

Comprehension Instructional Routine: Sequence of Events in Text

Preparation/Materials: one large copy of the text “Alligator Nests” (e.g., use white board, overhead), student copies of “Alligator Nests,” one large graphic organizer, student copies of graphic organizer, chart with signal words, pencils



- *Italicized sentences are what the teacher does*
- **Bold type is what the teacher says**
- Regular type is what the student(s) say
- **Bullet (•) and bolded type are what the teacher and student(s) say in unison**
- Teacher or student slides finger under underlined letter(s) or word(s)



NOTE: The numbers in the text are in light gray as an easy reference. Do not say the numbers when reading the text.

TEACHER EXPLAINS TASK

We are going to sequence events in a text. This means we are going to put the events into the order in which they happen. When we can tell the sequence of events, we can figure out what the text is mostly about.

TEACHER MODELS TASK

A sequence is the order in which things happen.

What is a sequence?

- A sequence is the order in which things happen

When we sequence events in a text, we retell important events or actions in the order that they happened. For example, brushing my teeth has a sequence of events. First, I pick up my toothbrush. Next, I put toothpaste on my toothbrush.

Everyone, what would I do after that?

- You put water on the toothbrush.

Yes, I put water on my toothbrush.

What would I do next?

- You brush your teeth.

That's correct! Finally, I brush my teeth.

Many things that we do throughout the day have a sequence of events, or an order to them. There are some events where the order does not matter, such as grocery shopping. It does not matter if I pick up my cereal before or after my fruits and vegetables. However, today we are going to talk about events that need to come in a particular order.

Display and point to the chart of signal words.

Signal words for sequence give us clues to the order in which things happen. They can tell us about the steps from a beginning point to an ending point. They can also tell us about the passage of time.

Here is a chart of signal words often used to sequence events. *Point to and read the list of words.*

first, second, third, next, then, later, before, after, finally, during, until, in the end

Read the list with me.

- first, second, third, next, then, later, before, after, finally, during, until, in the end

When we see these signal words in a text, they help us remember what happened first, and what happened next.

Display the large teacher's copy of the text. Point to the vocabulary words as you define them.

I am going to read a text about alligators. There are several words in this text about alligator nests that we are going to talk about before I read.

Say the word. Then have students say the word with you.

The first word is female. Say female with me.

- female

A female is a girl or a woman. We use the words girl, woman, and female for people. For animals, we say female. Some characteristics of female animals include laying eggs, having babies, and caring for the babies. The female cat takes care of her kittens.

This word is vegetation. Say vegetation with me.

- vegetation

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TEACHER MODELS TASK (continued)

Vegetation refers to grass, leaves, sticks, plants. The land by the water was covered by thick vegetation consisting of leaves, branches, plants and dried grass.

This word is predator. Say predator with me.

- predator

Animals that are predators kill other animals or eat their eggs for food. A predator such as a fox eats chickens and lambs.

Say mound with me.

- mound

A mound is a heap or a pile. For the bonfire, we made a mound of branches, leaves, and logs.

The title of this text is "Alligator Nests." Read the title with me.

- "Alligator Nests"

I know from the title that I will learn something about alligator nests. I also know that there can be eggs in a nest. I wonder if an alligator lays eggs. Listen and follow along as I read "Alligator Nests."

Point to each word as you read aloud from the large copy of the text. You may wish to address the word "yerping" while reading the text. After reading the sentence with the word "yerping," you could say this: yerping is the word to describe the sound made by baby alligators.

Alligator Nests

1 A female alligator builds her nest in early April. **2** First, she uses her body and tail to clear an area that is sheltered and near water. **3** Second, she uses her jaws to find vegetation like grass, leaves, sticks and dirt. **4** After this, she builds a mound and digs a hole in it with her back legs. **5** The nest is finished.

6 Next, the female alligator lays 20-70 eggs. **7** Then she covers the eggs with the vegetation to keep them warm. **8** The eggs are buried 3-14 inches deep in the nest. **9** During this time, the alligator protects her nest from predators such as raccoons, opossums and skunks. **10** Never go near an alligator's nest!

11 After 65-70 days, the eggs begin to hatch. **12** Then, the new babies make a sound called yerping and the female alligator opens the nest. **13** Finally, the alligator helps some of the babies out of the eggs by rolling the eggs in her mouth. **14** Some baby alligators stay near the nest for about two years.

This text is about the steps a female alligator takes when building her nest in early April. It is also about what happens after her nest is built. I am going to sequence the events, or the steps that occur when a female alligator builds her nest. I will use a graphic organizer to do this. The graphic organizer will help me see the order in which things happen.

Display graphic organizer, point to the sections as they are mentioned, and write title.

This graphic organizer consists of a title line at the top and several lines that are numbered. The numbers show the direction or order to write the events. I will write "Alligator Nests" at the top of this graphic organizer where it says title.

Point to line 1.

When I think of the first thing that happened in the text, I will write that information on the first line. I will write each new event so that the order is the same as the text. If I am not sure what happened first, I will reread the text.

Listen and follow along as I reread the first paragraph. Pay attention to signal words for clues to the sequence of events. *Point to each word as you read aloud from the large copy of the text.*

1 A female alligator builds her nest in early April. **2** First, she uses her body and tail to clear an area that is covered and near water. **3** Second, she uses her jaws to find vegetation like grass, leaves, sticks and dirt. **4** After this, she builds a mound and digs a hole in it with her back legs. **5** The nest is finished.

Next, I will reread each sentence. When I read a sentence with a signal word, I will stop and ask myself what just happened. Then I'll write the information in the graphic organizer. *Reread each sentence and point to the words.*

Always point to the chart when discussing all signal words for sequence. Then write information on each line of the graphic organizer.

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TEACHER MODELS TASK (continued)

Paragraph 1. Read sentence 1.

This sentence does not have a signal word. It is not about the steps an alligator goes through when she builds her nest. Instead, this sentence tells me an important detail. It tells me what time of the year female alligators build their nests. Female is one of our words from the story. What are some characteristics of female animals? *Accept any of the following responses: lay eggs, have babies, care for babies.*

I need to read more to find out what the first step is to building an alligator nest.

Read sentence 2.

I think the word **first** is a signal word. I am going to look at my chart of signal words. Yes, here it is; 'first' is a signal word for sequence.

What is the 'first' thing that happened? The alligator uses her body to clear an area. So I will write 'alligator clears an area with her body' on line 1 of the graphic organizer because this is the 'first' thing that happens when she begins to build her nest.

Read sentence 3.

Isn't **second** another signal word? Yes, here it is on our chart.

What is the 'second' thing that happened? She uses her jaws to find vegetation.

Everyone, what does vegetation mean again?

- Vegetation means grass, leaves, sticks, and plants.

Yes. I will write 'uses jaws to find vegetation' on line 2 of the graphic organizer.

Read sentence 4.

After tells me that this is the next thing that happens after the alligator uses her jaws to find vegetation. If I look on my chart, I can see the word 'after'.

What happens 'after' this? She builds a mound and digs a hole with her back legs. And here's the word mound again.

Everyone, what does mound mean?

- A mound is a heap or a pile.

So I will write 'builds mound and digs hole with back legs' on line 3 of the graphic organizer.

Read sentence 5.

There is no signal word in this sentence. It does not tell the next step. Instead, this sentence tells more information about the alligator's nest. The nest is now finished.

When sequencing events in a text, there will be sentences that will not be about the next step. Those sentences will give you more information about the topic. They might be about the steps that have already happened, or they might be about something that is about to happen.

Point to the graphic organizer.

Let's look at the graphic organizer to see the sequence of events. It should tell us the order in which the alligator builds her nest.

Read lines 1-3 aloud, pointing to each word as you read.

Now, read these events with me. *Choral read with students.*

I can take the sequence of events from lines 1-3 and tell the most important thing I've learned about how an alligator builds her nest. I would say the most important idea is this: An alligator uses all parts of her body to build her nest.

Everyone, what is the most important thing I've learned about how the alligator builds her nest?

- An alligator uses all parts of her body to build her nest.

TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER

Now let's do the next paragraph together.

Remember, when we sequence events, we tell the important events in the order that they happened. What do we do when we sequence events?

- We tell the important events in the order that they happened.

Signal words for sequence of events can tell us about the steps from a beginning point to an ending point.

What do signal words for sequence of events tell us?

- They tell us the steps from a beginning point to an ending point.

Display and point to the chart of signal words.

Let's read the signal words often used to sequence events.

- **first, second, third, next, then, later, before, after, finally, during, until, in the end**

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TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER (continued)

Display the teacher copy of the story. Pass out student copies of "Alligator Nests."

Listen and follow along with your own copy as I read aloud the second paragraph of "Alligator Nests." Then we will use the graphic organizer to continue sequencing events.

6 Next, the female alligator lays 20-70 eggs. **7** Then she covers the eggs with the vegetation to keep them warm.

8 The eggs are buried 3-14 inches deep in the nest. **9** During this time, the alligator protects her nest from predators such as raccoons, opossums and skunks. **10** Never go near an alligator's nest!

Give students a copy of the graphic organizer and a pencil. Continue to display the large graphic organizer and point to the sections as they are mentioned.

Now we will sequence the events of this paragraph. The graphic organizer for sequencing consists of several lines that are numbered. The numbers on each line show the direction or order to write the events. What do the numbered lines show?

- They show the direction or order to write the events.

The title of our text is at the top, and the first 3 events are already there for you.

Let's reread each sentence in the second paragraph and look for signal words to help us find the sequence of events in this part of the text. Once we've read a sentence with a signal word, we will ask ourselves if this is the next step in the sequence.

Point to and read aloud from the large teacher copy. Students read from their own copy. Teacher fills in the large graphic organizer and students fill in their own copies of the graphic organizer.

Go to Paragraph 2. Let's read sentence 6.

Next is a signal word for sequence. Look at the chart and find 'next'. Is it a signal word?

- Yes.

This sentence tells us the 'next' step the alligator takes.

Does the sentence tell us the 'next' step the alligator takes?

- Yes.

The signal word 'next' tells us that another event or step is happening. It tells us what happens after the female alligator builds her nest.

This is the 'next' event: she lays 20-70 eggs. What is the 'next' event?

- She lays 20-70 eggs.

We need to write this 'next' event on line 4 of our graphic organizer.

Where do we write this 'next' event?

- We write this on line 4.

Yes. Let's write 'she lays 20-70 eggs' on line 4. Write on your graphic organizer and I will write on mine.

Before I read this text, I wondered if alligators lay eggs in their nests. Now I know that they do.

Let's read sentence 7.

This sentence tells us the next step the alligator takes.

I saw the word then in the sentence. 'Then' is a signal word for sequence. Try to find 'then' on the chart. Is it a signal word?

- Yes.

'Then' tells us the next event or step after the alligator lays her eggs.

Does the sentence tell us the next step the alligator takes?

- Yes.

The next event is this: she covers the eggs with vegetation to keep them warm. What is the next event?

- She covers the eggs with vegetation to keep them warm.

Yes. We will write this on line 5 of the graphic organizer. Where will we write this?

- We will write this on line 5.

Write 'covers the eggs with vegetation' on your graphic organizer and I will write on mine.

Let's read sentence 8.

I don't see a signal word in this sentence. Look on the chart. Can you find a signal word for this sentence?

- No.

This sentence tells us more information about the eggs. It does not tell us the next step the alligator takes.

Does the sentence tell us the next step the alligator takes?

- No.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER (continued)

Remember, not every sentence in a text with sequence of events will be the next step. It may be more information about the topic, about some of the earlier steps, or about what might happen later on. Let's continue to read.

Let's read sentence 9.

Hmmm.....isn't during a signal word for sequence? Look on the chart. Is 'during' a signal word?

- Yes.

The sentence with 'during' tells the next step the alligator takes while the eggs are kept warm.

Does this sentence tell us the next step the alligator takes while the eggs are kept warm?

- Yes.

The next event is this: the alligator protects her nest from predators.

What is the next event?

- The alligator protects her nest from predators.

Let's write 'the alligator protects her nest from predators' on line 6 of our graphic organizers. You write on your graphic organizer and I will write on mine.

Let's read sentence 10.

I think this is another sentence without a signal word.

Can you find a signal word on the chart for this sentence?

- No.

This sentence tells us some very important information about alligator nests. It does not tell us about the next step the alligator takes when building and caring for her nest.

Does this sentence tell us the next step?

- No.

The important information is this: we must never go near alligator nests.

Let's look at the graphic organizer to see the sequence of events. Lines 4-6 tell us the next steps the alligator takes after she builds her nest. It tells us about her eggs. What do lines 4-6 tell us?

- They tell us about her eggs.

Let's read lines 4-6 on our graphic organizers. *Choral read with the students.*

You've done a great job sequencing events!

Graphic organizers are very useful. If I take the sequence of events in lines 4-6, I can tell the most important thing we've learned about an alligator after she builds her nest. I would say the most important idea is this: An alligator lays many eggs and protects her eggs from predators.

Everyone, what is the most important thing we've learned about what the alligator does after she builds her nest?

- An alligator lays many eggs and protects her eggs from predators.

STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK

It's your turn to sequence events in the text, "Alligator Nests."

What do we do when we sequence events?

We tell the important events in the order that they happened.

What do signal words for sequence of events tell us?

Signal words tell us the steps from a beginning point to an ending point.

Display the chart of signal words and point to each word as students read them aloud.

Signal words can give us clues about sequence of events. Read the words we use to sequence events.

first, second, third, next, then, later, before, after, finally, during, until, in the end

Display the teacher's copy of text. Students follow along with their own copy as the teacher reads the text.

Follow along as I read the third paragraph of "Alligator Nests."

11 After 65-70 days, the eggs begin to hatch. **12** Then, the new babies make a sound called yerping and the female alligator opens the nest. **13** Finally, the alligator helps some of the babies out of the eggs by rolling the eggs in her mouth. **14** Some baby alligators stay near the nest for about two years.

Let's read the third paragraph together. *Choral read with students.*

Now, you will use the graphic organizer to continue sequencing events about what happens once the alligator lays her eggs. *Continue to display the large graphic organizer and point to the sections as they are mentioned.*

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK (continued)

What do the numbered lines tell us?

The numbered lines tell us the direction or order to write the events.

We will reread each sentence aloud in paragraph 3. Look for signal words to help you find the sequence of events. Once we've read a sentence with a signal word, ask yourself if this is the next step in the sequence.

Choral read each sentence with students.

Go to Paragraph 3. Let's read sentence 11.

Is there a signal word in this sentence?

Yes.

What is the signal word?

The signal word is 'after'.

Find 'after' on the chart. Is it a sequence word?

Yes.

Does this tell us something that happens after the alligator protects her eggs?

Yes.

The sequence word 'after' tells us the next thing that happens.

What is the next event?

'After' 65-70 days, the eggs begin to hatch.

Where on the graphic organizer do we write 'after 65-70 days, the eggs begin to hatch'?

We write this on line 7.

Let's write it. *Continue to write on the large graphic organizer so you have a final record of all the information.*

Let's read sentence 12.

Is there a signal word in this sentence?

Yes.

What is the signal word?

The signal word is 'then'.

Find 'then' on the chart. Is it a sequence word?

Yes.

Does this tell us something that happens next?

Yes.

The sequence word 'then' tells us the next event that happens.

What is the next event?

The new babies make a yerping sound and the female alligator opens the nest.

Where on the graphic organizer do we write 'the new babies make a yerping sound and the female alligator opens the nest'?

We write this on line 8.

Let's write it.

Let's read sentence 13.

Is there a signal word in this sentence?

Yes.

What is the signal word?

The signal word is 'finally'.

Find 'finally' on the chart. Is it a sequence word?

Yes.

Does this tell us there is a new event?

Yes.

The sequence word 'finally' tells us there is a new event.

What is the next event?

The alligator helps the babies out of the eggs by rolling them in her mouth.

This is a long sentence. Let's try to shorten it. We can say this: alligator rolls eggs in mouth to help babies out.

Where on the graphic organizer do we write 'alligator rolls eggs in mouth to help babies out'?

We write this on line 9.

Let's write it.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK (continued)

Let's read sentence 14.

Is there a signal word?

No.

Look on the chart to make certain.

Does this sentence tell us something that happens next?

Yes.

This sentence is tricky. It does not have a signal word. It does not tell us the very next thing that happens once the babies are born. Instead, it tells us some interesting information that happens in the first two years of the baby alligator's life.

What happens in the first two years of the baby alligator's life?

Baby alligators stay near the nest for two years.

So is this an event that we can write on our graphic organizer about sequence of events?

Yes.

Where on the graphic organizer will we write 'baby alligators stay near the nest for two years'?

We will write this on line 10.

Let's write it. Write this on the large graphic organizer and give students time to write on their graphic organizer.

Look at what we have just written on our graphic organizer.

Let's read lines 7-10 together. Choral read with students.

Nice work sequencing the events in the last paragraph!

I can take the graphic organizer with the sequence of events from lines 7-10 and tell the most important thing we've learned about what an alligator does after she builds her nest and lays her eggs. I would say the most important idea is this: When the eggs begin to hatch, the female alligator opens up the nest and helps the babies out of the eggs by rolling them in her mouth.

What is the most important thing an alligator does after she builds her nest and lays her eggs?

The female alligator opens up the nest and helps the babies out of the eggs by rolling them in her mouth.

Now let's read all of the events from the 3 paragraphs. Read with me from the large graphic organizer. Point to each line of the graphic organizer as students read the sequence of events.

You've done a great job sequencing events!

This graphic organizer for sequencing events can help us to figure out what the text is mostly about.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

When students consistently sequence events in the text, provide individual turns using other explicit passages. Call on students in an unpredictable order, calling more frequently on students who made errors.

SCAFFOLDING SUGGESTION FOR ERRORS

Verify that students are correctly identifying signal words, the parts of the graphic organizer, and how to sequence events. If students experience difficulty with this concept, use the graphic organizer with something that is familiar to the students (e.g., getting ready for school, the school day, getting ready for bed, making a cake).

Adaptations using this Instructional Routine:

- Once students are able to sequence the events of this text, choose other texts at an appropriate reading level for sequencing. Choose both narrative and expository texts for this purpose.
- This routine is a spring board for finding main idea and summarization. Once students are fluent with this routine, it can be used to find the main idea. For each paragraph, ask what the paragraph is mostly about. A main idea statement is given for each paragraph of the "Alligator Nests" text in this routine. After this, take each main idea statement and write a summary of the important information in the text.
- Use other graphic organizers for sequence (e.g., time line, list format, chain link format).

For further independent practice with narrative text sequencing, refer to the following Kindergarten and First Grade FCRR Student Center Activities at http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/GK-1/C_Final.pdf

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

Sequence of Events Chart

List steps or events in order.

Title : _____

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

Sequence of Events Chart

List steps or events in order.

Title : Alligator Nests

1 alligator clears an area with her body

2 uses jaws to find vegetation

3 builds mound and digs hole with back legs

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

Signal Words for Sequence

first

before

second

after

third

finally

next

during

then

until

later

in the end

Alligator Nests

- 1 A female alligator builds her nest in early April. 2 First, she uses her body and tail to clear an area that is covered and near water.**
- 3 Second, she uses her jaws to find vegetation like grass, leaves, sticks and dirt. 4 After this, she builds a mound and digs a hole in it with her back legs. 5 The nest is finished.**
- 6 Next, the female alligator lays 20-70 eggs. 7 Then she covers the eggs with the vegetation to keep them warm. 8 The eggs are buried 3-14 inches deep in the nest. 9 During this time, the alligator protects her nest from predators such as raccoons, opossums and skunks. 10 Never go near an alligator's nest!**
- 11 After 65-70 days, the eggs begin to hatch. 12 Then, the new babies make a sound called yelping and the female alligator opens the nest. 13 Finally, the alligator helps some of the babies out of the eggs by rolling the eggs in her mouth. 14 Some baby alligators stay near the nest for about two years.**