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 text follow expected organizational patterns?
- Do the introductions and conclusions present the kind of information you would expect?
- Does the text appear to be organized linearly?
- Does the text use headings? If so, does it use more than one level?
Use these three techniques for displaying your arrangement 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 and partition
- problem-methods-solution
- cause and effect
Follow three guidelines for organizing information chronologically:

- Provide signposts.
- Consider using graphics to complement the text.
- Analyze events where appropriate.
Follow three guidelines for organizing information spatially:

- Provide signposts.
- Consider using graphics to complement the text.
- Analyze events where appropriate.
An example of information organized chronologically and spatially
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 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 five guidelines for organizing information by comparison and contrast:

• Establish criteria for the comparison and contrast.
• If appropriate, determine whether each criterion calls for a required characteristic or a desired characteristic.
• Evaluate each item according to the criteria you have established.
• Organize the discussion.
• Consider using graphics to complement the text.
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.
- Be inclusive.
- Arrange the categories in a logical sequence.
- Consider using graphics to complement the text.
An example of information organized by partition
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.