

STRUCTURING AN ARGUMENT

INTERNAL STRATEGIES

The development of the argument is the main structural component of any essay, and authors use specific techniques, called internal strategies to develop, express, and/or organize their ideas. Internal strategies are used in two ways; to organize an entire essay and/or to develop one argument within an essay. For example, an essay might be structured entirely as a comparison and use analogy within that essay to develop one of the arguments.

Development Method	Definition	Example
	Compares something less familiar with something more familiar in order to help the reader understand the former.	Comparing a computer circuit board to a superhighway helps those less familiar with computers to understand that a circuit board is a busy communication highway, containing set routes with junctions for going in different directions.
	Explains why something happened by showing the direct causal relationship between two or more things.	Edward Roussel, in "Letter from Prison," argues that "to think that punishment causes redemption is a trap."
	Explores in greater depth the significance associated with the term or concept in consideration in order to give as a full picture as possible of its characteristics.	Susan Sontag defines "beauty" (in her essay of the same name) by examining the ancient Greek and Christian views on beauty, the language used to describe men's versus women's beauty, and the significance of the absence of beauty in the world.
	Illustrates a point with reference to personal or shared experience, an allusion, statistics, analogy, or quote from an authority	In his essay "Were Dinosaurs Dumb?" Stephan Gould cites Jack chopping down the beanstalk and David smiting Goliath with a slingshot as examples of metaphors and fairytales that show how "slow wit is the tragic flaw of a giant."

	Points out similarities and differences between two or more ideas, things, people, etc.; point-by-point comparison is a more effective organization in that similarities and differences are clearly pointed out.	Comparing King Lear and Hamlet as tragic heroes reinforced the characteristics of the Shakespearean tragic hero while pointing out specific differences in their tragic flaws.
	Points out differences between two characters or ideas; because this method can sharpen and clarify an argument it is frequently more powerful than comparison	By contrasting the openly discriminatory laws and practices against women with what couldn't be (or isn't) said to other minorities, Doris Anderson, in "The 51% Solution," argues that women are routinely discriminated against.
	Places together, under a single heading, concepts or things that share sufficient key characteristics as to be considered similar.	Kildare Dobbs, in his essay "Canada's Regions," classifies the people of each region of Canada by their characteristics.
	Explains step by step how something is done or how to do something and tells the reader the significance of this process.	Ernest Hemmingway explains how to survive a camping trip in his essay "Camping Out." His step by step explanation proves to the reader that enjoy It is all right to talk about this process will lead to an actually enjoyable outdoor experience.
	Shapes/interprets a particular incident or encounter (usually an emotional experience) so that readers may recognize some connection between your experiences and their own and includes interpretive commentary to explain the meaning of the experience.	