

# DESCRIBING THE STRUCTURE

**RI.4.5. Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.**

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Additional resources to use during and after the lesson set; this unit's supplements are a chart of signal words and bonus graphic organizers representing additional text structure types for extended learning.

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# DESCRIBING THE STRUCTURE

## TEACHER NOTES

RI.4.5, Lessons 1–3

### UNIT OVERVIEW

In this unit, students learn how to describe the text structure of informational texts. Students are exposed to basic structures using social studies texts you select. As students proceed through the lessons, they learn to use signal words and graphic organizers to identify and understand two common text structure types.

**Lesson 1:** In this lesson, students learn the features of chronological text structure. First, students explore chronological order by creating a timeline of getting ready for school. Next, you introduce signal words that relate to text structure and introduce a text that uses chronological structure. After reading the text, student partners use a graphic organizer to visualize how the details in the text are related and determine the chronological order of events in the selection.

**Lesson 2:** This lesson includes the same activities used in the first lesson but for cause/effect text structure. Students identify signal words in a paragraph that uses cause/effect structure and complete a graphic organizer to deconstruct how the text details are organized and related.

**Lesson 3:** In this lesson, students review chronological and cause/effect structure and determine the text structure type for two different paragraphs. Students identify signal words in each text to guide them toward determining the text structure and then organize the text details into graphic organizers.

Upon completion of the lessons, students can identify and describe two common text structures used in informational texts.

### Research Findings

Informational texts are more difficult to read than narratives because they have multiple types of text structure.

(Meyer & Poon, 2001)

Elementary and middle school students should have lots of exposure with informational texts and the various text structures they can have.

(Duke, 2000; Moss, 2004)

### Lesson Strategies, Approaches, or Activities

Lesson 1 introduces students to chronological structure. Lesson 2 introduces students to cause/effect structure. Both lessons describe how the information in the text is organized and related in each structure type and when each structure is commonly used.

An instructional focus on increasing text structure awareness typically includes explicitly teaching students how to identify the common structures found in informational texts. (Hall & Sabey, 2007)	Each lesson emphasizes identifying signal words ( <i>first, then, same as, because of, as a result</i> , etc.) that provide clues about the specific structure used in an informational text and indicate the relationship between the details in the text.
Instruction aimed at improving text structure awareness helps students identify the important ideas portrayed in the text and their relationships. (Hall, Sabey, & McClellan, 2005; Meyer et al., 2002; Williams et al., 2005)	In each lesson, students complete graphic organizers to deconstruct the text structure in a way that emphasizes the details' relationships.
Elementary school students typically have less experience with informational texts than narratives. Due to this inexperience, students encounter more difficulty reading informational texts than they do when reading narratives. (Chambliss, 1995; Goldman, 1997; Hall, Sabey, & McClellan, 2005)	Throughout the unit, students read multiple examples of different text structures and locate the signal words indicating the text structure type.

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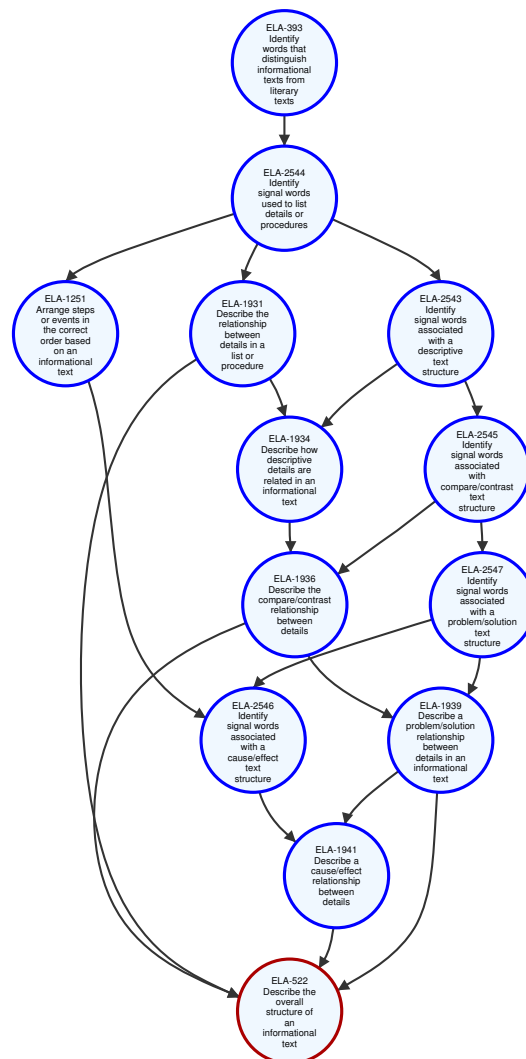
# DESCRIBING THE STRUCTURE

## LEARNING MAP TOOL

RI.4.5

### STANDARD

**RI.4.5** Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.



*\*Learning map model for RI.4.5.*

Node ID	Node Name	Node Description
ELA-393	IDENTIFY WORDS THAT DISTINGUISH INFORMATIONAL TEXTS FROM LITERARY TEXTS	Identify key signal words that differentiate informational text from literature (e.g., <i>as a result</i> , <i>for example</i> , and <i>one problem</i> ).
ELA-522	DESCRIBE THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Describe the overall structure (e.g., procedural, description, compare and contrast, cause and effect, or problem and solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in an informational text.
ELA-1251	ARRANGE STEPS OR EVENTS IN THE CORRECT ORDER BASED ON AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Arrange the steps or events from an informational text in a sequential or logical order.
ELA-1931	DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DETAILS IN A LIST OR PROCEDURE	Describe the relationship between details in a list or procedure using signal words associated with list or procedural text structures (e.g., <i>first</i> , <i>second</i> , <i>next</i> , <i>last</i> , <i>before</i> , <i>then</i> , and <i>after</i> ).
ELA-1934	DESCRIBE HOW DESCRIPTIVE DETAILS ARE RELATED IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Describe how the relationships between details highlight descriptive text structure.
ELA-1936	DESCRIBE THE COMPARE/CONTRAST RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DETAILS	Describe the relationship between details in an informational text arranged in a structure highlighting a compare/contrast relationship.
ELA-1939	DESCRIBE A PROBLEM/SOLUTION RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DETAILS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Describe the relationship between details in an informational text arranged in a structure highlighting a problem/solution relationship.
ELA-1941	DESCRIBE A CAUSE/EFFECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DETAILS	Describe the relationship between details in an informational text arranged in a structure highlighting a cause and effect relationship.
ELA-2543	IDENTIFY SIGNAL WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH A DESCRIPTIVE TEXT STRUCTURE	Identify signal words commonly used in informational texts to indicate a descriptive text structure (e.g., <i>for example</i> , <i>such as</i> , <i>in fact</i> , <i>for instance</i> , <i>in addition</i> , <i>another</i> , and <i>also</i> ).
ELA-2544	IDENTIFY SIGNAL WORDS USED TO LIST DETAILS OR PROCEDURES	Identify signal words commonly used in informational texts to indicate a list or procedural text structure (e.g., <i>first</i> , <i>second</i> , <i>next</i> , <i>last</i> , <i>before</i> , <i>then</i> , and <i>after</i> ).
ELA-2545	IDENTIFY SIGNAL WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH COMPARE/CONTRAST TEXT STRUCTURE	Identify signal words commonly used in informational texts to indicate a compare/contrast text structure (e.g., <i>same as</i> , <i>alike</i> , <i>similar to</i> , <i>resembles</i> , <i>compared to</i> , <i>different from</i> , <i>unlike</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>yet</i> , <i>however</i> , and <i>contrast</i> ).
ELA-2546	IDENTIFY SIGNAL WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH A CAUSE/EFFECT TEXT STRUCTURE	Identify signal words commonly used in informational texts to indicate a cause/effect text structure (e.g., <i>if</i> , <i>so</i> , <i>because of</i> , <i>as a result</i> , <i>since</i> , <i>in order to</i> , <i>cause</i> , and <i>effect</i> ).
ELA-2547	IDENTIFY SIGNAL WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH A PROBLEM/SOLUTION TEXT STRUCTURE	Identify signal words commonly used in informational texts to indicate a problem/solution text structure (e.g., <i>problem</i> , <i>solution</i> , <i>because</i> , <i>cause</i> , <i>since</i> , <i>so that</i> , and <i>as a result</i> ).

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# DESCRIBING CHRONOLOGICAL TEXT STRUCTURE

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RI.4.5, Lesson 1

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students determine the chronological order or time sequence of an event from a social studies selection.

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### STANDARD

**RI.4.5** Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.

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### PREPARATION

Before the lesson, find a social studies selection that describes an event in state or local history (or something else that fits your curriculum) and retells the sequence of events in chronological order. As you select the event, keep in mind that you will need a passage that identifies the event's causes and effects for Lesson 2. Prepare to display the text for the class. Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use.

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### MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ chronological text, displayed
- ▶ [STUDENT HANDOUT: MY MORNING TIMELINE](#)
- ▶ [STUDENT HANDOUT: CHRONOLOGICAL STRUCTURE](#)
- ▶ [SUPPLEMENT: SIGNAL WORDS](#) (optional)

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## IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can identify a chronological structure when I read an informational text.”

**Pass out** [STUDENT HANDOUT: MY MORNING TIMELINE](#). **Direct** students to fill in the timeline with all the things they did before they got to school. Students should write the events in the order they happened.

**Invite** students to share their timelines with the class.

**Tell** students that in today’s lesson you will focus on the chronological order of events. **Ask** students if they know what *chronological order* means.

**Say**, “Chronological order is when a sequence of events is given in the order that they happened.” **Explain** that all the things that happened before school this morning helped students get ready for the day.

**Say**, “When you explain how something happens, you use words like *first*, *next*, *last*, and *finally*. These are called signal words.” **Explain** that in informational texts that use chronological order, authors use signal words to tell the time order of an event or topic. **Introduce** [SUPPLEMENT: SIGNAL WORDS](#) and **explain** that each text structure type has its own signal words. **Tell** students to try to identify the signal words while they listen to the text.

**Read** the selection aloud. Then **pass out** [STUDENT HANDOUT: CHRONOLOGICAL STRUCTURE](#) and display the text. **Ask** students which event should be placed in the first box and why it should be placed there. **Allow** students to talk to a neighbor for one minute and then collect responses. When the class agrees on the first event, **instruct** students to fill it in on the handout.

**Direct** students to work with a partner to complete the handout for the rest of the events in the selection. **Tell** students they may not need every shape on the handout. As students work, **circulate** and check for understanding.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING		
Determine if the student can <a href="#">IDENTIFY SIGNAL WORDS USED TO LIST DETAILS OR PROCEDURES (ELA-2544)</a> :		
▶ What signal words are used to show the order of events?	▶ What happens first in the text? What happens next?	▶ What is the chronological order of the event?

Next, **call on** students to share the chronological order or time sequence of the events in the selection. Students may fill in the handout boxes at the projector or share their ideas verbally.



If there are differences in the order students identify, ask students to determine what the most important details are and to determine if they are all represented in the handout. Once the class has determined the chronological order, **collect** the handouts.

For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.

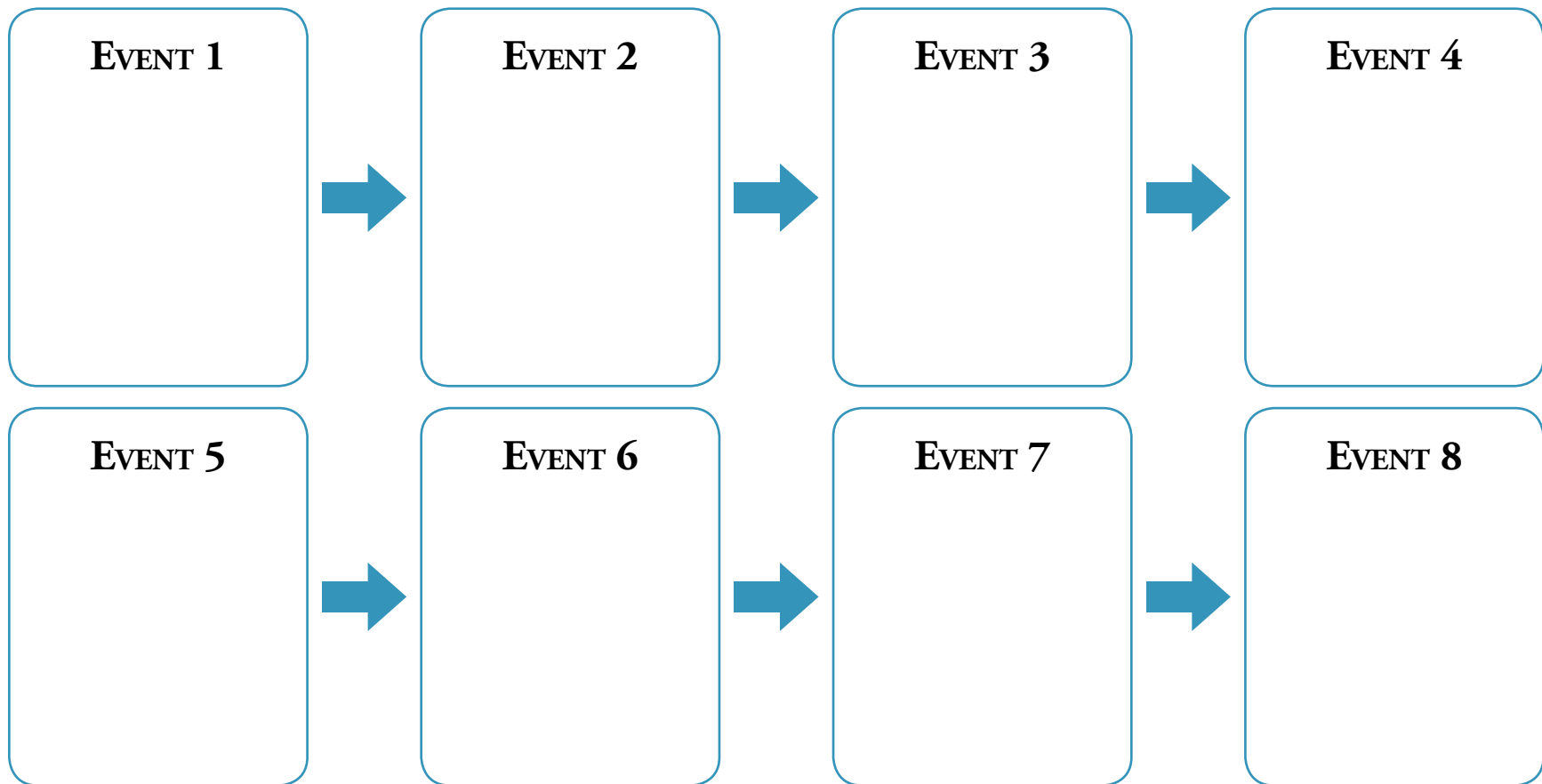
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## MY MORNING TIMELINE

### STUDENT HANDOUT

Lesson 1

**Directions:** Complete the timeline with the things you did before school this morning. Write the events in the order they happened.



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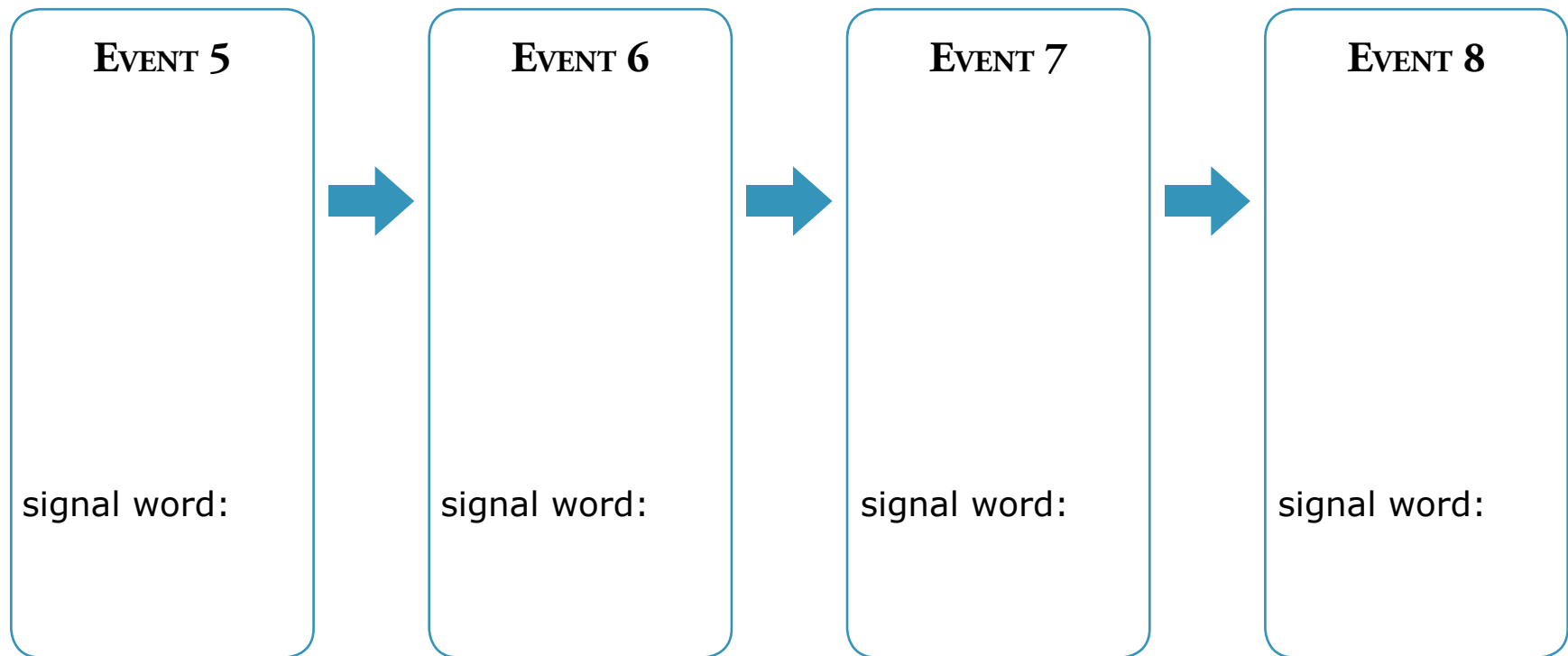
## CHRONOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

### STUDENT HANDOUT

Lesson 1

**Directions:** List the events from the text in the order they happen.

EVENT 1	EVENT 2	EVENT 3	EVENT 4
signal word:	signal word:	signal word:	signal word:



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## SIGNAL WORDS

### SUPPLEMENT

RI.4.5

Chronological Structure	Cause/Effect Structure
first	because of
next	as a result of
then	in order to
before	the effects of
after	therefore
when	consequently
finally	for this reason
following	if ____ then ____
afterward	thus
as soon as	accordingly
during	begins with
immediately	finally
later	first
not long after	how
now	is caused by
second	leads to
last	so that
another	when ____ then ____
until	thereby
additionally	

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# DESCRIBING CAUSE/EFFECT TEXT STRUCTURE

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RI.4.5, Lesson 2

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students describe cause/effect text structure in a social studies selection.

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### STANDARD

**RI.4.5** Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.

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### PREPARATION

Before the lesson, choose a selection that identifies the causes and effects of the event from the Lesson 1 passage. Arrange to display the text. Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use.

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### MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ cause-and-effect text, displayed
  - ▶ **SUPPLEMENT: SIGNAL WORDS** (optional)
  - ▶ **STUDENT HANDOUT: CAUSE/EFFECT STRUCTURE**
- 

### IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can describe the causes and effects of an event.”

**Review** chronological structure and ask students to explain the features of the structure. Correct responses include that signal words help explain the time order or that an event or topic is explained from the past to the present. **Ask** students to share signal words that are related to chronological order.

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**Explain** that today you will be looking for cause/effect structure. **Ask** students what a cause is. Then ask what an effect is. **Invite** students to share examples of causes and effects. If students have difficulty coming up with examples, ask, “What is a cause of you being late to school?” Then ask, “What is the effect of you being late to school? What kinds of things could happen?”

**Tell** students that a cause/effect text structure explains how something happened because of something else. **Display** **SUPPLEMENT: SIGNAL WORDS**. **Remind** students that signal words such as *therefore* and *as a result* show a cause/effect relationship.

**Display** the text selection. **Tell** students to follow along as you read aloud. **Read** the selection.

**Ask** students to identify the main event or topic that is being described.

**Pass out** **STUDENT HANDOUT: CAUSE/EFFECT STRUCTURE**. **Tell** students that they will work with a partner to determine the causes and effects of the event, using the signal word chart to help them find words that signal which details are causes and which details are effects. **Direct** students to write each cause and effect in a box on the handout. **Remind** students that they will need to reread the text to determine the causes and effects. Also, **instruct** students to discuss with their partner how they know each item is a cause or an effect.

While students work, **walk around** and ask the Checking for Understanding questions.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING		
Determine if the student can <b>DESCRIBE A CAUSE/EFFECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DETAILS (ELA-1941)</b> :		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ What signal words are used in the selection?</li><li>▶ Does this signal word show a cause or an effect?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ What is a cause or effect that the author uses about _____?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Why is this cause [or effect] important to the text topic?</li></ul>

**Invite** pairs to share with the class the details they found in the text and why they are a cause or an effect. **Ask** which signal words helped them identify the example as a cause or an effect. As students share, have them explain why each cause or effect is important to the topic.

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If students struggle to find causes and effects, help them identify the signal words and share examples that show a clear relationship of cause or effect. For example, the pony express disappeared as a result of the invention of the telegraph. The signal words *as a result* show that the invention of the telegraph caused the pony express to disappear. This cause shows that with the new technology of the telegraph, the pony express was not needed to deliver news because people sent news over telegraph wires.

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For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.



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## CAUSE/EFFECT STRUCTURE

### STUDENT HANDOUT

Lesson 2

**Directions:** Identify the causes and effects of the event from the text.

<b>CAUSE</b>  signal words:	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>EFFECT</b>  signal words:
<b>CAUSE</b>  signal words:		<b>EFFECT</b>  signal words:
<b>CAUSE</b>  signal words:		<b>EFFECT</b>  signal words:

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# DETERMINING AND DESCRIBING TEXT STRUCTURES

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RI.4.5, Lesson 3

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students identify and deconstruct different text structures.

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### STANDARD

**RI.4.5** Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.

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### PREPARATION

Before the lesson, identify one paragraph with a chronological sequence of steps or events and one paragraph that shows a cause/effect relationship. Arrange to display the texts for the class. Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use.

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### MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ displayed informational paragraphs
  - ▶ **SUPPLEMENT: SIGNAL WORDS** (optional)
  - ▶ **STUDENT HANDOUT: TEXT STRUCTURE**
- 

### IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can identify different text structures in informational texts.”

**Review** the two types of text structure from the previous lessons and display **SUPPLEMENT: SIGNAL WORDS**. **Tell** students these are common structures they will find in informational writing.

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**Display** the text selections and **pass out** [STUDENT HANDOUT: TEXT STRUCTURE](#).

**Read** the passages aloud. Then **tell** students they will work with a partner to determine which paragraph uses which structure and to fill in the information for each paragraph on the handout. **Remind** students to use the signal words list to help them determine the text structure.

As students work, **circulate** and collect evidence about student thinking.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING		
<p>Determine if the student can <b>IDENTIFY SIGNAL WORDS USED TO LIST DETAILS OR PROCEDURES (ELA-2544)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ What are the signal words in the paragraph?</li><li>▶ Which text structure do those signal words belong to?</li></ul>	<p>Determine if the student can <b>DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DETAILS IN A LIST OR PROCEDURE (ELA-1931)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ How do the details show the chronological or sequence relationship?</li></ul>	<p>Determine if the student can <b>DESCRIBE HOW DESCRIPTIVE DETAILS ARE RELATED IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-1934)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ How do the details describe the topic?</li></ul>

**Ask** individuals or pairs to share the structure they determined for each paragraph and how they determined the structure using details and signal words. **Collect** student handouts.

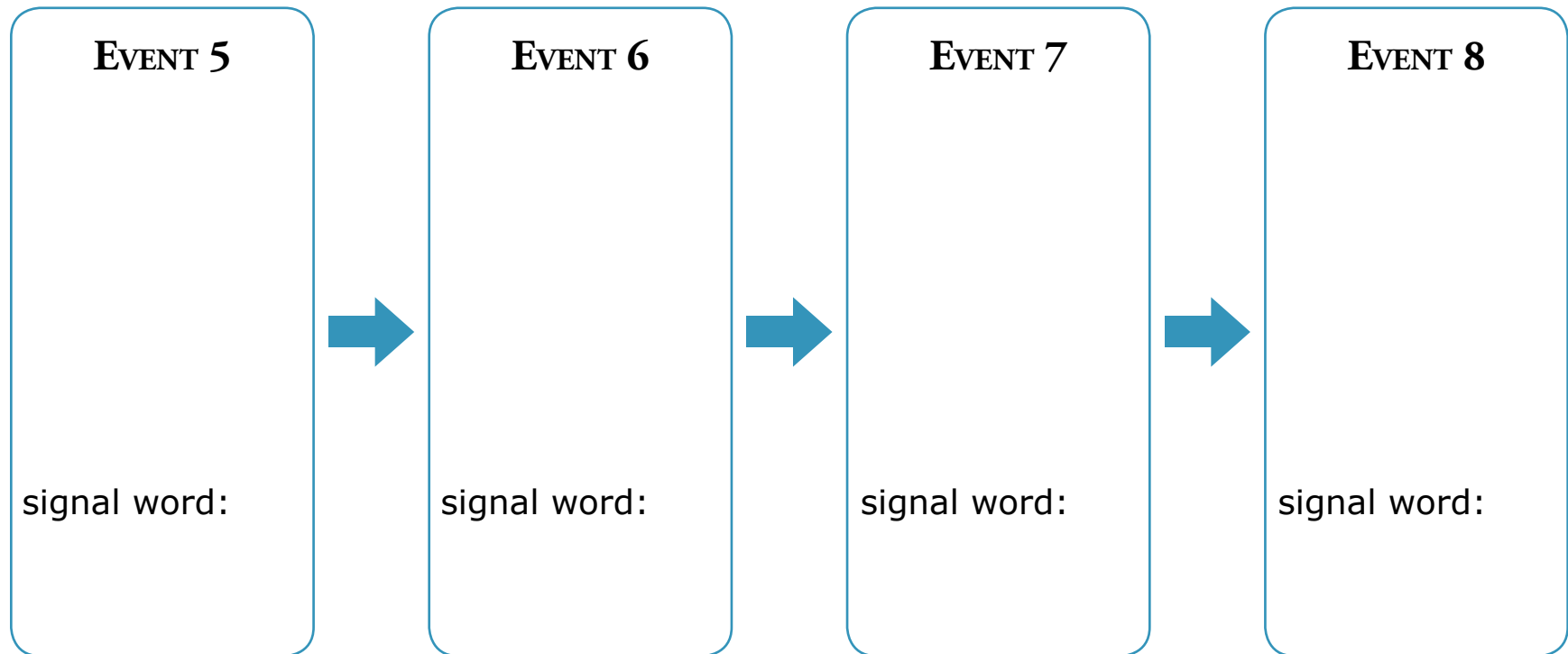
For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.

**Directions:** Decide which text structure each paragraph uses. Then write the signal words and details that helped you determine the structure.

### Chronological Order

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

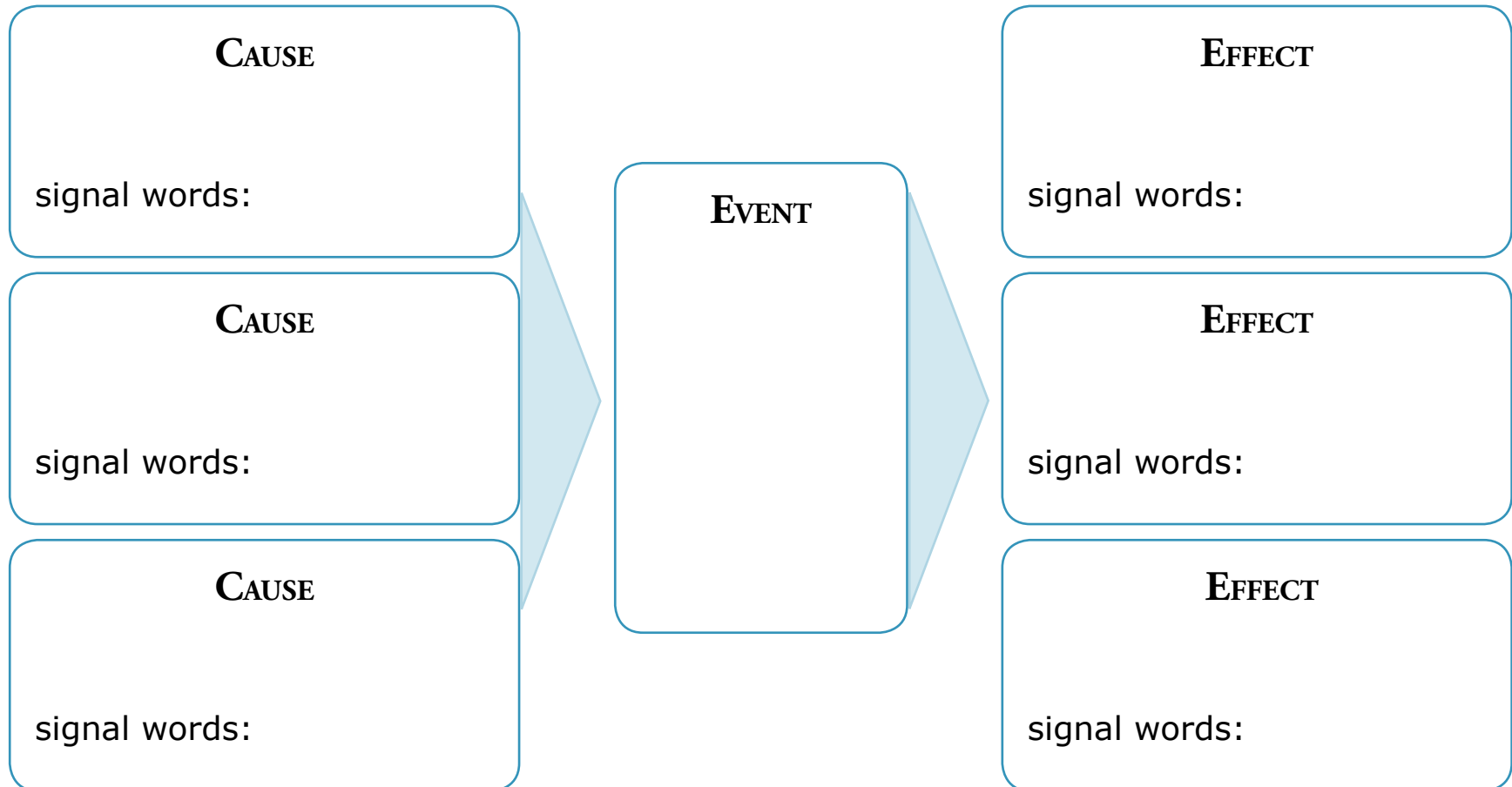
EVENT 1	EVENT 2	EVENT 3	EVENT 4
signal word:	signal word:	signal word:	signal word:



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## Cause/Effect

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_



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## COMPARE/CONTRAST STRUCTURE

### SUPPLEMENTARY STUDENT HANDOUT

**Directions:** Identify the similarities and differences of the topics in the text.

A Venn diagram consisting of two overlapping circles. The left circle is labeled 'TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_' and contains a numbered list (1., 2., 3.) and a section for 'signal words:'. The right circle is also labeled 'TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_' and contains a numbered list (1., 2., 3.) and a section for 'signal words:'. The overlapping area in the center is labeled 'ALIKE' and contains a numbered list (1., 2., 3.) and a section for 'signal words:'.

**Left Circle:**

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

1.  
2.  
3.

signal words:  
1.  
2.  
3.

**Right Circle:**

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

1.  
2.  
3.

signal words:  
1.  
2.  
3.

**Center (Overlap):**

ALIKE

1.  
2.  
3.

signal words:  
1.  
2.  
3.

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DESCRIPTIVE STRUCTURE  
SUPPLEMENTARY STUDENT HANDOUT

**Directions:** Identify the details that describe the topic.

**DETAIL**

signal words:

**DETAIL**

signal words:

**DETAIL**

signal words:

**TOPIC**

**DETAIL**

signal words:

**DETAIL**

signal words:



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## SIGNAL WORDS 2

### SUPPLEMENT

RI.4.5

Description	Compare/Contrast	Problem/Solution
for example for instance such as in addition in fact another also most important is a feature of to show furthermore	just like is similar to likewise in the same way both also too yet but while on the other hand instead in contrast however although is different from not only ____ but also ____	help solve the question is the problem is a solution is as a result of difficulty one answer is issue obstacle one reason is

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## DESCRIBING THE STRUCTURE

### STUDENT FEEDBACK GUIDE

RI.4.5, Lesson 1–3

**Directions:** For each learning goal, circle the sentence that best matches what you can do.

Learning Goal	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>Identify signal words from a list</b>	I know that signal words show what structure the text uses.	I can identify signal words of one structure (chronological or cause/effect).	I can identify signal words of chronological and cause/effect structures.
<b>Explain how details are related in a text</b>	I can explain how a detail in the text is connected to one event in the text.	I can explain how two text details are connected to an event in the text.	I can explain how text details are connected to several events in the text.
<b>Explain the overall structure of an informational text</b>	I can identify chronological or cause/effect structure.	I can identify if a text uses chronological or cause/effect structure by using signal words and text details.	I can use signal words and details to explain a text's structure when I know it uses chronological or cause/effect structure.