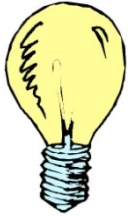


**Discussion questions for groups of teachers:** How do you currently teach your students to write with big topics (or themes) and sub-topics in mind? How might the following lesson ideas and lesson plans be adapted for the grade level you teach?

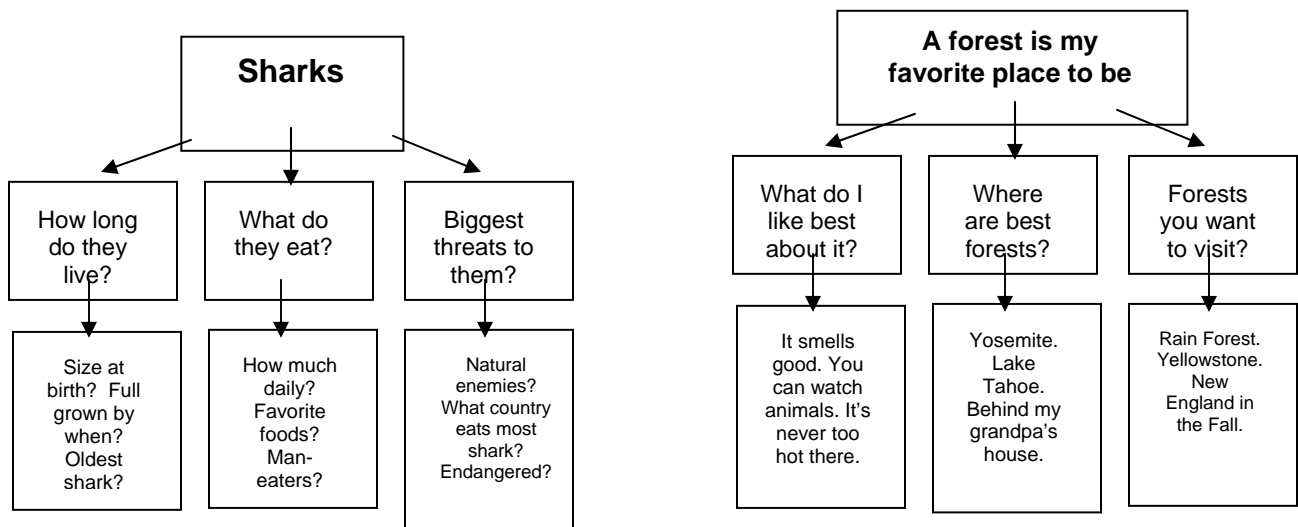
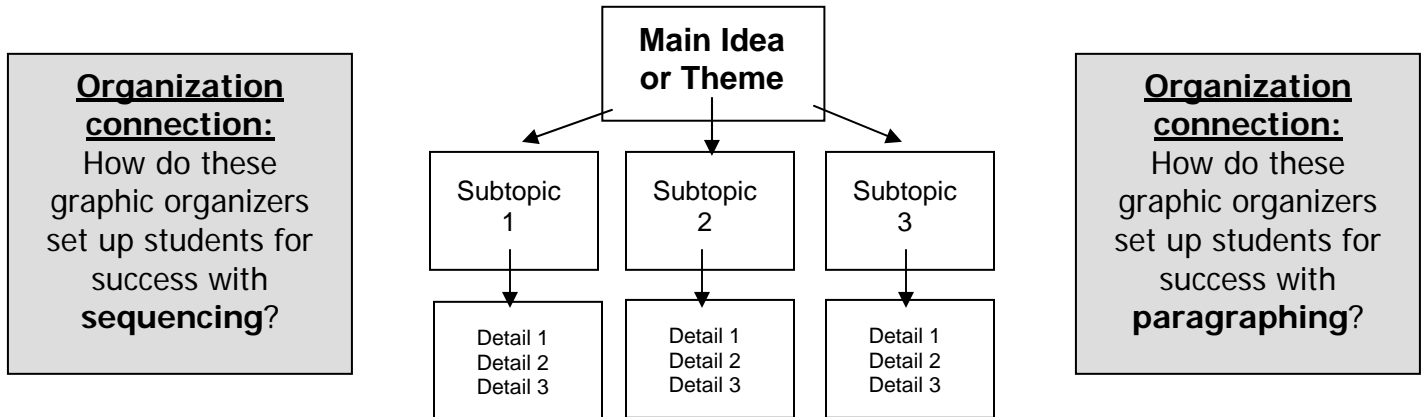
# Big Topics and Sub-Topics

Fresh ideas from Northern Nevada Writing Project teachers on the following topics:



- \_\_\_\_\_ writing with a clear, central big idea or theme in mind
- \_\_\_\_\_ the big idea or theme is supported by sub-ideas or sub-topics
- \_\_\_\_\_ highly interesting sub-topics are purposefully chosen by the writer

**Graphic organizers are a powerful way to teach the concept of pre-thinking subtopics before writing. They also set up students to be successful with organization.**

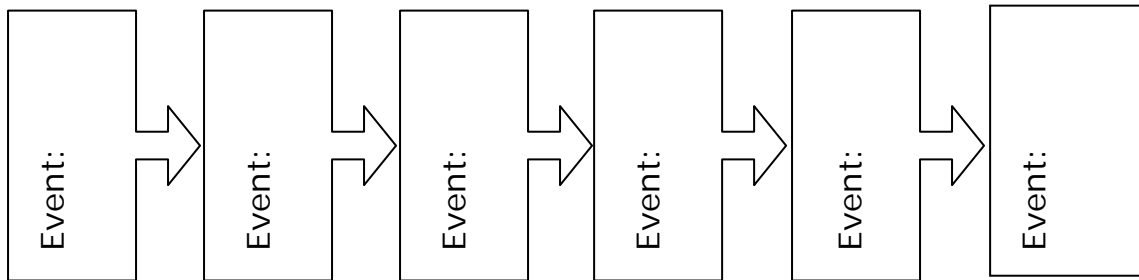


**Two basic graphic organizers for idea development that lead to organization:**

**Discussion questions for groups of teachers:** How might you use the following graphic organizers to pre-write for a piece of writing that would require both a big topic & supportive sub-topics? What variations of these organizers have you used?

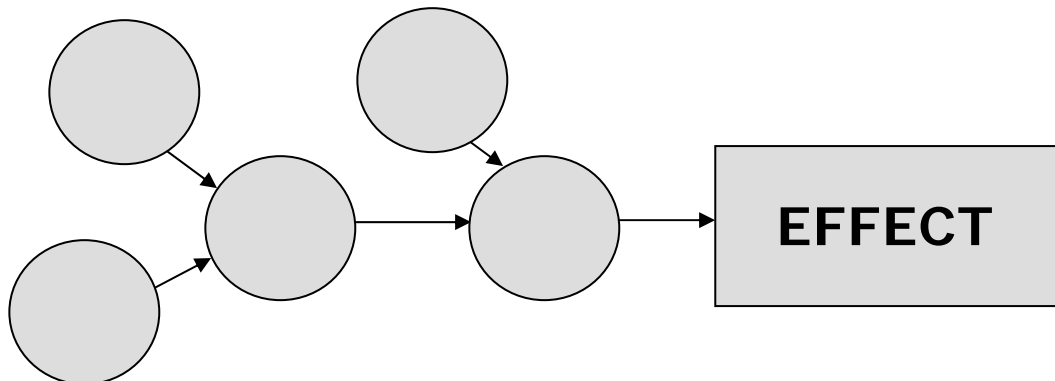
**A time-sequence graphic organizer:**

**Possible Prompts:** "A person's rise to power" (historical or fictional person)  
"How [sub-topic] became my favorite [topic]" (narrative)  
"How I came to strongly believe [topic]" (persuasive)  
What other prompts might work with this organizer?



**Process/cause-effect graphic organizer:**

**Possible Prompts:** "What really started the Civil War?" (informational)  
"What always makes me feel [insert emotion]?" (narrative)  
"How to change someone's attitude about [topic]" (persuasive)  
What other prompts would fit this organizer?



**A great on-line location for creative (and free) graphic organizers:**

<http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>

**Two sophisticated graphic organizers for better idea development:**

**Discussion questions for groups of teachers:** Assuming a teacher would provide excellent modeling beforehand, what age of student could go deeper with topics and sub-topics, using either of these graphic organizers? What would "excellent modeling" look like with students you might be working with?

