

# Recognizing Sequence Using Key Words



Many paragraphs present details in **time order**, or chronological sequence. Often, writers use key words to show time order. Some of those key words are *first*, *second*, *next*, *then*, *last*, and *finally*. When you read, watch for key words. When you write, use key words to help readers follow what is happening.

In this paragraph, events in a story are listed in time order:

Sonya had a good time shopping at the mall. *First*, she stopped at the department store to buy a dress. *Then* she visited the shoe store. *Finally*, she bought herself an ice-cream sundae at the candy store.

In this paragraph, steps in a process are listed in time order:

Glass blowing is a painstaking art. *First*, glass is heated until it becomes liquid. *Next*, a worker dips a hollow iron pipe into the liquid glass. The worker *then* blows into the pipe. A glass balloon comes out of the other end of the pipe. *After that*, the worker can shape the glass. *Finally*, the shaped glass is broken away from the pipe.

**Read the following paragraph. Then choose the correct answer to each question.**

Sailor Joseph Lee was on the crew of a cargo ship that sank in the South Pacific. Splashing about in the wreckage all alone, Lee found the escape raft and climbed aboard. At first, he lived on one jug of fresh water and some dry biscuits. Then the biscuits ran out. After that, Lee made a fishing hook out of a bent nail and some string. He began to catch fish. Soon after, the fresh-water jug ran dry. Clever Lee strung up some cloth to collect dew and rainwater. He survived at sea for 98 days until he reached land.

1. What happened after the biscuits ran out?
  - A Lee found the escape raft and climbed aboard.
  - B Lee's ship sank in the South Pacific.
  - C Lee made a fishing hook out of a bent nail and some string.
2. What happened right before Lee strung up the cloth?
  - F The cargo ship sank in the South Pacific.
  - G The fresh-water jug ran dry.
  - H Lee found the escape raft and climbed aboard.

## Practice

Read each paragraph. Then write five sentences for each paragraph describing its events in time order. Each sentence should tell about one event.

According to a Kwakiutl (Native American) creation myth, a raven flying over water could find nowhere to land. He decided to create a world. First, he dropped small pebbles to make islands. Second, he created trees and grass. Next, he made beasts to live in the forests. Then he made birds fly in the air above and fish swim in the sea below. Finally, he created man and woman out of clay and wood. This made the world complete.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

The students at Moore Middle School raised over \$8,000 for victims of a hurricane. First, they held a bake sale and a car wash. Next, they used the proceeds to buy some old pieces of furniture. Then they refinished the pieces. After that, the students were able to sell the furniture at high prices. Finally, they sent all the money they had made to the hurricane relief fund.

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

## Apply

Read each topic sentence. Then read the four sentences below it. These sentences are out of order. Beside the first event in time order, write *First*. Beside the second event, write *Second*. Beside the third, write *Third*. Beside the last event, write *Finally*.

1. Frogs go through three stages before they become adults.

\_\_\_\_\_, they are tiny eggs laid in the water.

\_\_\_\_\_, the tadpole gets bigger and grows legs and the body of a frog.

\_\_\_\_\_, the eggs hatch, and the frogs become legless tadpoles.

\_\_\_\_\_, the frog becomes an adult.

2. Roping a calf is a skill learned by all cowboys.

\_\_\_\_\_, the cowboy makes a large loop at the end of his rope.

\_\_\_\_\_, with the calf securely roped, he ties the other end of the rope to his saddlehorn.

\_\_\_\_\_, he flings the loop around the calf's head.

\_\_\_\_\_, whirling the loop, he rides up next to the calf.

3. One of the most famous hibernators is the sleepy dormouse.

\_\_\_\_\_, it falls asleep, with its heart slowing down to one beat every few minutes.

\_\_\_\_\_, it stores up lots of body fat all through the autumn.

\_\_\_\_\_, it wakes up restored from its long rest.

\_\_\_\_\_, as winter comes on, it builds a nest in the tree roots.

4. The glass in windows is made using a special process.

\_\_\_\_\_, the molten glass is poured onto a pool of molten tin.

\_\_\_\_\_, the molten glass spreads out, cools, and hardens.

\_\_\_\_\_, soda ash, limestone, and sand are put into a furnace.

\_\_\_\_\_, the hot furnace melts the ingredients into molten glass.

## Check Up

---

In each paragraph, details are presented in time order. However, one sentence is missing. Read each paragraph. Then circle the letter of the sentence that belongs on the line.

1. The movie detective described the events to the roomful of suspects. \_\_\_\_\_ . He went up to the first floor. There, he was surprised by the rich man, who found him stealing rare books from his study. A fight began. The thief grabbed his flashlight. He struck the rich man and ran out of the room. Finally, he left the house.

  - A The rich man's blood was on the thief's flashlight.
  - B The thief and the rich man were longtime rivals.
  - C First, the thief threw the flashlight into the bushes.
  - D First, the thief entered the house through the basement window.
2. The actress who plays Time Cat works on her make-up for two hours every night. First, she paints her arms, legs, and neck with black and white stripes. Second, she smears a base of white greasepaint all over her face. Next, she paints the numbers and hands of a clock on her face. \_\_\_\_\_ .

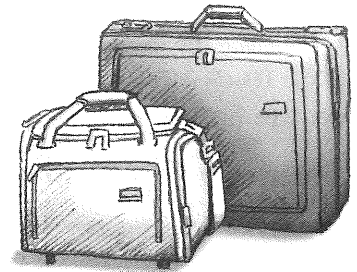
  - F Next, she practices her meowing.
  - G Finally, she puts on a cat-nose, whiskers, and pointy ears.
  - H Finally, she takes all of the make-up off.
  - J In her last play, she dressed as a Greek goddess.
3. John, Jeff, and Jett went all-out preparing for their Super Bowl party. \_\_\_\_\_ . Next, they decorated the living room with banners. After that, they filled ten bowls with snacks. Then they filled coolers with soft drinks. Finally, they opened the door for their guests.

  - A At halftime, they swept the kitchen.
  - B First, they ate enough pizza to feed a small village.
  - C They were sad because the Bears weren't in the Super Bowl.
  - D First, they cleaned the house from top to bottom.

## Recognizing Sequence Without Using Key Words

Sometimes writers do not use key words to make time order clear. In these cases, readers must pay close attention to each sentence. They should picture events as they happen.

In this paragraph, notice how the writer has made the order of events clear without using key words:



Gracie's week in Italy was not what she hoped it would be. For the first three days, it rained. When the rain finally stopped, Gracie went for a walk and twisted her ankle. On her last night, she went out for a lovely dinner. But when she came back to the hotel, she found a mouse in her bed. Then on the flight home her luggage was lost.

In this paragraph, the writer describes steps without relying on key words:

It's important to plan for a camping trip carefully. About a month before you go, look at maps. Get to know the trail you will be taking. About a week before the trip, begin packing the things you'll need. The day before your trip date, check on the weather. You may need a raincoat.

**Read the paragraph. Then choose the correct answer to each question.**

Nita Taylor, ten years old, was walking her dog Rollo last week. Rollo saw a groundhog and chased it down a rocky slope. Nita started after the dog, but she slipped. She tumbled down the slope and got her foot caught in an old fence. When Rollo saw that she couldn't get up, he ran up the hill, barking. He barked at the door of their house. Nita's father came out. Rollo led Mr. Taylor down the slope to rescue Nita.

1. What happened just after Nita slipped?
  - A Her dog Rollo saw a groundhog.
  - B She started down the slope after her dog.
  - C She tumbled down the slope and got her foot caught in an old fence.
2. What happened right before Nita's father came out of the house?
  - F Rollo led Mr. Taylor down the slope to rescue Nita.
  - G Rollo saw a groundhog and chased it down a rocky slope.
  - H Rollo barked at the door of the house.

## Practice

Each paragraph below tells a story or describes a process. Each paragraph is missing one sentence. Read each paragraph. Then choose its missing event or step from among the four lettered sentences. Write the letter of that sentence on the line.

- A He went to the kitchen and started the coffeemaker.
- B She unscrewed the lug nuts and removed the tire.
- C Now he's training for the Thanksgiving Day Marathon.
- D Then she took the bus to work.

1. Emily couldn't find her wallet, so she retraced her steps of the day. In the morning, she bought coffee at the corner store. \_\_\_\_\_. She didn't use her wallet at lunchtime, because she had brought a sandwich. Her friend Henry gave her a ride home, and they stopped at a tollbooth. Emily paid the toll. She must have left her wallet in Henry's car.
2. As she was driving home, Boki's tire went flat. She pulled off the road and inspected the tire. It had been punctured by a nail. She got the jack out of her trunk and set it up. \_\_\_\_\_. Then she put the spare tire on and replaced the lug nuts. She tossed the punctured tire into the trunk to be patched later. She still made it home in time for dinner.
3. Hugh got up at 6:00 A.M. on his mother's birthday. \_\_\_\_\_. When the coffee was almost done, he heated up a frying pan and cooked scrambled eggs. At 6:20 he put two slices of bread into the toaster. By the time his mother's alarm went off, Hugh was standing by her bed with a full breakfast on a tray.
4. On the first of January, Nikos decided to get fit. He jogged halfway around the pond but got tired. He walked the rest of the way around. By the end of January, he could jog all the way around the pond. By early April, he was running twice around the pond every morning. It was too hot to run outdoors when summer came, so Nikos used the treadmill at the gym. \_\_\_\_\_.

## Apply

---

Read each topic sentence. Then read the four supporting sentences below it. Number these sentences from 1 to 4 in time order.

1. Roasting marshmallows can be the best part of camping.

\_\_\_\_\_ When it is brown and crisp, pull it off and eat it!

\_\_\_\_\_ Roast the marshmallow just above the flames of the fire.

\_\_\_\_\_ Find a long, thin stick.

\_\_\_\_\_ Put a fresh marshmallow on the end of the stick.

2. Kittens need to be properly weaned before you give them away.

\_\_\_\_\_ When it's three or four weeks old, the kitten can start eating solid, wet food.

\_\_\_\_\_ When a kitten is newborn, it should only drink its mother's milk.

\_\_\_\_\_ After two weeks, you can dip your finger in milk and let the kitten lick it off. Then you can give it a saucer of milk.

\_\_\_\_\_ After seven or eight weeks, it will be ready to go to its new home.

3. The clothing of women in Europe has changed over the years.

\_\_\_\_\_ In the 16th century, women's vests were made stiff with whalebone.

\_\_\_\_\_ Today, European women wear dresses, slacks, jeans, or sweatpants: whatever suits them!

\_\_\_\_\_ Women wore tight corsets until the late 1800s.

\_\_\_\_\_ In the 1920s, they started wearing short skirts instead of long ones.

4. The artist in the park can do your portrait in 15 minutes or it's free.

\_\_\_\_\_ When he has gotten your features right, he puts in highlights and shadows so that you don't look flat.

\_\_\_\_\_ He spends the last few minutes drawing your hair. Voilà!

\_\_\_\_\_ He spends about five minutes total on your eyes, nose, and mouth.

\_\_\_\_\_ He begins by sketching the general shape of your head.

## Check Up

The details in the following paragraphs are presented in time order. In each paragraph, one sentence is missing. Read each paragraph. Then choose the sentence that belongs on the line.

1. Claude and Tabitha spent a day climbing Bald Mountain. They began their climb at sunrise. They hiked all morning, stopping only for bathroom breaks. At noon they stopped for a half-hour lunch. They were tired by late afternoon, so they sang songs to keep their spirits up. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A They packed plenty of water for their hike.
  - B Their sandwiches were soggy, but they tasted good.
  - C They mapped out their trail the night before the climb.
  - D As the sun was going down, they reached the peak and happily set up camp.
  
2. The pirate Jack Bones raided the ship *Queen Anne* off the coast of Spain. He took \$50,000 worth of gold. With his stolen treasure, he sailed down to North Africa. He buried the gold on a beach in Morocco. \_\_\_\_\_. Six months later, another pirate set fire to Jack's ship. Jack died, and the map was destroyed. No one has ever found the gold.
  - F Jack tried to escape the burning ship but had no lifeboat.
  - G He drew a map of the treasure site.
  - H He got his name from an older pirate.
  - J The captain of the *Queen Anne* fought bravely.
  
3. Sam goes to acting class every Wednesday. Each class begins with all the students yelling as loud as they can for five minutes. The teacher says that good yelling loosens you up for good acting. \_\_\_\_\_. When they are done, they sit in a circle and talk about how the scenes could be better.
  - A Once they're loosened up, the students act out scenes.
  - B On Tuesdays, Sam studies Russian.
  - C They have to take off their shoes before they enter the room.
  - D Next term, Sam will try to write a play.