DECIPHRING PASSAGES

(Changing Comprehension Text to Graphic Representations)

A paragraph is a unit of writing that consists of one or more sentences focusing on a single idea or topic. A well-written paragraph often has the following structure:

1. **Topic Sentence**: This sentence outlines the main idea that will be presented in the paragraph.
2. **Support Details or Examples**: This is the part of the paragraph that presents details, facts, examples, quotes and arguments that support the main idea.
3. **Conclusion Sentence**: This sentence summarizes the main idea of the paragraph. It may also lead the reader to the topic of the next paragraph.

The word 'decipher' means to convert a text written in code or any non verbal mode to normal language. It is synonymous to interpretations, translations, explanations after comprehending the message.

A graphic organizer is a diagram that represents a relationship directed by a thinking-skill verb. Graphic organizers are representations, pictures or models used for processing textual information. They facilitate understanding of knowledge when there is a large amount of information to work with, in a given limited time. Teachers may use graphic organizers in their teaching and students may use them in a number of ways to aid their learning process.

In the reading process, graphic organizers can be used at three levels: Before instruction, during instruction and after instruction. Before instruction, graphic organizers are used to understand the level of the students in terms of the content. During instruction, graphic organizers allow students to approach the content cognitively because they assist thinking. It also allows students to construct maps that are appropriate to their learning styles. After instruction, they help students as a summarization tool or technique and they help the students to understand their improvement in terms of understanding passage. If a student can connect prior knowledge with what was learned and identify relationships between those ideas, it means graphic organizers have successfully assisted them in the course of their learning process.

There are various functions of graphic organizers. In reading comprehension, they assist learners to:

- Clarify and organize information into categories (main idea, supporting details, topic sentence and facts.
- Organize information in a paragraph for better understanding.

- Construct meaning of difficult words and sentences dividing into expressions.
- Understand the context by associating with prior knowledge.
- Identify conceptual and perceptual errors that may occur in the course of reading a passage.

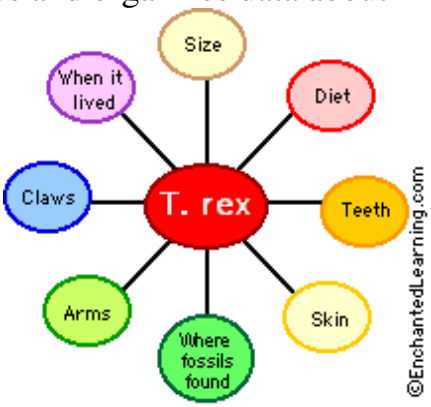
Graphic organizers can have various forms, from representations of objects to hierarchical and cyclical structures. Semantic map, structured overview, web, concept map, semantic organizer, story map, graphic organizer, etc. no matter what the special name, a graphic organizer is a VISUAL representation of knowledge. It is a way of structuring information, of arranging important aspects of a concept or topic into a pattern using labels.

Graphic organizers have been classified into five major categories according to their structures: ‘‘star web, chart matrix, tree map, chain, and sketch. Following are some of the graphic representations that may be used:-

1. Star Diagrams

Star diagram is a type of graphic organizer that condenses and organizes data about multiple traits, facts or attributes associated to a single topic.

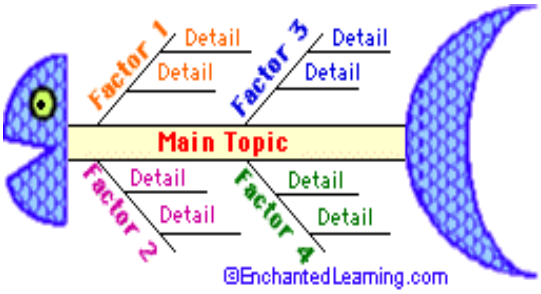
Star diagrams are useful for basic brain storming about a topic or simply listing all the major traits related to a theme.



For example, a star diagram can be used to create a graphic display describing all you know about dinosaurs (when they lived, what kinds there were, how big they were, what they ate, where fossils have been found, etc.) or a graphic display of methods that help your study skills (like taking notes, reading, doing homework, memorizing, etc.). Another use is a story star, a star diagram used to describe the key points of a story or event, noting the 5 W's: who, when, where, what, and why.

2. Fishbone Diagrams

A fishbone map (sometimes called a herringbone map) is a type of graphic organizer that is used to explore the many aspects or effects of a complex topic, helping students to organize their thoughts in a simple, visual way. The use of color helps make a fishbone map clearer and easier to interpret.

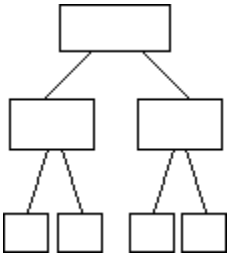


If the topic at hand involves investigating attributes associated with a single, complex topic, and then obtaining more details on each of these ideas, a fishbone diagram may be used. The fishbone diagram is like a spider map, but it works for more complex topics - topics that require more details to be enumerated.

The process of creating fishbone diagram helps the student focus on the topic, requires the student to review what they already know in order to organize that knowledge, and helps the student to monitor their growing comprehension of the topic.

3. Tree Diagrams

Tree Diagrams are a type of graphic organizer that shows how items are related to one another. The tree's trunk represents the main topic, and the branches represent relevant facts, factors, influences, traits, people, or outcomes.



Uses of Tree Diagrams:
Tree diagrams can be used to sort items or classify them. A family tree is an example of a tree diagram. Other examples of trees are cladistics trees (used in biological classification) and dichotomous keys (used to determine what group a specimen belongs to in biology). Tree diagrams are also used as visual in statistics to document the outcomes of probabilistic events (like tossing a coin).

4. Cluster/Cloud Diagrams

Cluster diagrams (also called cloud diagrams) are a type of non-linear graphic organizer that can help to systematize the generation of ideas based upon a central topic. Using this type of diagram, the student can more easily brainstorm a theme, associate about an idea, or explore a new subject.

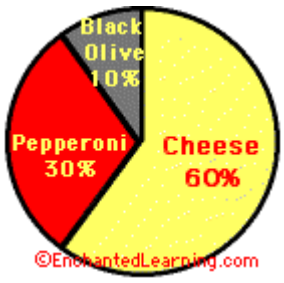
To create a cluster diagram, the student first thinks of as many terms or ideas relating to the stimulus topic as possible (and then writes the second-level ideas in circles attached to the main topic) - this first step is like creating a star diagram. Then the student explores each of these new second-level ideas in turn, and for each, finds as many related ideas as possible (and adds these third-level terms to the diagram around the idea). If more detail is desired, the previous step can be repeated for each of the third-level ideas (or more).

For example, a cluster diagram can be used to create a graphic display to brainstorm about a topic like pollution. The first level of ideas could be specific types of pollution (like air pollution, water pollution, polluted soil, etc.), and the second-level could be details on each of those subtopics (for air pollution, you could include causes of air pollution, effects of air pollution, how to stop it, etc.). You could go on to include further details on these third-level topics, and more levels, until you are out of ideas.

Colour coding can be very helpful in making an easy-to-understand cluster diagram.

5. Pie Chart (Circle Graphs) Diagrams

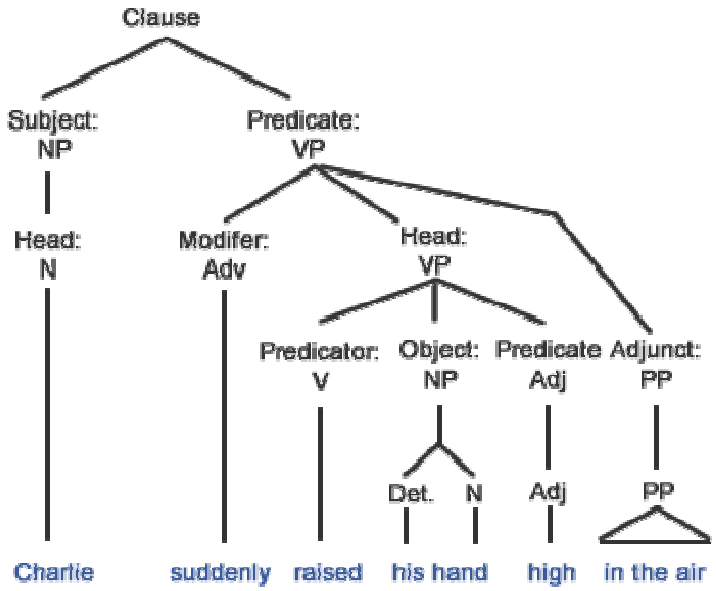
Pie chart diagrams (also called circle graphs) are a type of graphic organizer that is useful for displaying information about the percentages or parts of a whole.

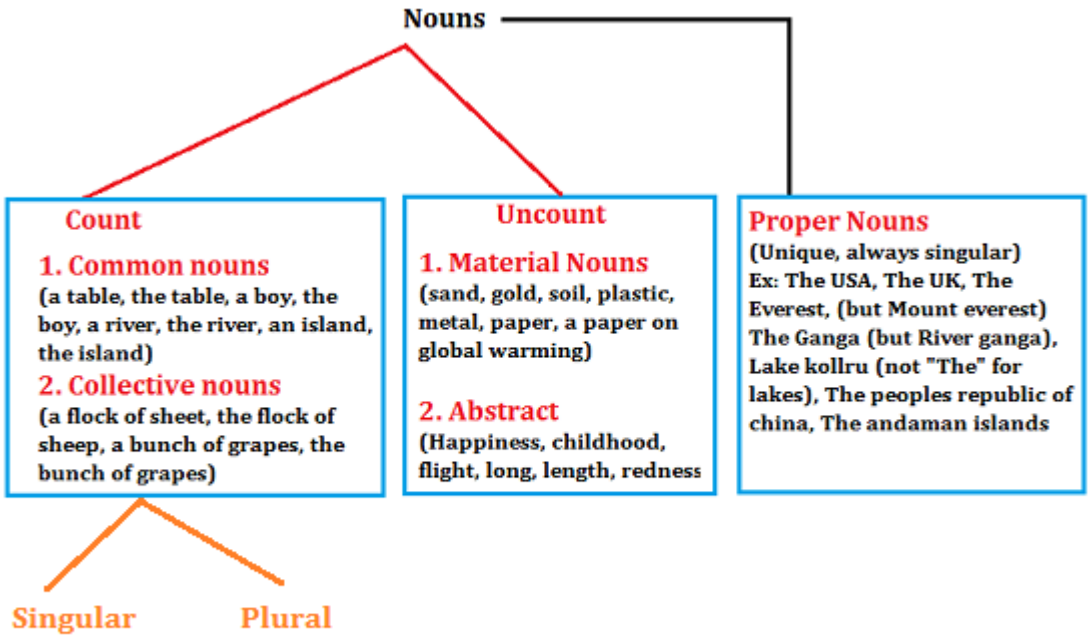


For example, a pie chart can clearly show the percentage of people who prefer cheese pizza, pepperoni pizza, or black olive pizza.

6. Flowchart Diagrams

Flowchart diagrams are a type of graphic organizer that visually display a chain of instructions used to complete an algorithm or other complicated process. They represent a work flow or a process showing the steps as boxes of various kinds and their order by connecting them with arrows. This helps in understanding the given text in a simple manner.





(A common / collective noun can be singular or plural)