

Grade 3 Playlist: Relationships Between a Series of Events, Ideas, or Steps

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.3:

- Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

Welcome

Writing is sometimes like doing a puzzle. A writer needs to give readers information piece by piece so that they can see the big picture by the time they are done reading. Writers can give this information in a variety of different ways. How they choose to structure their writing is up to them. In nonfiction texts, writers most often use a chronological, sequential, or a cause-and-effect structure to show the relationship between the events, steps, or ideas in their text. If done correctly, all of the information will fit together nicely in a reader's brain, just like a finished puzzle, and the reader will completely understand what the writer was trying to explain or teach.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- identify time, sequence, and cause-and-effect organization.
- explain the relationship between events, ideas, concepts, or steps in a text.

Review

Key Terms

- The **structure** of a text is how the author organizes information.
- **Chronological order**, or time order, organizes information based on the date it happened in history.
- **Sequence** organizes information in the order that events happened or should happen.
- **Cause/effect** organizes information by the reason for an action and the result of that action.

Exploring the Standard

In order to see the relationships shown in a nonfiction text, readers need to examine the text structure. Is the text organized in a chronological way? Is the text showing the order of steps in a process? Is the text showing a cause-and-effect relationship? By examining the structure, a reader can better understand the relationships among information in the text.



A Closer Look: Historical Texts

One of the most common ways for historical texts to be organized is chronological order, or time order. This structure shows how the events in the texts occurred in relation to one another. The readers are able to see what happened first, second, third, and so on. Authors often provide the dates of historical events to show when they happened.

Example 1

This excerpt from “Samuel Finley Breese Morse” by Hattie E. Maccomber is about the man who invented the telegraph. It puts events in time order. Read this text, and try to find clues about the text’s structure.

It was not until 1837 that Mr. Morse had his wonderful invention ready to exhibit. During that year many people saw it. Many thought it a silly toy. Few dreamed of its importance.

Mr. Alfred Vail, whose father and brother had large brass and iron works, was one of those who believed in it. Mr. Vail decided to assist Mr. Morse. He was young and liked machinery. Long after, Mr. Morse said that much of the success of the telegraph was due to Mr. Vail.

In 1838, Mr. Morse asked Congress to give him aid. He wished to build a telegraph between Baltimore and Washington. The President and others saw the telegraph exhibited.

A gentleman, named Mr. F.O.J. Smith, helped Mr. Morse with money. But many Congressmen laughed at the idea. Do you not think they felt ashamed when they found how great a thing they had been laughing at?

While waiting for Congress to decide, Mr. Morse went to Europe again. He tried to get a patent in London, but it was refused him.

Notice the author’s use of dates in the text. By putting the year that certain events occurred, the author is showing when events happened in history. There are also key words such as **during** and **while** that help show when other events in the text occurred. Other words can help a reader know the chronological order of events. Some of these words are **after**, **eventually**, **finally**, **later**, **now**, **soon**, and **next**.

Example 2

Historical texts can also have a cause-and-effect structure. This passage, “The First Transcontinental Telegraph System Was Completed,” is also about the invention of the telegraph. Look at the way it handles information differently.

On October 24, 1861, the first transcontinental telegraph system was completed. This communication advancement would soon spell the end for the horses and their riders working for the Pony Express. The telegraph system, invented by Samuel F.B. Morse, could transmit messages rapidly from coast to coast using the electronic dots and dashes of Morse code. Previously, the Pony Express had provided the fastest delivery of a message across America. What do you know about the Pony Express?



Teaching Notes: Relationships Between a Series of Events, Ideas, or Steps

The goal of RI.3.3 is for students to be able to describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classrooms as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Ask students to look on a website (e.g., <http://www.dkfindout.com/us/>; <http://www.timeforkids.com/>; <https://www.highlightskids.com/articles>) and find an article with a clear chronological, sequential, or cause-and-effect structure. Have students circle key words or phrases that show the structure.
2. Give students a list of informational topics (e.g., global warming, building a bike, World War II). Have students get into groups and decide which structure would be best for each topic. If there are differences in the groups' choices, ask them to explain their reasoning.

Writing Prompts

Put students in pairs, and give each pair one of the three structures. Ask them to research a topic of their choice and write a short informational text using that structure.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RI.3.3:

- **“6 Reasons to Use Informational Text in Primary Grades”**: In this article, Nell K. Duke discusses the importance of talking about nonfiction texts with students:
<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/6-reasons-use-informational-text-primary-grades>
- **Ramen Noodles**: In this online lesson plan, students learn more about sequencing and the importance of steps using easy ramen noodle recipes:
http://www.readingmatrix.com/articles/jacobs_yong/article-part2.pdf
- **“Recognizing Cause-and-Effect Relationships”**: In this unit online lesson plan, students “read a text, locate clue words and determine its organization structure: cause and effect”:
<http://betterlesson.com/lesson/549780/recognizing-cause-and-effect-relationships>
- **Videos**: These videos correspond with RI.3.3 and might be helpful for classroom use:
<http://ccss3.watchknowlearn.org/Category.aspx?CategoryID=15151>

