

6.1 Organization

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand how to develop and organize content in patterns that are appropriate for your document and audience.
2. Demonstrate your ability to order, outline, and emphasize main points in one or more written assignments.
3. Demonstrate how to compose logically organized paragraphs, sentences, and transitions in one or more written assignments.

The purpose of business writing is to communicate facts and ideas. In order to accomplish that purpose, each document has key components that need to be present in order for your reading audience to understand the message. These elements may seem simple to the point that you may question how any writer could neglect them. But if you take note of how often miscommunication and misunderstanding happen, particularly in written communications, you will realize that it happens all the time. Omission or neglect may be intentional, but it is often unintentional; the writer assumes (wrongly) that the reader will easily understand a concept, idea, or the meaning of the message. From background to language, culture to education, there are many variables that come into play and make effective communication a challenge. The degree to which you address these basic elements will increase the effectiveness of your documents. Each document must address the following:

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- How
- (and sometimes) Why

If you have these elements in mind as you prepare your document, it will be easier to decide what to write and in what order. They will also be useful when you are reviewing your document before delivering it. If your draft omits any one of these elements or addresses it in an unclear fashion, you will know what you need to do to fix it.

Another way to approach organizing your document is with the classical proofs known as *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*. **Ethos**, or your credibility, will come through with your choice of sources and authority on the subject(s). Your **logos**, or the logic of your thoughts represented across the document, will allow the reader to come to understand the relationships among who, what, where, when, and so forth. If your readers cannot follow your logic they will lose interest, fail to understand your message, and possibly not even read it at all. Finally, your **pathos**, or passion and enthusiasm, will be reflected in your design and word choices. If your document fails to convey enthusiasm for the subject, how can you expect the reader to be interested? Every document, indeed every communication, represents aspects of these classical elements.

General Purpose and Thesis Statements

No matter what your business writing project involves, it needs to convey some central idea. To clarify the idea in your mind and make sure it comes through to your audience, write a thesis statement. A thesis statement, or central idea, should be short, specific, and to the point. Steven Beebe and Susan Beebe, S. [Steven], & Beebe, S. [Susan]. (1997). *Public speaking: An audience-centered approach* (3rd ed., pp. 121–122). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. recommend five guiding principles when considering your thesis statement. The thesis statement should

1. be a declarative statement;
2. be a complete sentence;
3. use specific language, not vague generalities;
4. be a single idea;
5. reflect consideration of the audience.

This statement is key to the success of your document. If your audience has to work to find out what exactly you are talking about, or what your stated purpose or goal is, they will be less likely to read, be influenced, or recall what you have written. By stating your point clearly in your introduction, and then referring back to it in the body of the document and at the end, you will help your readers to understand and remember your message.

Organizing Principles

Once you know the basic elements of your message, you need to decide in what order to present them to your audience. A central organizing principle will help you determine a logical order for your information. One common organizing principle is chronology, or time: the writer tells what happened first, then what happened next, then what is happening now, and, finally, what is expected to happen in the future. Another common organizing principle is comparison: the writer describes one product, an argument on one side of an issue, or one possible course of action; and then compares it with another product, argument, or course of action.

As an example, let's imagine that you are a business writer within the transportation industry and you have been assigned to write a series of informative pieces about an international initiative called the "TransAmerica Transportation System Study." Just as the First Transcontinental Railroad once unified the United States from east to west, which was further reinforced by the Interstate Highway System, the proposed TransAmerica Transportation System will facilitate integrating the markets of Mexico, the United States, and Canada from north to south. Rail transportation has long been an integral part of the transportation and distribution system for goods across the Americas, and its role will be important in this new system.

In deciding how to organize your report, you have several challenges and many possibilities of different organizing principles to use. Part of your introduction will involve a historical perspective, and a discussion of the events that led from the First Transcontinental Railroad to the TransAmerica Transportation System proposal. Other aspects will include comparing the old railroad and highway systems to the new ones, and the transformative effect this will have on business and industry. You will need to acknowledge the complex relationships and challenges that collaboration has overcome, and highlight the common benefits. You will be called on to write informative documents as part of a public relations initiative, persuasive essays to underscore the benefits for those who prefer the status quo, and even write speeches for celebrations and awards.

Table 6.1 "Organizing Principles" lists seventeen different organizing principles and how they might be applied to various pieces you would write about the TransAmerican Transportation System. The left column provides the name of the organizing principle. The center column explains the process of organizing a document according to each principle, and the third column provides an example.

Table 6.1 Organizing Principles

| Organizing Principle | Explanation of Process | Example |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Time (Chronological) | Structuring your document by time shows a series of events or steps in a process, which typically has a beginning, middle, and end. "Once upon a time stories" follow a chronological pattern. | <p>Before the First Transcontinental Railroad, the events that led to its construction, and its impact on early America. Additional examples may include the national highway projects and the development of reliable air freight.</p> <p>Now we can consider the TransAmerica Transportation System and the similar and distinct events that led us to today.</p> |
| 2. Comparison | Structuring your document by comparison focuses on the similarities and/or differences between points or concepts. | <p>A comparison of pre- and post-First Transcontinental Railroad America, showing how health and life expectancy improved with the increased access to goods and services.</p> <p>Another example could be drawn from air freight, noting that organ donation in one part of the country can now save a life in another state or on the opposite coast.</p> <p>In a similar way, the TransAmerica Transportation System will improve the lives of the citizens of Mexico, the United States, and Canada.</p> |
| 3. Contrast | Structuring your document by using contrasting points highlights the differences between items and concepts. | <p>A contrast of pre- and post-First Transcontinental Railroad America showing how much time it took to communicate via letter, or how long it took to move out West. Just in time delivery and the modern highway system and trucking may serve as an example for contrast.</p> <p>The TransAmerica Transportation System will reduce customs clearing time while increasing border security along the distribution network.</p> |
| | | The movement of people and goods out West grew considerably from 1750 to 1850. With the availability of a new and faster way to go West, people |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| 4. Cause and Effect | Structuring your document by cause and effect structuring establishes a relationship between two events or situations, making the connection clear. | generally supported its construction. Both the modern highway and air transportation systems may serve as examples, noting how people, goods, and services can be delivered in drastically reduced time frames. Citizens of all three countries involved have increasingly been involved in trade, and movement across common borders through the TransAmerica Transportation System will enable the movement of goods and services with great efficiency. |
| 5. Problem and Solution | Structuring your document by problem and solution means you state the problem and detail how it was solved. This approach is effective for persuasive speeches. | Manufacturers were producing better goods for less money at the start of the Industrial Revolution, but they lacked a fast and effective method of getting their goods to growing markets. The First Transcontinental Railroad gave them speed, economy, and access to new markets. Highways and air routes have dramatically increased this trend. In a similar way, this new system is the next evolutionary step in the integration and growth of our common marketplaces. |
| 6. Classification (Categorical) | Structuring your document by classification establishes categories. | <p>At the time the United States considered the First Transcontinental Railroad, there were three main types of transportation: by water, by horse, and by foot.</p> <p>Now rail, road, and air transportation are the norm across business and industry.</p> |
| 7. Biographical | Structuring your document by biography means examining specific people as they relate to the central topic. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1804: Lewis and Clark travel 4,000 miles in over two years across America • 1862: President Lincoln signs the Pacific Railroad Act • 1876: The Transcontinental Express from New York arrives in San Francisco with a record-breaking time of 83 hours and 39 minutes • 2009: President Obama can cross America by plane in less than 5 hours • So why shouldn't the ratio of time from import to consumer be reduced? |
| 8. Space (Spatial) | Structuring your document by space involves the parts of something and how they fit to form the whole. | A train uses a heat source to heat water, create steam, and turn a turbine, which moves a lever, causing a wheel to move on a track. A package picked up from an office in New York in the morning is delivered to another in Los Angeles in the afternoon. From a Pacific port in Northern Mexico to a market in Chicago or Canada, this system unifies the movement of goods and services. |
| 9. Ascending and Descending | Structuring your document by ascending or descending order involves focusing on quantity and quality. One good story (quality) leads to the larger picture, or the reverse. | A day in the life of a traveler in 1800. Incremental developments in transportation to the present, expressed through statistics, graphs, maps, and charts. A day in the life of a traveler in 1960, 1980, or even 2000, with visual examples of changes and trends may also contribute to the document. A day in the life of a traveler in 2009 compared to the |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| | | relatively slow movement of goods and services, constrained by an antiquated transportation network that negatively impacts efficiency. |
| 10. Psychological | <p>It is also called “Monroe’s Motivated Sequence.” Ayres, J., & Miller, J. (1994). <i>Effective public speaking</i> (4th ed., p. 274). Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark.</p> <p>Structuring your document on the psychological aspects of the audience involves focusing on their inherent needs and wants. See Maslow Maslow, A. (1970). <i>Motivation and personality</i> (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Harper & Row. and Schutz. Schutz, W. (1966). <i>The interpersonal underworld</i>. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books. The author calls <i>attention</i> to a <i>need</i>, then focuses on the satisfaction of the need, <i>visualization</i> of the solution, and ends with a proposed or historical <i>action</i>. Useful for a persuasive message.</p> | <p>When families in the year 1800 went out West, they rarely returned to see family and friends. The country as a whole was an extension of this distended family, separated by time and distance. The railroad, the highways, and air travel brought families and the country together. In the same way, common markets already exist across the three countries, but remain separated by time, distance, and an antiquated system scheduled for significant improvement.</p> |
| 11. Elimination | <p>Structuring your document using the process of elimination involves outlining all the possibilities.</p> | <p>The First Transcontinental Railroad helped pave the way for the destruction of the Native American way of life in 1870. After examining treaties, relocation and reservations, loss of the buffalo, disease, and war, the railroad can be accurately considered the catalyst for the end of an era.</p> <p>From the lessons of history we can learn to protect and preserve our distinct cultures, languages, and sovereign territories as we integrate a common transportation system for our mutual benefit and security.</p> |
| 12. Example | <p>Structuring your document by example involves providing vivid, specific examples (as opposed to abstract representations of data) to support main points.</p> | <p>Just as it once took weeks, even months, for a simple letter to move from coast to coast, goods and services have had a long and arduous process from importation to market. For example, the popular Christmas toy X, imported to Mexico from China in September, may well not be on store shelves by December 25 under the old system. Now it can move from importation to market in under two weeks.</p> |
| | <p>Structuring your document by process and procedure is similar to the time (chronological) organizational</p> | <p>From conception to design, manufacturing to packaging, to transportation and inspection, to sales</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| 13. Process and Procedure | pattern with the distinction of steps or phases that lead to a complete end goal. This is often referred to as the “how-to” organizational pattern. | and sales support, let’s examine how the new transportation system facilitates increased efficiency in delivery to market and product support. |
| 14. Point Pattern | Structuring your document in a series of points allows for the presentation of diverse assertions to be aligned in a cohesive argument with clear support. | The TransAmerica Transportation System offers several advantages: security, speed, efficiency, and cost reduction. |
| 15. Definition | Structuring your document with a guiding definition allows for a clear introduction of terms and concepts while reducing the likelihood of misinterpretation. | The TransAmerica Transportation System can be defined by its purpose, its integrated components, and its impact on the secure movement of goods and services across common borders. |
| 16. Testimonial | Structuring your document around a testimony, or first person account of an experience, can be an effective way to make an abstract concept clearer to an audience. | According to Ms. X, owner of InterCountry Trading Company, it previously took 12 weeks to import, clear, and deliver a product from Mexico to the United States, and an additional four weeks to take delivery in Canada. Now the process takes less than two weeks. |
| 17. Ceremonial (Events, Ceremonies, or Celebrations) | Structuring your document by focusing on the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thanking dignitaries and representatives 2. The importance of the event 3. The relationship of the event to the audience 4. Thanking the audience for participation in the event, ceremony, or celebration | Thanking the representatives, builders, and everyone involved with the construction of the TransAmerica Transportation System. The railroad will unite America, and bring us closer in terms of trade, communication, and family. Thank you for participating in today’s dedication. |

Outlines

Chances are you have learned the basic principles of outlining in English writing courses: an **outline** is a framework that organizes main ideas and subordinate ideas in a hierarchical series of roman numerals and alphabetical letters. The right column of [Table 6.2 "Outline 1"](#) presents a generic outline in a classical style. In the left column, the three main structural elements of an informative document are tied to the outline. Your task is to fill in the right column outline with the actual ideas and points you are making in your writing project. Feel free to adapt and tailor it to your needs, depending on the specifics of your report, letter, or other document.

Table 6.2 Outline 1

| Introduction | Main Idea |
|--------------|---|
| Body | I. Main idea: Point 1 Subpoint 1 A.1 specific information 1 A.2 specific information 2 |
| | II. Main idea: Point 2 |

| | |
|------------|---|
| Body | Subpoint 1 B.1 specific information 1 B.2 specific information 2 |
| | III. Main idea: Point 3 Subpoint 1 C.1 specific information 1 C.2 specific information 2 |
| Conclusion | Summary: Main points 1-3 |

Table 6.3 "Outline 2" presents an alternate outline form that may be more suitable for brief documents like letters and e-mails. You can use this format as a model or modify it as needed.

Table 6.3 Outline 2

| | | |
|---|--------------|---|
| 1 | Introduction | General purpose, statement, or thesis statement |
| 2 | Body | Point 1: |
| | | Point 2: |
| | | Point 3: |
| 3 | Conclusion | Summarize main points |

Paragraphs

Paragraphs are how we package information in business communication, and the more efficient the package, the easier the meaning can be delivered.

You may wish to think of each paragraph as a small essay within a larger information platform, defined by a guiding thesis and an organizing principle. The standard five-paragraph essay format used on college term papers is mirrored in individual paragraphs. Often college essays have minimum or maximum word counts, but paragraphs hardly ever have established limits. Each paragraph focuses on one central idea. It can be as long or as short as it needs to be to get the message across, but remember your audience and avoid long, drawn-out paragraphs that may lose your reader's attention.

Just as a document generally has an introduction, body, and conclusion, so does a paragraph. Each paragraph has one idea, thought, or purpose that is stated in an introductory sentence. This is followed by one or more supporting sentences and concluded with a summary statement and transition or link to the next idea, or paragraph. Let's address each in turn:

- The **topic sentence** states the main thesis, purpose, or topic of the paragraph; it defines the subject matter to be addressed in that paragraph.
- **Body sentences** support the topic sentence and relate clearly to the subject matter

of the paragraph and overall document. They may use an organizing principle similar to that of the document itself (chronology, contrast, spatial) or introduce a related organizing principle (point by point, process or procedure).

- The **conclusion sentence** brings the paragraph to a close; it may do this in any of several ways. It may reinforce the paragraph's main point, summarize the relationships among the body sentences, and/or serve as a transition to the next paragraph.

Effective Sentences

We have talked about the organization of documents and paragraphs, but what about the organization of sentences? You have probably learned in English courses that each sentence needs to have a subject and a verb; most sentences also have an object. There are four basic types of sentences: declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory. Here are some examples:

- **Declarative** – You are invited to join us for lunch.
- **Imperative** – Please join us for lunch.
- **Interrogative** – Would you like to join us for lunch?
- **Exclamatory** – I'm so glad you can join us!

Declarative sentences make a statement, whereas **interrogative sentences** ask a question. **Imperative sentences** convey a command, and **exclamatory sentences** express a strong emotion. Interrogative and exclamatory sentences are easy to identify by their final punctuation, a question mark and an exclamation point, respectively. In business writing, declarative and imperative sentences are more frequently used.

There are also compound and complex sentences, which may use two or more of the four basic types in combination:

1. *Simple sentence.* Sales have increased.
2. *Compound sentence.* Sales have increased and profits continue to grow.
3. *Complex sentence.* Sales have increased and we have the sales staff to thank for it.
4. *Compound complex sentence.* Although the economy has been in recession, sales have increased, and we have sales staff to thank for it.

In our simple sentence, "sales" serves as the subject and "have increased" serves as the verb. The sentence can stand alone because it has the two basic parts that constitute a sentence. In our compound sentence we have two independent clauses that could stand alone; they are joined by the conjunction "and." In our complex sentence, we have an independent clause, which can stand on its own, combined with a fragment (not a sentence) or dependent clause which, if it were not joined to the independent clause, would not make any sense. The fragment "and we have the sales staff to thank" on its own would have us asking "for what?" as the subject is absent. Complex compound sentences combine a mix of independent and dependent clauses, and at least one of the clauses must be dependent.

The ability to write complete, correct sentences is like any other skill—it comes with practice. The more writing you do, as you make an effort to use correct grammar, the easier it will become. Reading audiences, particularly in a business context, will not waste their time on poor writing and will move on. Your challenge as an effective business writer is to know what you are going to write and then to make it come across,

via words, symbols, and images, in a clear and concise manner.

Sentences should avoid being vague and focus on specific content. Each sentence should convey a complete thought; a vague sentence fails to meet this criteria. The reader is left wondering what the sentence was supposed to convey.

- Vague - We can facilitate solutions in pursuit of success by leveraging our core strengths.
- Specific - By using our knowledge, experience, and capabilities, we can achieve the production targets for the coming quarter.

Effective sentences also limit the range and scope of each complete thought, avoiding needless complexity. Sometimes writers mistakenly equate long, complex sentences with excellence and skill. Clear, concise, and often brief sentences serve to communicate ideas and concepts in effective and efficient ways that complex, hard-to-follow sentences do not.

- *Complex.* Air transportation features speed of delivery in ways few other forms of transportation can match, including tractor-trailer and rail, and is readily available to the individual consumer and the corporate client alike.
- *Clear.* Air transportation is accessible and faster than railroad or trucking.

Effective sentences are complete, containing a subject and a verb. Incomplete sentences—also known as sentence fragments—demonstrate a failure to pay attention to detail. They often invite misunderstanding, which is the opposite of our goal in business communication.

- Fragments - Although air transportation is fast. Costs more than trucking.
- Complete - Although air transportation is fast, it costs more than trucking.

Effective business writing avoids bureaucratic language and phrase that are the hallmark of decoration. Decoration is a reflection of ritual, and ritual has its role. If you are the governor of a state, and want to make a resolution declaring today as HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, you are allowed to start the document with “Whereas” because of its ritual importance. Similarly, if you are writing a legal document, tradition calls for certain standard phrases such as “know all men by these presents.” However, in standard business writing, it is best to refrain from using bureaucratic phrases and ritualistic words that decorate and distract the reader from your clear, essential meaning. If the customer, client, or supplier does not understand the message the first time, each follow-up attempt to clarify the meaning through interaction is a cost. [Table 6.4 "Bureaucratic Phrases and Standard Alternatives"](#) presents a few examples of common bureaucratic phrases and standard English alternatives.

Table 6.4 Bureaucratic Phrases and Standard Alternatives

| Bureaucratic Phrase | Standard English Alternatives |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| At the present time | Now, today |
| Concerning the matter of | Regarding, about |
| Despite the fact that | Although, while, even though |
| Due to the fact that | Because, since, as |
| Implement an investigation of | Find out, investigate |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Inasmuch as | Because, since, as |
| It has been suggested | [name of person or organization] has suggested, said, or stated |
| It is believed that | [name of person or organization] believes, thinks, or says that |
| It is the opinion of the author | I believe, I think, in my opinion |
| Until such time as | Until, when |
| With the exception of | Except, apart from |

In oral communication, repetition can be an effective strategy to reinforce a message, but in written communication it adds needless length to a document and impairs clarity.

- Redundant - In this day and age air transportation by air carrier is the clear winner over alternative modes of conveyance for speed and meeting tight deadlines.
- Clear - Today air transportation is faster than other methods.

When a writer states that something is a “true fact,” a group achieved a “consensus of opinion,” or that the “final outcome” was declared, the word choices reflect an unnecessary redundancy. A fact, consensus, or outcome need not be qualified with words that state similar concepts. If it is fact, it is true. A consensus, by definition, is formed in a group from diverse opinions. An outcome is the final result, so adding the word “final” repeats the fact unnecessarily.

In business writing we seek clear and concise writing that speaks for itself with little or no misinterpretation. The more complex a sentence becomes, the easier it is to lose track of its meaning. When we consider that it may read by someone for whom English is a second language, the complex sentence becomes even more problematic. If we consider its translation, we add another layer of complexity that can lead to miscommunication. Finally, effective sentences follow the KISS formula for success: Keep It Simple—Simplify!

Transitions

If you were going to build a house, you would need a strong foundation. Could you put the beams to hold your roof in place without anything to keep them in place? Of course not; they would fall down right away. In the same way, the columns or beams are like the main ideas of your document. They need to have connections to each other so that they become interdependent and stay where you want them so that your house, or your writing, doesn’t come crashing down.

Transitions involve words or visual devices that help the audience follow the author’s ideas, connect the main points to each other, and see the relationships you’ve created in the information you are presenting. They are often described as bridges between ideas, thought or concepts, providing some sense of where you’ve been and where you are going with your document. Transitions guide the audience in the progression from one significant idea, concept, or point to the next. They can also show the relationships between the main point and the support you are using to illustrate your point, provide examples for it, or refer to outside sources. [Table 6.5 "Types of Transitions in Writing"](#) is a summary of fourteen different types of transitions. Consider them as you contemplate how to bring together your information and make notes on your outline.

Table 6.5 Types of Transitions in Writing

| Type | Definition | Examples |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Internal Previews | An internal preview is a brief statement referring to a point you are going to make. It can forecast or foreshadow a main point in your document. | If we look ahead to, next we'll examine, now we can focus our attention on, first we'll look at, then we'll examine |
| 2. Signposts | A signpost alerts the audience you are moving from one topic to the next. Sign posts or signal words draw attention to themselves and focus the audience's attention. | Stop and consider, we can now address, turning from/to, another, this reminds me of, I would like to emphasize |
| 3. Internal Summaries | An internal summary briefly covers information or alludes to information introduced previously. It can remind an audience of a previous point and reinforce information covered in your document. | As I have said, as we have seen, as mentioned earlier, in any event, in conclusion, in other words, in short, on the whole, therefore, to summarize, as a result, as has been noted previously, |
| 4. Sequence | A sequence transition outlines a hierarchical order or series of steps in your document. It can illustrate order or steps in a logical process. | First...second...third, furthermore, next, last, still, also, and then, besides, finally |
| 5. Time | A time transition focuses on the chronological aspects of your order. Particularly useful in an article utilizing a story, this transition can illustrate for the audience progression of time. | Before, earlier, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, lately, later, meanwhile, now, presently, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon as long as, as soon as, at last, at length, at that time, then, until, afterward |
| 6. Addition | An addition or additive transition contributes to a previous point. This transition can build on a previous point and extend the discussion. | Additionally, not to mention, in addition to, furthermore, either, neither, besides, on, in fact, as a matter of fact, actually, not only, but also, as well as |
| 7. Similarity | A transition by similarity draws a parallel between two ideas, concepts or examples. It can indicate a common area between points for the audience. | In the same way, by the same token, equally, similarly, just as we have seen, in the same vein |
| 8. Comparison | A transition by comparison draws a distinction between two ideas, concepts or examples. It can indicate a common or divergent area between points for the audience. | Like, in relation to, bigger than, the fastest, larger than, than any other, is bigger than, both, either...or, likewise |
| 9. Contrast | A transition by contrast draws a distinction of difference, opposition, or irregularity between two ideas, concepts or examples. This transition can indicate a key distinction between points for the audience. | But, neither...nor, however on the other hand, although, despite, even though, in contrast, in spite of, on the contrary conversely, unlike, while instead, nevertheless, nonetheless, regardless, still, though, yet, although |

| Type | Definition | Examples |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| 10. Cause and Effect, Result | A transition by cause and effect or result illustrates a relationship between two ideas, concepts or examples and may focus on the outcome or result. It can illustrate a relationship between points for the audience. | As a result, because, consequently, for this purpose, accordingly, so, then, therefore, thereupon, thus, to this end, for this reason, as a result, because, therefore, consequently, as a consequence, and the outcome was |
| 11. Examples | A transition by example illustrates a connection between a point and an example or examples. You may find visual aids work well with this type of transition. | In fact, as we can see, after all, even, for example, for instance, of course, specifically, such as, in the following example, to illustrate my point |
| 12. Place | A place transition refers to a location, often in a spatially organized essay, of one point of emphasis to another. Again, visual aids work well when discussing physical location with the reading audience. | opposite to, there, to the left, to the right, above, adjacent to, elsewhere, far, farther on, below, beyond, closer to, here, near, nearby, next to |

| | | |
|----------------------|--|---|
| 13. Clarification | A clarification transition restates or further develops a main idea or point. It can also serve as a signal to a key point. | To clarify, that is, I mean, in other words, to put it another way that is to say, to rephrase it, in order to explain, this means |
| 14. Concession | A concession transition indicates knowledge of contrary information. It can address a perception the audience may hold and allow for clarification. | We can see that while, although it is true that, granted that, while it may appear that, naturally, of course, I can see that, I admit that while |

KEY TAKEAWAY

Organization is the key to clear writing. Organize your document using key elements, an organizing principle, and an outline. Organize your paragraphs and sentences so that your audience can understand them, and use transitions to move from one point to the next.

EXERCISES

1. What functions does organization serve in a document? Can they be positive or negative? Explain and discuss with a classmate.
2. Create an outline from a sample article or document. Do you notice an organizational pattern? Explain and discuss with a classmate.
3. Which of the following sentences are good examples of correct and clear business English? For sentences needing improvement, describe what is wrong and write a sentence that corrects the problem. Discuss your answers with your classmates.
 - a. Marlys has been chosen to receive a promotion next month.
 - b. Because her work is exemplary.
 - c. At such time as it becomes feasible, it is the intention of our department to facilitate a lunch meeting to congratulate Marlys
 - d. As a result of budget allocation analysis and examination of our financial condition, it is indicated that salary compensation for Marlys can be increased to a limited degree.
 - e. When will Marlys's promotion be official?
 - f. I am so envious!
 - g. Among those receiving promotions, Marlys, Bob, Germaine, Terry, and Akiko.
 - h. The president asked all those receiving promotions come to the meeting.
 - i. Please attend a meeting for all employees who will be promoted next month.
 - j. Marlys intends to use her new position to mentor employees joining the firm, which will encourage commitment and good work habits.
4. Find an example of a poor sentence or a spelling or grammar error that was published online or in print and share your finding with the class.