

Patterns

All higher level organisms follow, key into, and create patterns. Patterns are an important component of survival.

Patterns, habits, associations start from observation.

- An infant notices that when he throws his toy on the floor, his mother always comes to pick it up and give it back to him. So he learns he can get more attention by throwing his toy on the floor.
- The dog gets extremely animated when he notices that, after dinner, his owner puts on his baseball cap and his jacket, and the dog knows that it's time for his walk.
- Wolves will take a practice run at a herd of caribou to get them running; once they are running the wolves look to see which of the caribou might be limping or running more slowly than the others. They have learned to identify the patterns of caribou behavior that indicate who the slowest or weakest individuals are.
- Modern day human beings also notice patterns, though they are not so closely tied to survival as they used to be. We are constantly looking for patterns and identifying them to help make sense of our world.
 - The “man in the moon” is a pattern that the Western world recognizes, but other cultures, identify a rabbit on the moon, or a woman's figure.
 - The constellations of the zodiac are patterns identified in the night sky that have helped cultures through the centuries to explain their mythology and/or to create one
 - It is often difficult for us to NOT notice patterns. Maybe randomness is somehow disturbing. We try to resolve unknown things into familiar things by discovering a pattern that we DO recognize, like when someone sees the face of Jesus on a piece of toast.

Creating Patterns

In the same way that we recognize patterns, we are also more comfortable when we create patterns. Since most other people seek familiarity, they are looking for patterns to reassure them. As writers, we can help our readers the most by creating writing that is fairly close to the pattern readers expect. Readers are more comfortable following a pattern, they will be expecting a pattern, and, frankly, most of the time if you want your message to get through to the reader, you will have an easier time of it, when you adhere to a pattern.

- Write clear, complete sentences, for the most part
- Use transitions to connect ideas between sentences
- Structure paragraphs with a topic sentence followed by sentences that explain, define, or elaborate on that topic sentence.
- Connect your paragraphs to each other using transitions

- Write papers that move logically from beginning to end, even if the paper itself does not start at the beginning
- Without being strictly formulaic, the closer you create your paper into something recognizable, the greater (possible) impact your paper could have.
- If the paper is “experimental,” it may be valuable for some other reasons, but if the intent is to persuade people to consider another viewpoint, they may not be able to get past the structure of the paper to appreciate the message.