

**Identify each numbered element as:**

- Theme
- Analytic point
- Orienting information
- Excerpt (what kind?)
- Analytic commentary

This first sentence is actually weakly implemented Orienting Information (it's not in the best place). For this exercise, skip it!

**1** The School Pickup  
Turning to our first example, the following excerpt illustrates how the relatively mundane activity of waiting at the school gates can incorporate the movement of information and, in particular, its flow through one parent into the home.

**2** [Emma ushers her only child, Sophie, from the school gates]  
Emma: Come on trouble.  
Sophie: I'm a bloody reserve...  
Emma: Excuse me?  
Sophie: I'm a reserve for the swimming thing  
Emma: Oh, that's good  
Sophie: I'm not going! I don't want...  
Emma: That's not too bad, a reserve.

**4** Sophie: Yeah, there's somebody [inaudible]  
Emma: Well, at least you get to take part.  
Sophie: Only one kid from our class has got in.  
Emma: Really... [Addressing researcher:] Typical school letter [reads through it]. When is it, 17th of June?  
Sophie: Tomorrow.  
Emma: Tomorrow?  
Sophie: ... and we've got to be at school at 8.30  
Emma: What? Tomorrow?  
Sophie: yeah  
Emma: ... [reads from paper] Early start, leave school at 8.30. Errgh! Well, you'll have to talk to dad. Alright, let's get out of here.

**3** Back at home, having returned from the school run, Emma places the letter about the gala on her sideboard. This is the place she temporarily puts paperwork that is awaiting action. As she makes herself a cup of tea, she returns twice to the sideboard to read over the letter. Following the second reading, she retrieves a diary from a filing cabinet kept in the living room and steps out on the balcony to talk to her husband, Simon (who is back, early, from his job as a window cleaner). Simon's talk is inaudible but Emma's side of the conversation speaks for itself:

**6** You've got Jim at 9 o'clock... yeah, I know it's a pain in the arse, ... yeah, but I don't need to go anywhere tomorrow! [Returning to the living room, she again picks up and looks at the correspondence about the gala]. Hmm, ridiculous, 8.30 start!

**7** Later Emma reveals it was Simon's diary she had with her when talking to him on the balcony. She explains what it was she was doing:

I knew Simon was taking her to school but I couldn't remember what time his first job was but luckily he can do tomorrow. So he's going to take her at 8.30. Then basically come back have a cup of tea and then go back out again, cause his job at 9 is right opposite the school, so he's going to have to go back and forth [laughs].

**8** There are several key points that we wish to draw attention to from these field notes. First, it is notable that Emma is confronted with an organizational matter when out on the school run. Whilst her daughter Sophie is busied with expressing her disappointment at being a reserve for a swimming gala, Emma attempts to get to grips with the practical arrangements. She moves between reading the letter she has

just been handed and coaxing the details from Sophie directly. At once, there is the impression that Emma is attempting to work out the logistics of where, when and how she will get her daughter to the gala, an unexpected appointment that she is none too happy about.

Once home, it is noteworthy that Emma puts the correspondence about the gala in a place she has established for things that require action. Her solution relies on tasks and chores having some embodied form, taking shape in scraps of paper, printed letters, and so on. It also makes use of the location of her sideboard—located, conspicuously, in the main living space and in full view when either sitting in or passing through the room. Over the course of the afternoon, the gala letter's location serves as a physical point of reference for Emma. She returns to the sideboard and the letter several times, attempting to absorb its content and figure out how the logistics for this seemingly simple event can be arranged. Emma interleaves various other chores and activities with this contemplation. She seems to have to mull over the specifics for an extended period, and it is only after some time that she confronts Simon with his diary. Of interest is that it's Emma who takes responsibility for making the arrangements and she who enlists her husband's diary. Emma has the assumed role of managing and coordinating Sophie's movements, even when they encroach on Simon's work schedule.

The point we wish to emphasize here is how the swimming gala letter, given to Emma, precipitates a chain of events centered on integrating and arranging the relevant information into the household's existing organizing systems. As such, the capture and integration of information is part of a larger, ongoing, sequence, the specifics of which are coordinated and marshaled by one central figure: Emma. Of particular importance is Emma's use of actual material artifacts in this coordinating and marshalling. The printed letter, the sideboard and her husband's diary are all enlisted into the unfolding sequence of events and enable, in part, the organizing systems to work successfully.

**The Family Chart 11**  
This role of coordinating family and household activities is further illustrated in our next example. Rebecca is a mother of three girls, aged nine, six and three. To arrange and keep track of her daughters' as well as her husband's various activities she uses a home-made calendar, or what she calls her "family chart" (Fig. 1).

The chart, heavily annotated with the family's comings and goings, is hung prominently on the side of the refrigerator for all to see. Rebecca describes her own regular use of it:

I generally look [at the chart] at the beginning of the week. So just to remember like when there are tea dates, when I'm going out for dinner, have I got babysitting, and that kind of stuff. But I do look at it every morning. I do religiously come down, put the kettle on, have my shower, come back, look at it while I'm making the tea, and then go up back to bed with tea. And that's what I do every morning, that is my routine.

**ANSWERS**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Analyze excerpt-commentary units in Artful Systems in the Home (Taylor & Swan, 2005)

Note: Taylor and Swan DO NOT employ perfect ECU form, and some elements are out of order, or weakly delivered. Nevertheless, you can discern the rhetorical strategy of the ECU.

12. What's missing here? Hint: 