There are many ways to organize information in an essay. After brainstorming, main points will become your supporting paragraphs. If you consider each one of these as a category, your specific ideas and information should be organized into each category.

When you make your case in an essay, you use **METHODS OF DEVELOPMENT**. Typically, essays use multiple methods to make their case.

Method of Development	What It Does	Useful For…
Cause and Effect	Analyzes and explains the causes of a specific event or situation, the effects of an event or situation, or both	-Arguing/persuading. e.g., showing why graduates have fewer options because of student debt -Informing/explaining. e.g., explaining how debt limits graduates' choices
Compare and Contrast	Analyzes the similarities and differences between two or more ideas, people, or things	-Arguing/persuading/analyzing. For example, contrasting outcomes in countries with lower tuition against those in Canada -Informing/explaining. e.g., comparing tuition in Canada with tuition in other countries
Process Analysis	Describes or explains step by step how something is done	-Informing/explaining. e.g., explaining how the cycle of student debt works
Classification and Division	Analyzes a topic by breaking it down into its component parts or by grouping objects, people or ideas with shared qualities	-Informing/explaining. e.g., breaking down the cost of a university degree
Definition	Explains the writer's understanding of a word or concept, such as what it means to him or her and why	-Informing/explaining. e.g., what "higher education" means in terms of its goals
Examples and Illustration	Proves a point by illustrating it with specific examples; may be in order of importance (least to most; most to least)	-Informing/explaining. e.g., families, occupations, and incomes to show that tuition has become out of reach for many -Arguing/persuading/analyzing. e.g., giving examples of famous thinkers throughout history who had higher education
Narration	Tells a story in order to explain why and how something happened	-Arguing/persuading. e.g., recounting story of a promising student who is missing out on university because of cost -Informing/explaining. e.g., recounting story of how a life was transformed by access to higher education
Description	Provides details about a person, place, object, event, etc. in order to explain what it is like	-Arguing/persuading. e.g., describing the extreme disappointment of forgoing university because of cost -Informing/explaining. e.g., describing hallowed old campus to set the scene

Information from Van Zoost, et al: *Beyond Five Paragraphs*. Toronto: McGraw Hill, 2015

Another important consideration when writing essays is how you order information. Consider the following **Organizational Patterns:**

Organizational Pattern	Graphic Organizer	Useful For…
Topical: arranges information into subtopics within the larger topic.	topic → subtopic, subtopic	-explaining or presenting an overview of a topic -topics that do not fit well with other patterns of organization
Climactic: presents points in order of least to most important	Most important idea → Next most important idea → Least important idea	-building an argument -building interest
Chronological: presents main points in order in which they occurred	first → second → third	-telling a story -explaining an event -outlining steps in a process -explaining how one thing leads to or results in another
Spatial: presents details in a specific physical order, such as top to bottom or left to right	Starting point → below → Beyond	-describing a person, place, or thing
Block: compares/contrasts two or more things by discussing all of the characteristics of the first, and then all of the characteristics of the second	Thing compared → Qualities of thing 1 → Qualities of thing 2	-comparing and/or contrasting two or more ideas, people, or things
Point-by-Point/Side-by-Side: compare/contrasts two or more things by discussing them simultaneously, quality by quality	Thing compared → 1st point of comparison: thing 1 & 2 → 2nd point of comparison: thing 1 & 2	-comparing and/or contrasting two or more ideas, people, or things
Problem-Solution: identifies a problem and presents one or more ways to solve it	Problem → Solution 1 → Solution 2	-convincing people to support a course of action

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