

Explanations 1

Structure

- a title telling what's to be explained
- introduction - a general statement to introduce the topic, for example, in the autumn some birds migrate
- clear layout
 - a series of logical steps explaining how or why something occurs, for example because hours of daylight shorten...
 - numbers / time-connectives can be used to sequence the text
 - bullet points / subheadings
- diagrams with labels
- pictures with captions
- steps continue until the final state is produced or the explanation is complete
 - may contain a glossary
 - conclusion

Language Features

- The language features of an explanation text are often (but not always):
- written in simple present tense, for example, many birds fly south
- use connectives that signal time, for example - several months later, after that, meanwhile, soon afterward, consequently, eventually, simultaneously, finally
- use causal connectives, for example— *because, this causes, this results in, therefore, the reason that, accordingly, all the same, an effect of, as a consequence of, as a result of, consequently, despite this, even though, hence, however, in that case, moreover, nevertheless, otherwise*
- technical vocabulary used (often in bold – linked to the glossary)
- formal language



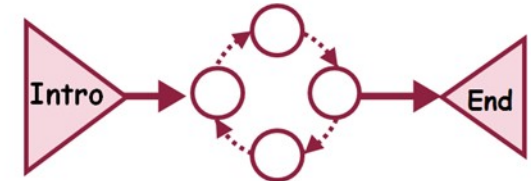
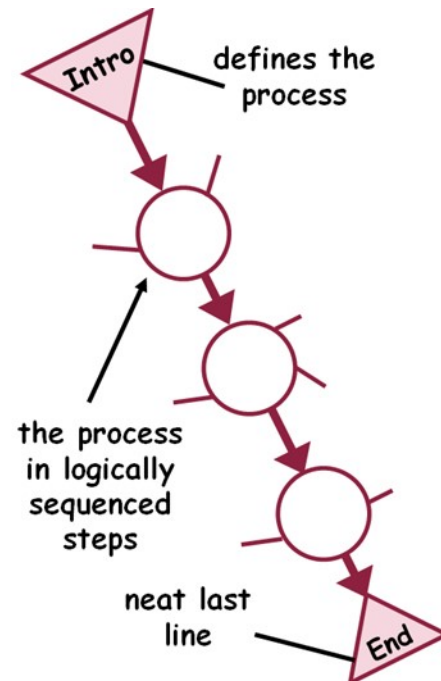
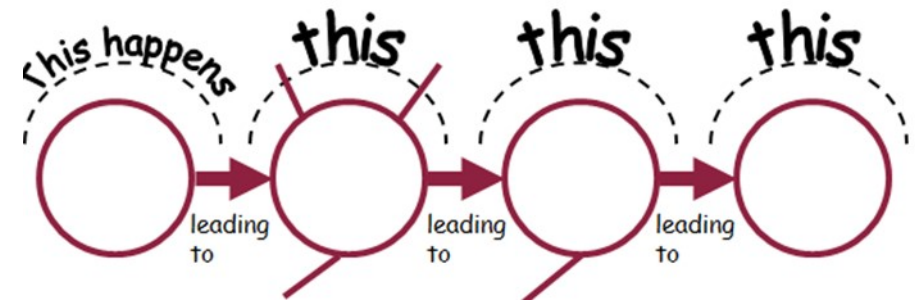
Top Tips

- decide whether diagrams, charts, illustrations or a flow chart would help to explain
- use a title that shows what you are writing about
- using how or why in the title helps. Try to make the title intrigue the reader, for example, Why do sloths hang about?
- use the first paragraph to introduce your subject to the reader
- organise the writing and illustrations to explain: what you need, how it works, why it works (cause and effect), when and where it works, and what it is used for
- add in extra, interesting information
- try to end by relating the subject to the reader
- if you use technical terminology, a glossary may be needed
- interest the reader with exclamation, for example Beware – whirlwinds can kill! Or use questions: Did you know that...?
- draw the reader in, for example strange as it may seem...; not many people know that...,etc
- re-read your explanation, pretending to know nothing about the subject – is it clear?
- recognise that explanation texts can be adapted or combined with other text types depending on the audience and purpose

Planning Explanations

Simple explanation:

- a series of logical steps



When you have made your flowchart skeleton, each blob gives you one paragraph (or section) in your writing.

Explanations can be complicated. You may have to draft your flow chart several times. But making the flow chart – and other diagrams – can help you understand the process better.