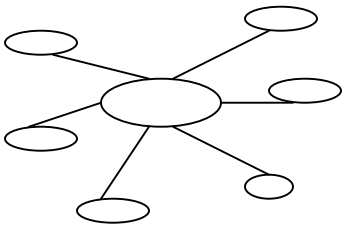
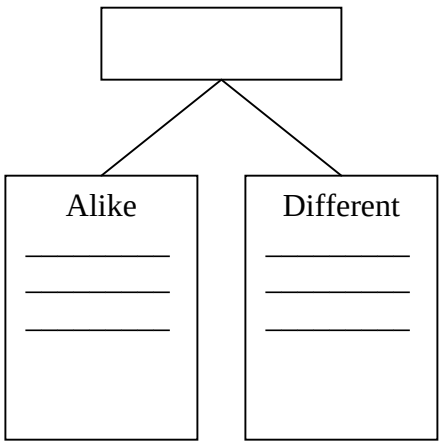
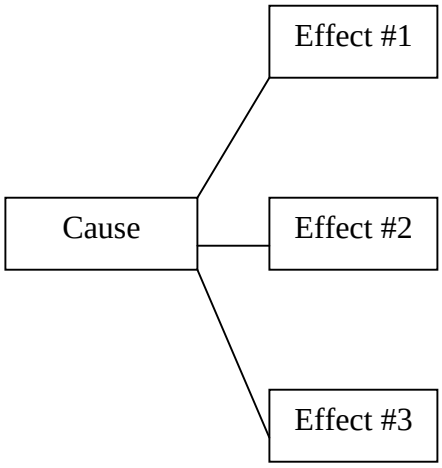
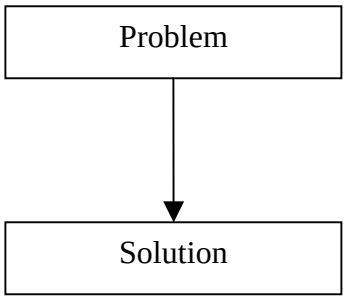
Five Expository Text Structures and their Associated Signal Words

Pattern	Description	Cue Words (signal words)	Graphic Organizer
Description	The author describes a topic by listing characteristics, features, attributes, and examples	• for example • characteristics • for instance • such as • is like • including • to illustrate	
Sequence	The author lists items or events in numerical or chronological sequence, either explicit or implied	• first • second • third • later • next • before • then • finally • after • when • later • since • now • previously • actual use of dates	1._____ 2._____ 3._____ 4._____
Comparison	Information is presented by detailing how two or more events, concepts, theories, or things are alike and/or different	• however • nevertheless • on the other hand • but • similarly • although • also • in contrast • different • alike • same as • either/or • in the same way • just like • just as • likewise • in comparison • where as • yet	

Cause and Effect	The author presents ideas, events in time, or facts as causes and the resulting effect(s) or facts that happen as a result of an event.	• if/then • reasons why • as a result • therefore • because • consequently • since • so that • for • hence • due to • thus • this led to	
Problem and Solution	The author presents a problem and one or more solutions to the problem	• problem is • dilemma is • if/then • because • so that • question/answer • puzzle is solved