

Chapter 7 Overview: Organizing Your Information

- Understanding three principles for organizing technical information
- Understanding conventional organizational patterns

Understand three principles for organizing technical information:

- Analyze your audience and purpose.
- Use conventional patterns of organization.
- Display your organizational pattern prominently in the document.

Ask four questions when you study documents from other cultures:

- Does the document follow expected organizational patterns?
- Do the introduction and conclusion present the kind of information you would expect?
- Does the document appear to be organized linearly?
- Does the document use headings? If so, does it use more than one level?

Display your organizational pattern prominently:

- Create a detailed table of contents.
- Use headings liberally.
- Use topic sentences at the beginnings of your paragraphs.

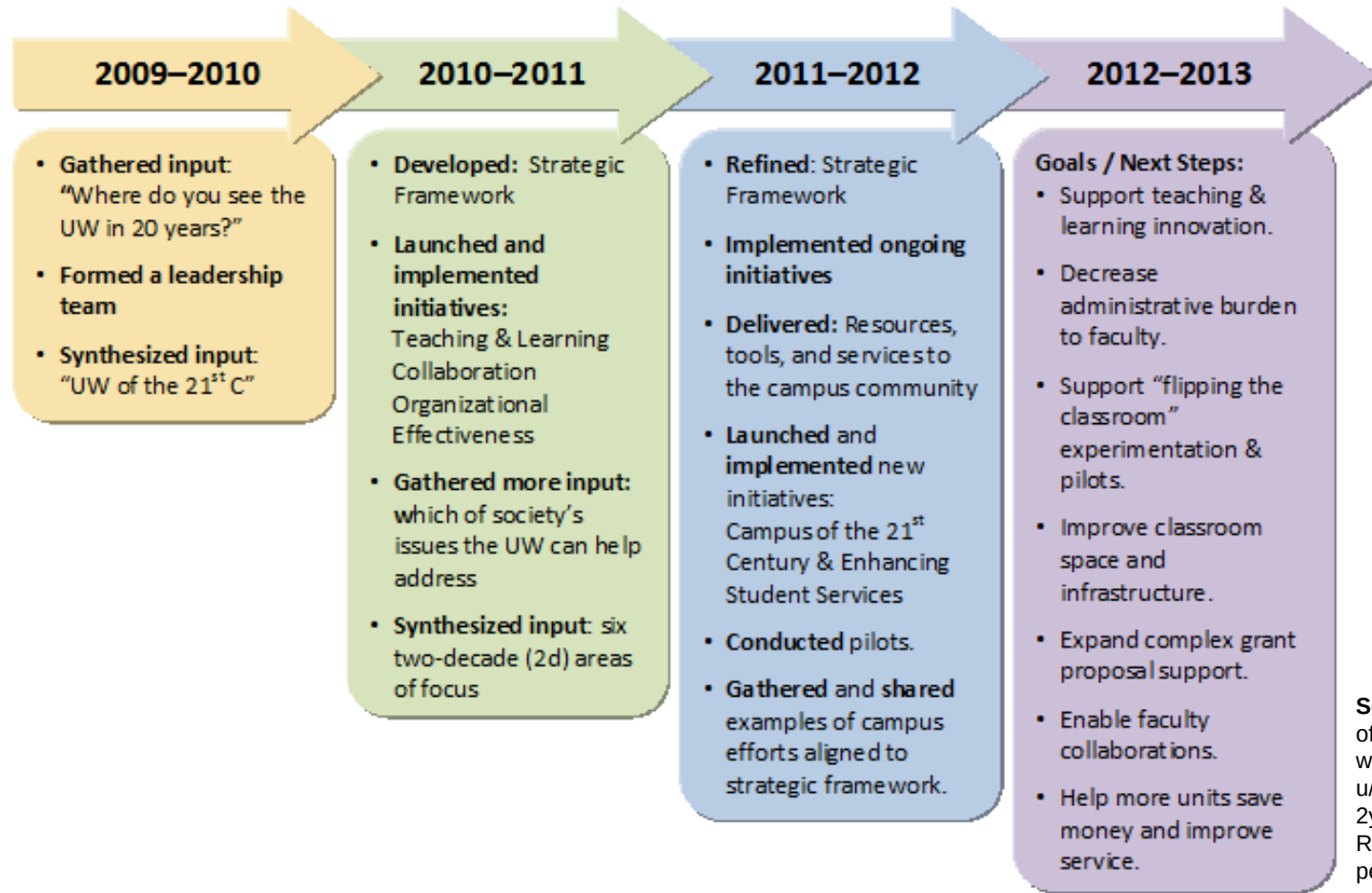
Understand eight typical patterns of organization:

- chronological
- spatial
- general to specific
- more important to less important
- comparison and contrast
- classification or partition
- problem-methods-solution
- cause and effect

Follow these three guidelines for organizing information chronologically:

- Provide signposts.
- Consider using graphics to complement the text.
- Analyze events where appropriate.

A graphic example of information organized chronologically



Source: University of Washington www.washington.edu/u/2y2d/about-2y2d/timeline/. Reprinted by permission.

Follow these three guidelines for organizing information spatially:

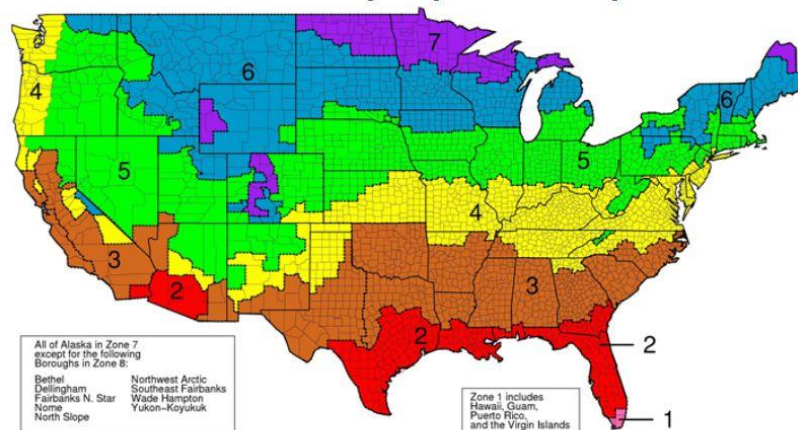
- Provide signposts.
- Consider using graphics to complement the text.
- Analyze events where appropriate.

A graphic example of information organized spatially

Recommended Levels of Insulation

Insulation level are specified by R-value. R-Value is a measure of insulation's ability to resist heat traveling through it. The higher the R-Value the better the thermal performance of the insulation. The table below shows what levels of insulation are cost-effective for different climates and locations in the home.

Recommended insulation levels for retrofitting existing wood-framed buildings



Zone	Add Insulation to Attic		Floor
	Uninsulated Attic	Existing 3-4 Inches of Insulation	
1	R30 to R49	R25 to R30	R13
2	R30 to R60	R25 to R38	R13 to R19
3	R30 to R60	R25 to R38	R19 to R25
4	R38 to R60	R38	R25 to R30
5 to 8	R49 to R60	R38 to R49	R25 to R30

Wall Insulation: *Whenever exterior siding is removed* on an

Uninsulated wood-frame wall:

- Drill holes in the sheathing and blow insulation into the empty wall cavity before installing the new siding, and
- Zones 3-4: Add R5 insulative wall sheathing beneath the new siding
- Zones 5-8: Add R5 to R6 insulative wall sheathing beneath the new siding.

Insulated wood-frame wall:

- For Zones 4 to 8: Add R5 insulative sheathing before installing the new siding.

Source: EnergyStar, 2014:
http://www.energystar.gov/?c=home_sealing.hm_improvement_insulation_table_

Follow these two guidelines for organizing information from general to specific:

- Provide signposts.
- Consider using graphics to complement the text.

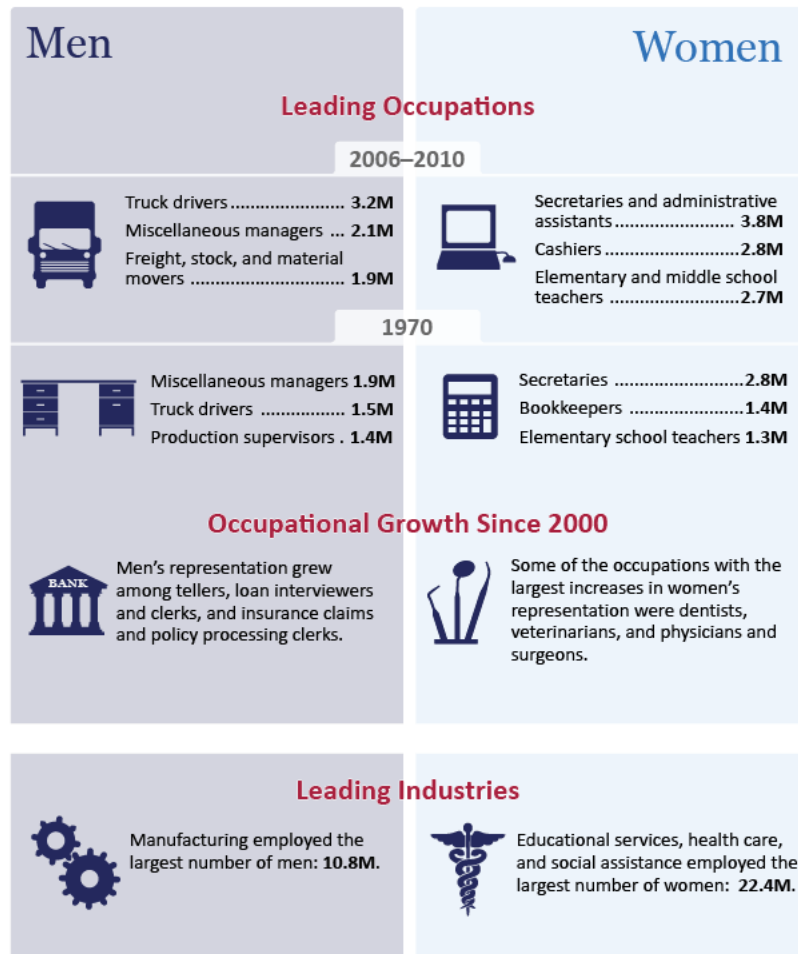
Follow these three guidelines for organizing information from more important to less important:

- Provide signposts.
- Explain why one point is more important than another.
- Consider using graphics to complement the text.

Follow these four guidelines for organizing information by comparison and contrast:

- Establish criteria for the comparison and contrast.
- Evaluate each item according to the criteria you have established.
- Organize the discussion.
- Consider using graphics to complement the text.

Follow a graphic example of information organized by comparison and contrast



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014:
http://www.census.gov/how/infographics/acs_infographic_eeo.html.

Follow these six guidelines for organizing information by classification or partition:

- Choose a basis of classification or partition that fits your audience and purpose.
- Use only one basis of classification or partition at a time.
- Avoid overlap.

Follow these six guidelines for organizing information by classification or partition (cont.):

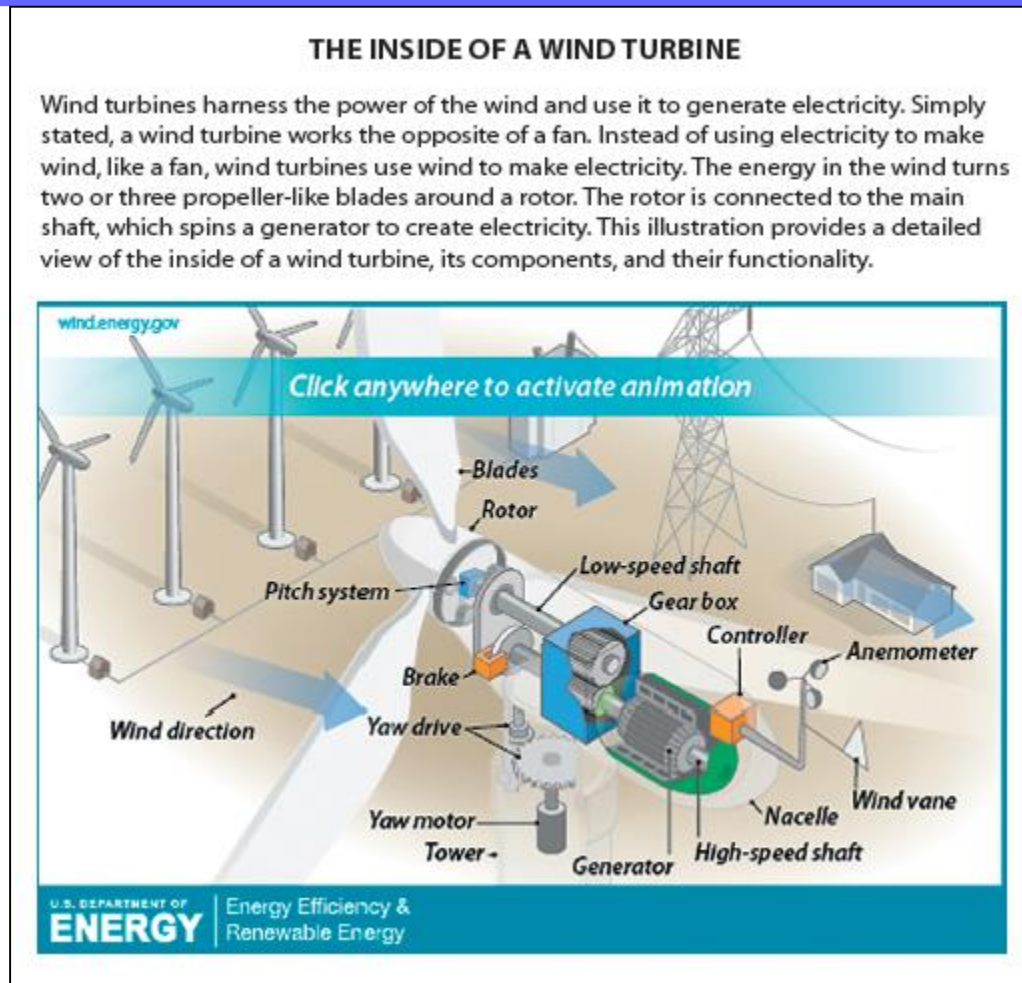
- Be inclusive.
- Arrange the categories in a logical sequence.
- Consider using graphics to complement the text.

A graphic example of information organized by classification

Explanation of EF-Scale Ratings		
Over the course of April 27th, 2011, damage across the entire range of the EF scale was sustained in some portion of the Huntsville County Warning Forecast Area. Below is a chart that explains what type of damage is associated with each ranking on the EF scale, including example photographs from the April 27th event.		
EF Rating	Wind Speeds	Expected Damage
EF-0	65-85 mph	'Minor' damage: shingles blown off or parts of a roof peeled off, damage to gutters/siding, branches broken off trees, shallow rooted trees toppled. 
EF-1	86-110 mph	'Moderate' damage: more significant roof damage, windows broken, exterior doors damaged or lost, mobile homes overturned or badly damaged. 
EF-2	111-135 mph	'Considerable' damage: roofs torn off well constructed homes, homes shifted off their foundation, mobile homes completely destroyed, large trees snapped or uprooted, cars can be tossed. 
EF-3	136-165 mph	'Severe' damage: entire stories of well constructed homes destroyed, significant damage done to large buildings, homes with weak foundations can be blown away, trees begin to lose their bark. 
EF-4	166-200 mph	'Extreme' damage: Well constructed homes are leveled, cars are thrown significant distances, top story exterior walls of masonry buildings would likely collapse. 
EF-5	> 200 mph	'Massive/incredible' damage: Well constructed homes are swept away, steel-reinforced concrete structures are critically damaged, high-rise buildings sustain severe structural damage, trees are usually completely debarked, stripped of branches and snapped. 

Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2012 Explanation of EF-scale ratings: www.srh.noaa.gov/hun/?n=efscale_explanation

A graphic example of information organized by partition



Source: U.S. Department of Energy, 2013:
http://www2.eere.energy.gov/wind/printable_versions/inside_a_wind_turbine.html.

Follow these five guidelines for organizing information by problem-methods-solution:

- In describing the problem, be clear and specific.
- In describing your methods, help your readers understand what you did and why you did it that way.
- In describing the solution, don't overstate.
- Choose a logical sequence.
- Consider using graphics to complement the text.

Follow these four guidelines for organizing information by cause and effect:

- Explain your reasoning.
- Avoid overstating your argument.
- Avoid logical fallacies.
- Consider using graphics to complement the text.