

# Methods of Organization

Organization is key to presenting a convincing argument. The type of organization you use in your essay will be based on the topic and style of your essay. There are several options to choose from and on occasion it is appropriate to combine elements of different methods together.

Pattern	Answers the Question(s)	Characteristics
<b>Cause and Effect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why did this happen?</li> <li>What were the results of a particular event?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes or discusses an event/action that was caused by another event/action</li> <li>May discuss a cause with a single effect or with several effects.</li> </ul>
<b>Chronological</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When did it happen?</li> <li>In what order did it happen?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details that support the main idea or thesis are described in the order that they happened</li> </ul>
<b>Sequential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How?</li> <li>What are the steps of this process?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details are a list of directions or steps that explain how to do something</li> <li>The steps lead to a final product or completed activity</li> </ul>
<b>Comparison and Contrast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are the items similar? (Comparison)</li> <li>How are the items different? (Contrast)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organized to emphasize the similarities or differences between two items, concepts, etc.</li> <li>May use the alternating method (discuss characteristic 1 of both A and B then characteristic 2 of both A and B, etc.) or the block method (discuss all characteristics of A first then discuss B)</li> </ul>
<b>Order of Importance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which is the most/least important?</li> <li>Which element is crucial?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Points are organized from most to least important or vice versa depending on the purpose of the author</li> </ul>
<b>Problem and Solution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the problem?</li> <li>What is a possible solution?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presents an important problem that is explained in detail</li> <li>Then offers an explanation of a possible solution or solutions</li> </ul>
<b>Spatial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where?</li> <li>In physical relation to what?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A physical location is described following a clear pattern (e.g. top to bottom, room by room, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Advantages and Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the pros and cons?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes the advantages</li> <li>Describes the disadvantages</li> <li>May conclude with making a decision or may leave the decision up to the reader.</li> </ul>