Recognizing Sequence and Chronological Order

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

- **chronological order**: the organization of events according to when they occur; often used to tell a story that advances over time
- **sequence order**: the order in which events should, may, or usually occur; often used to give directions or to show steps or events in a process

HERE’S HOW

**Step 1: Keep track of time.** Chronologies are often built around points on the calendar, the clock, or other specific time references.
- Look for phrases such as *in 2008, at 8:30, or in early summer.*
- Words signaling the passage of time include *first, then, and finally.*

**Step 2: Trace events or steps on a time line or flow chart.** Take note of text clues that tell when events or steps take place. You have a grasp of chronology or sequence if you can sum up the passage based on your chart.
- Make a time line that covers events in a chronological order text.
- Use a flow-chart or numbered list to track events in a sequence order text.

**Step 3: Note the pace and sequence.**
Some stories or accounts cover long processes over long passages of time. Others may describe lots of action in a limited period. Note how rapidly actions occur and how long they last.

**EXAMPLE: CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER**

That Thursday, my shoulders were aching and my nose was stuffed. I knew what that meant. **On Friday,** I dragged around all afternoon, but I managed to hang in there. On Saturday morning, it hit: I woke up with a flushed face, sneezing and sniffing. I spent the next day in bed with a fever of 100.5°. Monday was Halloween. My fever was up to 102°. Of course, I stayed home from school that day. There would be no tricks or treats for me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>achy, congested</td>
<td>tired all afternoon</td>
<td>sickness arrives</td>
<td>fever of 100.5°</td>
<td>fever of 102° missed Halloween</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note signal “time” words and phrases. The writer locates each sentence in time in relation to the previous sentences. Verb tense changes as the writer reflects.