Objectives
- Discuss the basic principles of organizing technical information.
- Identify and describe patterns of organizing information.
- Organize information for a technical report.

Basic Principles of Organizing
- Information
- Analyzing your audience and purpose
- Using conventional patterns of arrangement
- Displaying your organizational pattern prominently in the document

Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose
- Though previously done, this will likely change as you continue writing
- May find information that does not help answer the problem or purpose that was originally identified
- May need to reassess audience and purpose before you proceed

Using Conventional Patterns of Arrangement
- Determine if a pattern already exists for your information
- A pattern will serve as a template or checklist, helping you remember which information to include and where
- Using a pattern will help make your document easier to read and understand

Displaying Your Arrangement Prominently
- Involves three main steps:
  - Creating a detailed table of contents
  - Using headings liberally
  - Using topic sentences at the beginning of paragraphs
Basic Patterns of Organizing

- Information
- Chronological
- Spatial
- General to specific

Basic Patterns of Organizing

- More important to less important
- Comparison and contrast
- Classification and partition
- Problem-methods-solution
- Cause and effect

Chronological

- Follows a time-line to describe events
  - Describe events in the order in which they occurred
  - Describe events that led to the present situation
  - Explain how to carry out a task by describing the steps in a sequence
  - Describe the actions you took in carrying out the experiment

Spatial

- Commonly used to describe objects and physical sites
  - Describe the physical scene of an accident
  - Describe the property on which a building will be built
  - Describe the design of a new product
  - Describe the results of an experiment you conducted

General to Specific

- Provide readers a general understanding of a subject before they understand and remember the details
  - Describe the overall process before you describe each step in detail
  - Provide the overview of a project (executive summary) before the body of the report
  - Provide background information in a memo before going into the details

More to Less Important

- Providing the bottom line (most important) information first
  - Present the major reasons a site is appropriate for building a facility, then the minor reasons
  - Describing the major applications of a new product, then the minor applications
  - Describe the most important conclusion before less important conclusions in a research experiment report
**Compare and Contrast**

- Used to describe and evaluate two or more options under consideration
  - Compare and contrast the credentials of applicants for a job
  - Compare and contrast different strategies for designing a product
  - Must have standards or needs for comparing items

**Classification and Partition**

- Classification is the process of assigning items to categories
- Partition is the process of breaking a unit into its components

**Problem-Methods-Solution**

- Problem – Description of what was not working or what opportunity exists for improving current processes
- Methods – procedure performed to confirm the analysis of the problem or solve the problem
- Solution – statement of whether the analysis of the problem was correct or of what was discovered or devised to solve the problem

**Cause and Effect**

- Cause and effect reasoning provides a way to answer
  - What will be the effects of X?
  - What caused X?
- Difficult to describe because there is no scientific way to determine cause and effects

**Evaluation**

- Future job duties