

Table 3.1: Text Structures With Their Signal Words and Phrases

Text Structure	Signal Words and Phrases
Description structures enumerate attributes, specifics, or setting information about a topic. For example, a descriptive passage about monkeys might describe the physical characteristics of monkeys, one particular type of monkey, the environment of monkeys, and so on. Newspaper articles often use a descriptive plan, telling about who, where, how, and when.	<i>attributes of, characteristics are, for example, for instance, in describing, marks of, namely, properties of, qualities are, specifically, such as, that is, this particular, which was one</i>
Sequence structures group ideas based on order or time. A number of items are ordered in a continuous progression related to a particular topic. Recipes often follow a sequence structure, explaining which ingredients should be added first, next, then, and last. Historical accounts and stories also typically use sequence structures.	<i>after, afterwards, as time passed, before, continuing on, early, finally, following, in the first place, last, later, more recently, soon, to begin with, to end, years ago</i>
Causation structures present ideas in cause-and-effect relationships. Directions typically follow a causation sequence: if you want a certain outcome (effect), then follow these steps (cause). Explanations of a particular event may also follow causation structures, explaining the reasons or causes behind it.	<i>as a result, because, caused, consequence, consequently, for the purpose of, if/then, in explanation, in order to, led to, since, so, the reason, therefore, this is why, thus</i>
Problem/Solution structures organize ideas into two main parts: problem and solution. Texts that feature questions and answers often follow problem/solution structures. For example, a scientific article raises a problem or question and then seeks to provide a solution or answer to the question.	<i>answer, comeback, enigma, issue, need to prevent, perplexity, problem, puzzle, query, question, rejoinder, reply, response, return, riddle, solution, the trouble, to satisfy the problem, to set the issue at rest, to solve these problems</i>
Comparison structures relate ideas to each other on the basis of their similarities and differences. These can be simple (comparing different brands of laundry detergent) or more complex (comparing beliefs about God or legal arguments). Sometimes an author will present both sides of an issue without recommending one over the other. Other times, as in political speeches, one side of the issue will be portrayed as correct and the other side as incorrect.	<i>act like, alike, all but, although, but, compare to, difference, different, differentiate, have in common, however, in comparison, in contrast, in opposition, instead, not everyone, on the other hand, resemble, share, the same as, unlike, whereas, while</i>