

Organising and structuring texts



Structuring and organising

The vast amount of information that you absorb, filter and organise in the course of a writing project are fundamental activities of such a project. They are an elementary component of academic work and therefore of the academic achievement that you accomplish. Therefore, organising is a continuous processing of information, a work in progress that changes and shifts over time. Everyone has to expose themselves to this process. The aim is to gradually develop all the aspects necessary for the topic being pursued, so that in the end a certain system emerges.

Possibilities for creating an outline:

- Clusters or mind maps
- Organise using index cards that can be moved around to try out different orders
- Continuously make notes, e.g. in a work journal

One way to check the outline is to use the following method: **The common theme**

Take the draft of your outline and create space for three sentences under each point. Now write down three sentences quickly for each bullet point. These should contain the central statements, the core ideas. It is important that you stay in the flow of writing; where information may still be missing, make assumptions. Allow 20 to 30 minutes for this, no longer. Once you have finished, read through the text (out loud). If you notice any breaks or gaps, your outline is not yet complete.

Give your “common-theme-text” to others to read in order to get feedback and suggestions.

Composing

Academic texts are also based on elementary narrative patterns such as chronology, genesis/development, escalation, contrast, etc. They also have their own dramaturgical arc (e.g. rise and fall or from the edge to the centre). They also have their own dramaturgical arc (e.g. rise and fall or from the edge to the centre). Such elements of form-finding, which are often used unconsciously or semi-consciously, should also be considered and reflected upon.





Another aspect is the temporal organisation of a scientific text. Rhythm and tempo are categories that should not be neglected. The question is, how much time (specifically: how many pages) do you give to a thought, an aspect in your text? When does the next thought follow? When prioritising, try to put yourself in your reader's shoes: How long should he/she spend reading this or that thought?

Guidelines for structuring and composing:

- Always orientate yourself on your initial idea and your 'common theme'
- Check whether you really need an aspect / point in order to fulfil the requirement for a systematic approach - or whether you can do without it.
- Especially with long and interesting writing projects, a lot of material accumulates. In our experience, the writing process is a long process of taking leave of materials and ideas.

