

3. Placemat

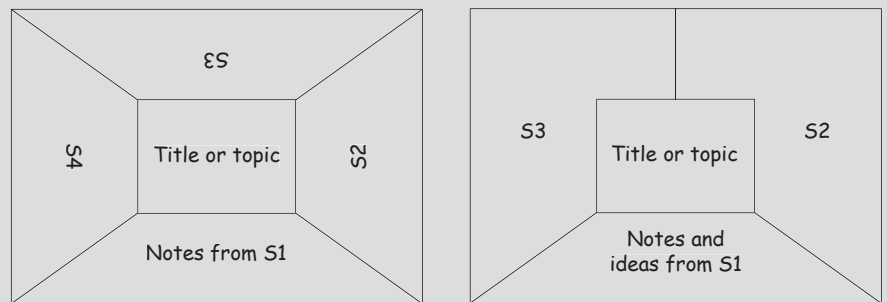
4th–9th grade

25 minutes



Materials:
A3 or A4 paper.

This is a good approach for small groups of three or four students – for example, when trying to find ideas for a presentation, or another collective text writing assignment. Instructions: groups of 3–4 students, seated at tables, receive an A3 paper. The paper is then subdivided into sections, as shown below. The title, or topic, is written in the center field.



For about 5 minutes, each student makes notes in their section of the paper, writing down ideas and important points about the common topic. They then present their ideas to the other members of the group, and, using colors and numbers, mark everything they wish to use in their text or presentation. In the next step, they write down the order of the different chapters or main ideas for their presentation or text on a different piece of paper. This way, the groups have established a solid structure for the development of the rest of the text.

9

Planning the structure of the text

(see also #16, Suggestions for text building)

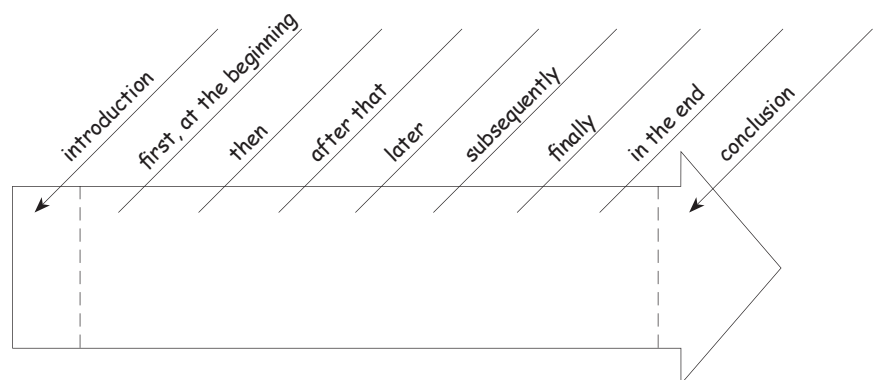
Goal

The students learn two techniques which can help them to better structure a text (broken down into introduction/main body/ending, in chronologically correct order). This complements the techniques referenced in part #8 (clusters, mind maps and placemats).

1. Working with a time line

2nd–7th grade

20 minutes



- The instructor draws (or projects) a timeline (a long arrow; see above) on the board, and explains to the class that it will help them understand how to clearly structure a text.
- For visualization purposes and clarity, the class will go through a detailed example. A theme with a clear series of events should be chosen, for example: "My summer vacation", "Last weekend", "The life of mother Theresa". Descriptive or reflective topics, such as "My thoughts about Peace", etc., are less suitable for this method (see the following three-part scheme).
- The instructor works with the class in deciding and marking which words

and phrases are most suitable for structuring and marking different subsequent steps in a text: “At the beginning, then, after that, thereafter, the next day, finally, in the end” etc. This exercise also serves to help students build up an appropriate vocabulary in the heritage language.

d) The students receive a simple action-oriented topic (e. g. “My daily routine”) and A3 paper. On this they draw a timeline and write down the different parts of the action. The pages are then reviewed and discussed by the class as a whole.

e) Finally, the students write their text in prose, thereby orienting themselves on the stages of the timeline.

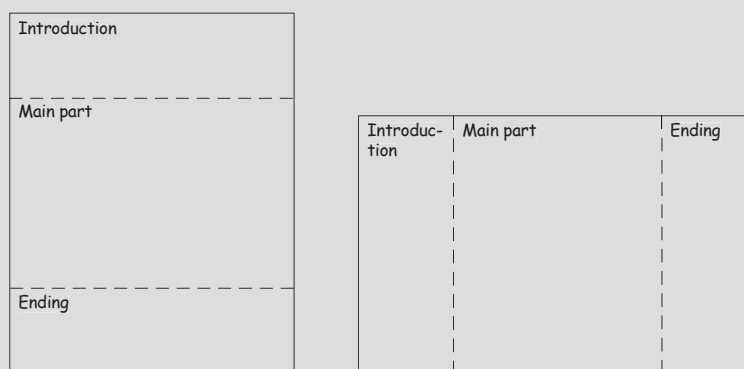
2. Working with a scheme to structure and develop a text

4th – 9th grade

20 minutes



a) The instructor first explains that most texts are structured in three parts: introduction/overview – main body (actual content) – ending/summary/outlook. This should be explained to the students with one or several text examples, if possible (newspaper article, short literary texts, exemplary writing by other students).



b) The instructor writes (or projects) the structure on the board (see illustration), and with a theme, practices the planning stage with the entire class. Possible appropriate themes: A description of my parents’ place of origin; Report about a journey to...; My thoughts about “Life in two cultures and languages”.

c) The students receive paper and a theme (see above) or select their own topic. They divide the paper into the three areas: introduction – main part – ending. They then write key words into the appropriate fields. It would be ideal if the students would first apply one of the procedures learned in # 8 (cluster, mind-map, placemat), which would help them to generate first ideas.

d) Discussion with the students about their experiences of applying the scheme in structuring and planning their text. How could it continue? The writing task should then be completed, if at all possible.