

12.1.3

Lesson 4 – Structural Techniques

The proper use of structural techniques can help to communicate the purpose and meaning of your personal narrative by allowing the reader to clearly comprehend the sequence of events and the relationships between ideas.

In this activity, review the two paragraphs with similar content: one effective and one less effective paragraph. Examine the two paragraphs comparing the use of structural techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome within each.

Effective:

So I spent my summer poolside, not lounging around with a tall glass of lemonade, but standing over a deep fryer slinging fries and onion rings at my community pool's snack bar. I faithfully saved half of every paycheck for college, and just as faithfully spent the other half on shoes. Pairs of slim metallic gold Air Max, orange filigree-embossed Foamposites, and a rare tie-dyed mash up of fabrics branded as "What the Dunk" all made their way into my collection. By the end of that summer, I had enough stock in my collection that I decided to become a self-employed shoe entrepreneur, buying and selling shoes online at a handsome profit. I camped overnight in Center City Philadelphia to get a prime place in line to purchase highly-coveted sneakers. I made some savvy investments, but I was also conned in an ill-advised Craigslist deal with an unscrupulous buyer. The challenges, rewards, and thrills of running a small business have fueled my decision to major in business.

Less effective:

I worked at the pool's snack bar standing over a deep fryer slinging fries and onion rings. I kept my paycheck for college, and just as faithfully spent half on shoes. I bought Air Max, Foamposites, and what the dunks. A bunch of awesome shoes made their way into my collection. I had enough in my collection that I decided to become a shoe entrepreneur, buying and selling shoes online to make money. Because I was successful there I thought I might major in business.

1. How does the first paragraph sequence events for coherence?
2. Contrast the first paragraph with the second paragraph. How does the second paragraph fail to establish coherence?