronological sequence questions can help them find evidence of the chronological sequence pattern in the text.
- Divide the text into two meaningful sections. Sections may include a single paragraph or multiple paragraphs.
- Ask students to read the first section of the text and to mark events in the text.

### Student Practice

- When they are done reading the first section of text, ask students to respond to the chronological sequence questions that they can answer at this point.
- If necessary, remind them that the first event stated in the article may not be the first event that takes place.
- Ask students to read the second section of text.

## After Reading

### Teacher Direct Instruction/Modeling

When students are done reading the whole text, complete the chronological sequence questions and discuss student responses.

### Student Practice

- Ask students to put the events in order. Use a list, a simple timeline, or a simple flow chart.
- Ask students how identifying chronological sequence helped them understand the text.

### Apply Strategy to Future Reading

- Ask students to bring a text to class that follows a different chronological sequence pattern. Plan a time that you can share these texts.
- Ask students to bring a text to class to which they can apply the strategy. Plan time for students to independently apply the strategy to the texts that they have selected.

## Sample Chronological Sequence Paragraph

### 50 Years of UFOs

For more than 50 years, France has kept records of UFO sightings. And now, France has become the first country to list UFO sightings on a Web site. So far, there are about 1,650 sightings, with the oldest one dating back to 1937. In 1954, the Web site lists a large number of sightings, and even France's president showed an interest. In 1977, the French space agency began investigating reports of UFOs. Often, the sightings were easy to explain. In some cases, however, the sightings could not be explained. One sighting that cannot be explained happened in 1981. Some people said that they saw a bowl-shaped UFO in the south of France. When it sped off, it left burn marks in the ground. In 1994, the crewmembers of an Air France airplane were flying over Paris when they noticed a large disk in the sky. Not long after, the space agency wrote a report saying this case has never been explained, but that people should have an open mind about the possibilities.

#### Chronological Sequence Questions with Sample Responses

- **What signal words indicate that this might be a chronological sequence text?**  
*“now”, “In 1954”, “In 1977”, “in 1981”, “In 1994”, “not long after”*
- **What pattern does the article follow (in order, out of order)?**  
*The last event is stated first, but all other events are in chronological order.*
- **What is the first event?**  
*The oldest sighting on the Web site is from 1937.*
- **What are the other events?**  
*1954: several sightings  
1977: French space agency investigating reports of UFOs  
1981: a bowl-shaped UFO left burn marks on the ground  
1994: crewmembers on an Air France flight saw a large disk  
Not long after: the space agency said the case could not be explained  
Now: France is the first country to keep records of UFO sightings on a Web site*
- **Which events are difficult to place in time? Which events might have occurred but are missing from the article?**  
*The second to last event. Probably a lot of other UFO sightings are not mentioned.*
- **What is the final outcome?**  
*France is the first country to keep records of UFO sightings on a Web site.*