

Identifying Lecture Styles

Lectures given by your teachers are usually organized in one of the following lecture styles:

- **Topic-List**
- **Question-Answer**
- **Compare-Contrast**
- **Series of Events**
- **Cause-Effect**
- **Problem-Solution**

Identifying the lecture style used by your teacher will help you [take good notes](#). Read to learn about each lecture style.

Topic-List

The teacher begins by presenting the topic followed by associated subtopics. Each subtopic includes details and sometimes sub-details. Number words like *one* or *second* and transitional words like *next* and *finally* indicate that the teacher is using a Topic-List style. The transitional words also indicate a change from one subtopic to another subtopic.

Question-Answer

The teacher begins by introducing a topic that is followed by one or more questions about the topic. Each question is answered after it is introduced. Words such as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why* and *how* indicate that the teacher is using a Question-Answer style. Phrases such as *in what way* and *how did they react* also indicate that this style is being used.

Compare-Contrast

The teacher begins by identifying two things that will be compared and contrasted. The teacher then tells how the two things are alike (i.e., compare) and how they are different (i.e., contrast). Words and phrases such as *alike*, *similarly*, *correspondingly*, *in parallel*, *counterpart*, *equal to*, *resemble*, and *just as* suggest similarities. Words and phrases such as *differently*, *however*, *antithesis of*, *disparity*, *on the other hand*, *opposite*, and *on the contrary* suggest differences.

Series of Events

The teacher begins by identifying the topic. Then the teacher describes an initial event, step, or stage related to the topic. Information is then presented about additional events, steps, or stages. The teacher concludes by revealing the final event, step, or stage. Words and phrases such as *initially*, *at the outset*, *next*, *followed by*, *then*, *later*, *after*, *succeeding*, *intermediate*, *last*, *culminating*, and *finally* indicate that the teacher is using a Series of Events style.

Cause-Effect

The teacher begins by presenting the cause of something, followed by one or more effects related to the cause. Details are included for some of the effects. Words or phrases such as *since, thus, therefore, consequently, for that reason, on account of, owing to, and as a result* indicate that the teacher is using a Cause-Effect style.

Problem-Solution

The teacher begins by introducing a problem and explaining why it is a problem. The teacher continues by describing attempts to solve the problem, providing details as needed. Finally, the teacher concludes by identifying the solution to the problem if one has been found or the status of attempts to solve the problem. Words and phrases such as *puzzle, issue, point of dispute, enigma, and complication* indicate that a problem is being presented. Words and phrases such as *solution, explanation, answer, cleared up, and worked out* indicate that the problem has been resolved. Words and phrases such as *unravel, investigate, clear up, and untangle* indicate that an attempted solution is under way.

Identifying the lecture style used by your teacher will help you write good notes in class.