

## Commentary on Classification Paragraph

The prompt to read this information appears on p. 141 of *Acting on Words*.

As you can see, the word “classified” appears in the topic sentence of the sample paragraph from *Canada’s First Nations*. Dickason reflects the work of linguists, specialists who study language patterns and group languages into relationships according to specific shared elements versus distinctions from languages in other categories. The topic sentence identifies a division of 50 different languages, each of which can be classified into one of 12 families. Returning to how Dickason applies this tool in the sample paragraph, notice that her reference to classification also includes geographical divisions. This provides further information about various language groupings. Half of Canada’s 12 language families thrived in what is now British Columbia, a warm region. Families and languages in the north are less numerous, presumably because colder weather promoted nomadic patterns and restricted language diversification. This attention to one aspect of causality illustrates how rhetorical patterns complement or reinforce each other. It is rare that a paragraph or longer passage of text focuses exclusively on one pattern or method of organization; it is equally rare to find a paragraph or section of text that does not organize itself around one of the seven basic patterns we introduce under the heading “Exposition” in Chapter 10. The paragraph above emphasizes classification of languages and geography, with cause-effect insight applied to help complete important details. Chapter 11 provides information on cause-effect structure.