

Patterns – Aids to Notetaking

Lecturers and text authors organize ideas in predictable patterns in order to present material more clearly and understandably. Once you recognize these patterns, they can help you organize notes and speed learning. Below are 7 basic patterns for presenting text or lecture information:

1. **CHRONOLOGICAL** – This pattern is **based on time** periods such as seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, etc. *Examples - “the next day.....”, “4 hours later.....”, “previously.....”, “over the next 3 years.....”*
2. **PROCESS OR SEQUENCE** – In this pattern, information is presented according to **stages, steps, or logical development** of an idea. These may be numbered or lettered to help you understand the progression. *Examples - “the first step.....”, “the next stage.....”, “finally”, “1), 2), 3), etc.*
3. **CAUSE AND EFFECT** – **Something happens because something else happened** first. *Examples - “When this event took place, the impact was.....”, “The fallout from this was...”*
4. **PROBLEM AND SOLUTION** – **A situation is presented and 1 or more alternatives for resolution** are identified, proposed, attempted, or demonstrated. *Example - “The problem is how to distribute the wealth. Several proposals were made in the legislature.”*
5. **INDUCTIVE** – This logical pattern goes from **general to specific**. A general statement is made and then details presents to explain or support it. *Example - “Sometimes, the hardest part of writing is seeing the different styles. There are 5 basics kinds of writing.”*
6. **DEDUCTIVE** – This logical pattern goes from **specific to general**. Specifics are presented and then a general statement is made from these. *Example - “The 5 kinds of exposition are classification, compare/contrast, definition, narrative, and process. Learning to write in these formats is sometimes difficult.”*
7. **COMPARE/CONTRAST** – This pattern focuses upon **similarities and/or differences when comparing and differences only when contrasting**. *Example - “Compare and contrast memorizing and understanding.”*

Watch for these patterns as you read textbook material, listen to lectures, and take notes. Recognizing these patterns will help organize, learn, and recall notes for exams.