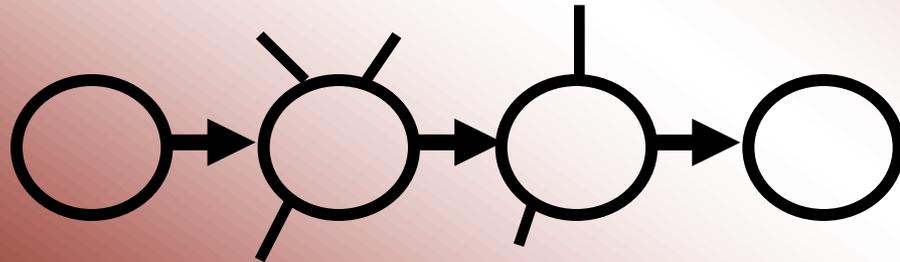


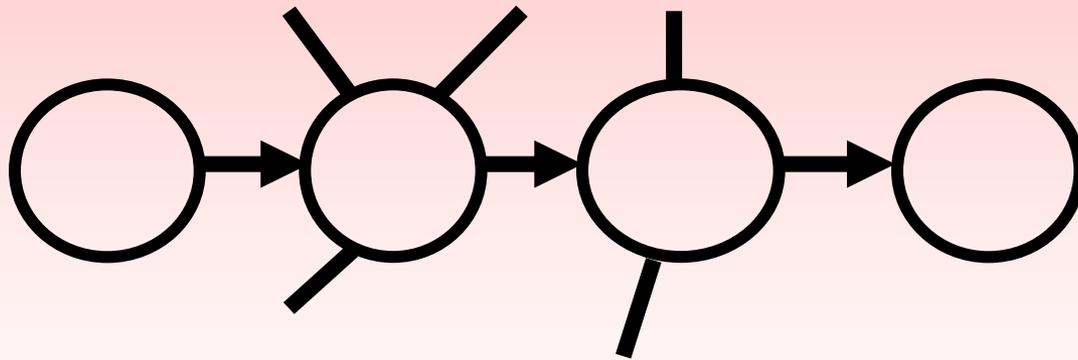
The explanation book



Sue Palmer

explanation text

- * explains how or why something happens
- * cause and effect
- * often in time order



(sequential)

Blank version 

These texts are often 'explanation text'...

"question & answer"
articles
and
leaflets

encyclopaedia
entry

parts of a
non-fiction
book
(e.g geography,
biology)

explanation

write-up of
science
experiment

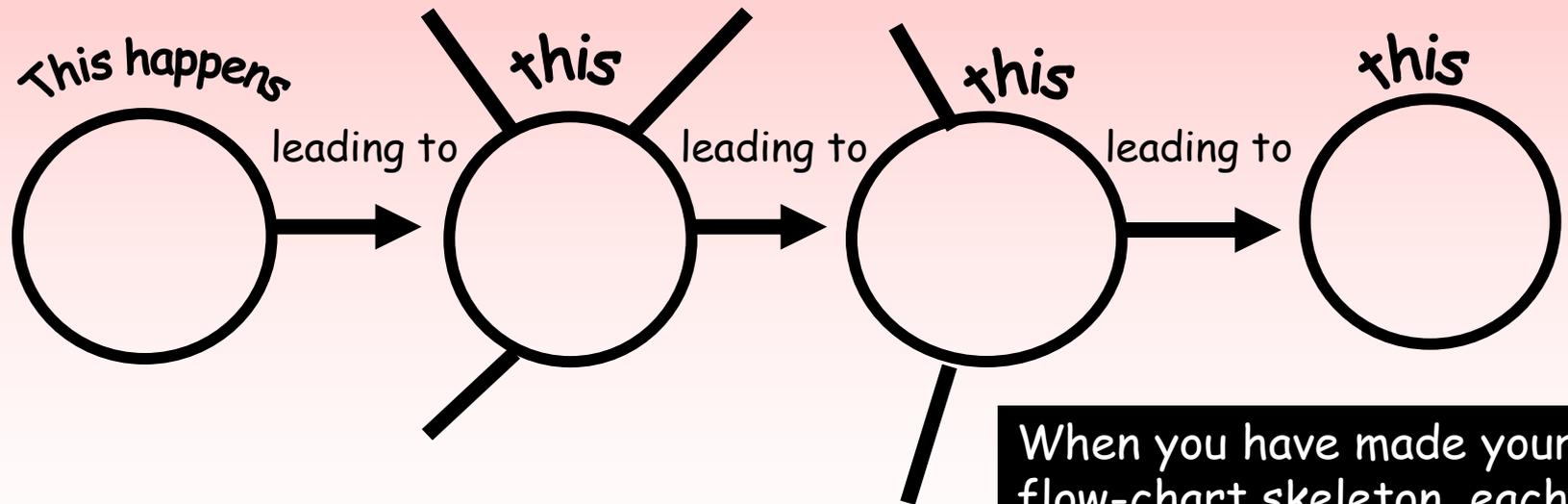
science
text book

technical manual
(e.g for car or
washing machine)

explanation organisation 1

Simple explanation:
a series of logical
steps

Probably...
labelled
diagram(s)



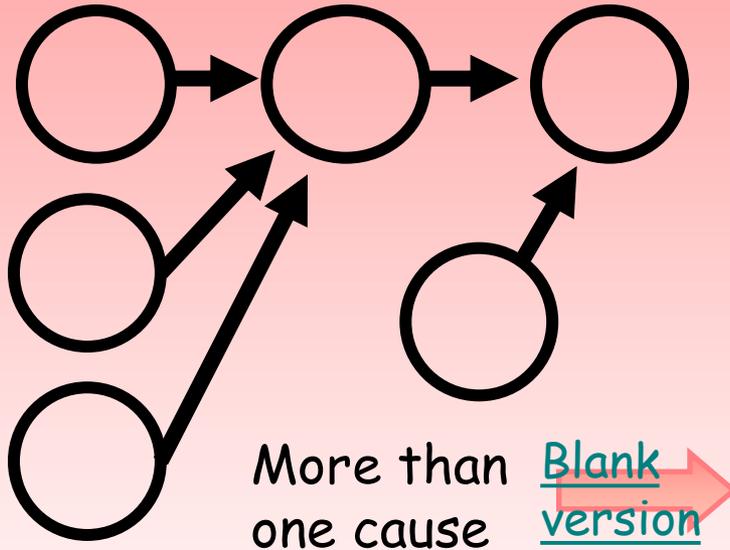
possibly---other causes or
effects at each stage

When you have made your
flow-chart skeleton, each
section of the flow chart
can become one paragraph
or section of writing.

explanation organisation 2

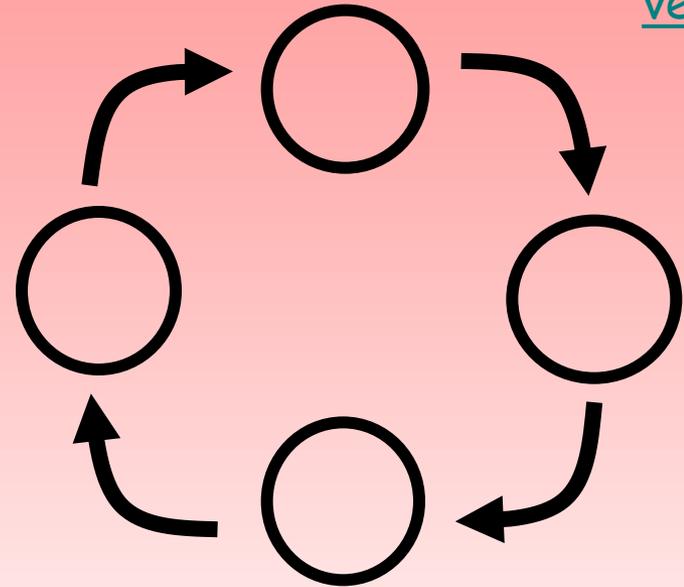
More complex explanations

e.g.



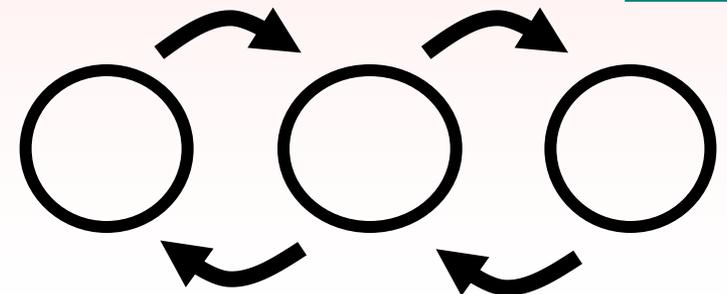
Blank version

Cycle



Blank version

Reversible effects



Blank version

Most explanations are quite complicated. You have to work out the flow chart carefully. It's best to draft it (perhaps several times). Often making the flow chart - and other diagrams - helps you understand.

explanation language features

* present tense
(except historical
explanations)

* causal language

* sequential
connectives

* impersonal
language (see
page 8)

* technical
vocabulary

because

If...then...

The reason that

when

so

This results in...

This causes...

Therefore

Audience

someone* who wants to understand a process (how or why)

Purpose

to help reader understand the process as easily as possible

- clear layout
- use of labelled diagrams
possible use of colour-coding, keys, etc.
- use of boxes for extra information

* You may have further information on the age, interests, etc of readers.

impersonal language

* third person

* passive voice

* usually formal vocabulary

(e.g "placed" as opp "put", "known as" as opp. "called")

* formal connectives

(e.g Furthermore, However, Therefore, Consequently)

The stick was placed in...

This is known as...

The motor is operated by...

The sides are covered in...

When writing with a partner..

REHEARSE * Say each phrase or sentence aloud
* Improve if possible

WRITE

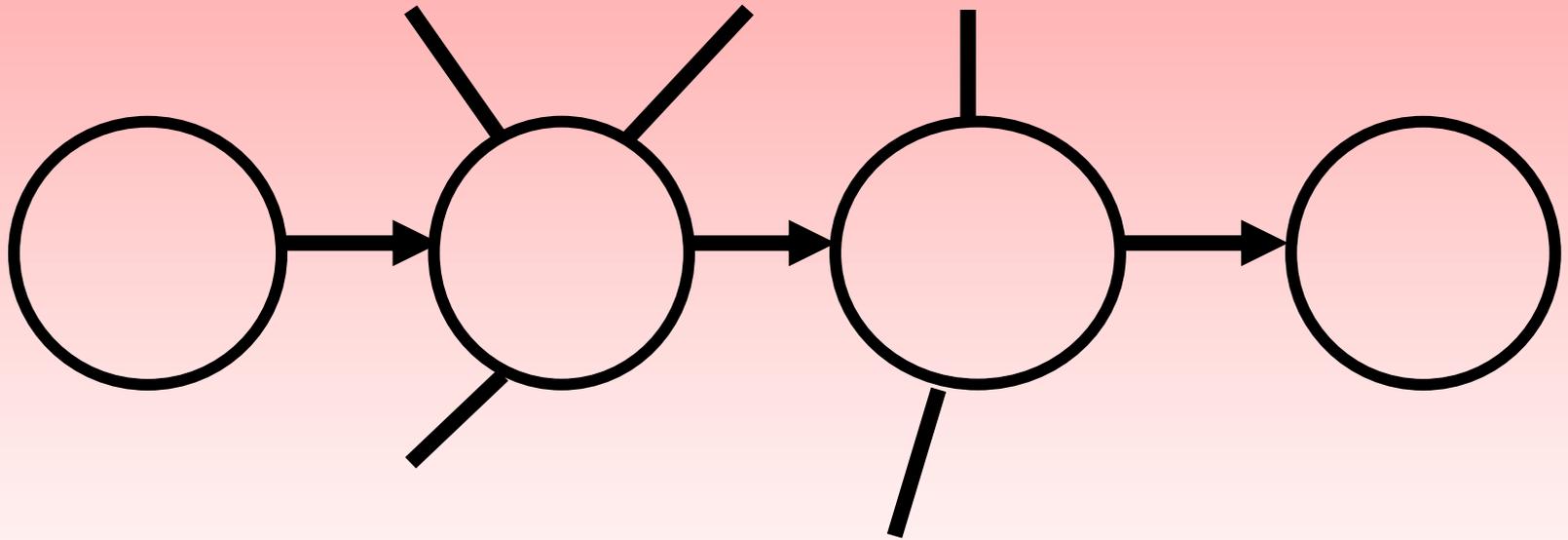
One writes,
one helps.

RE-READ

Read back to check
it makes sense

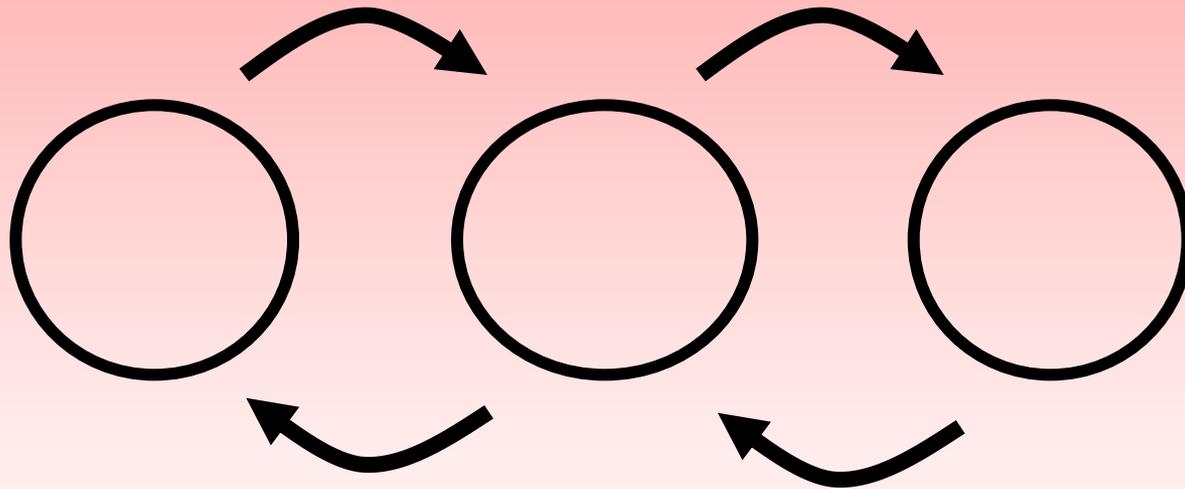
'Skeleton'
blanks

explanation text



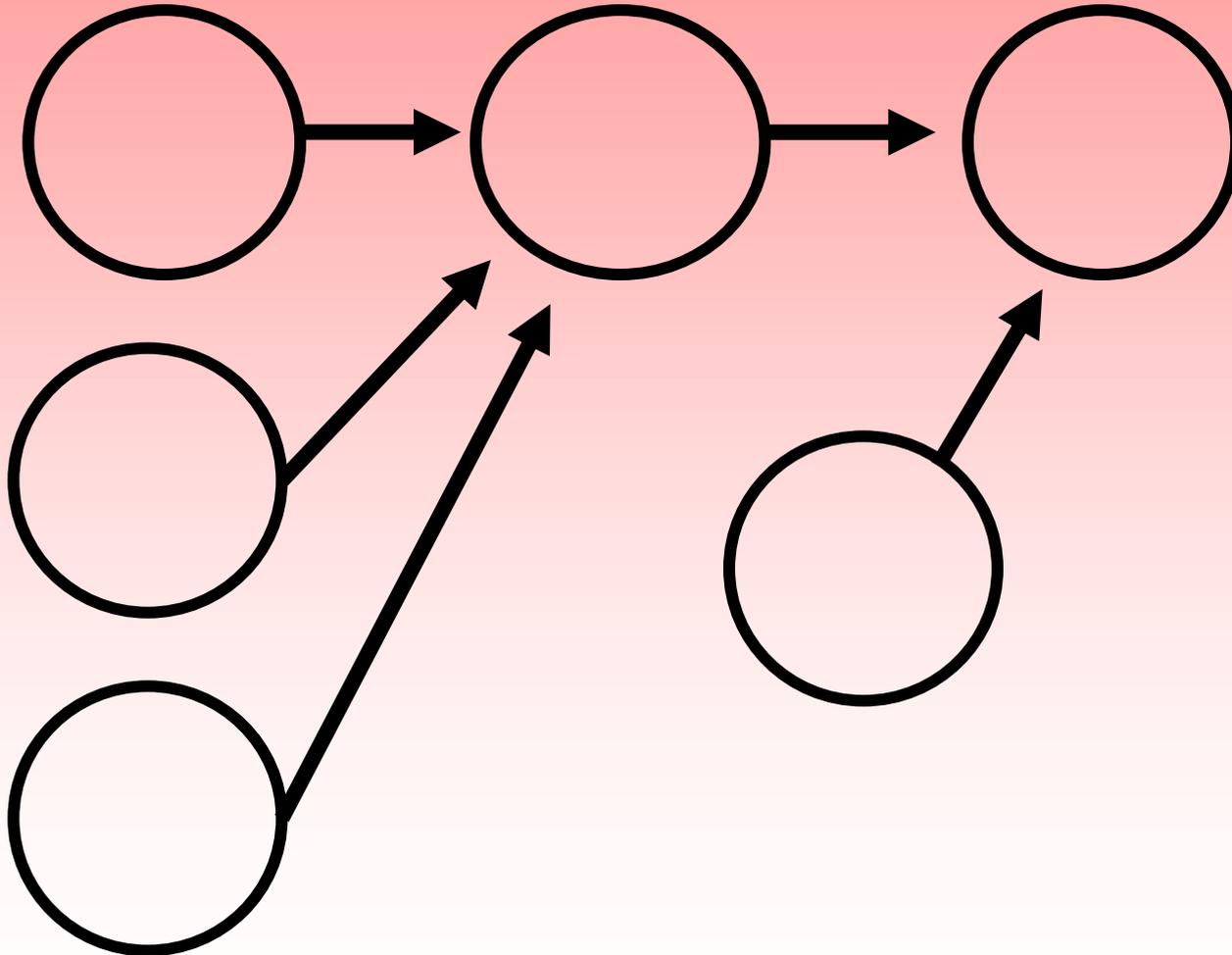
[Back to original](#)

Reversible effects



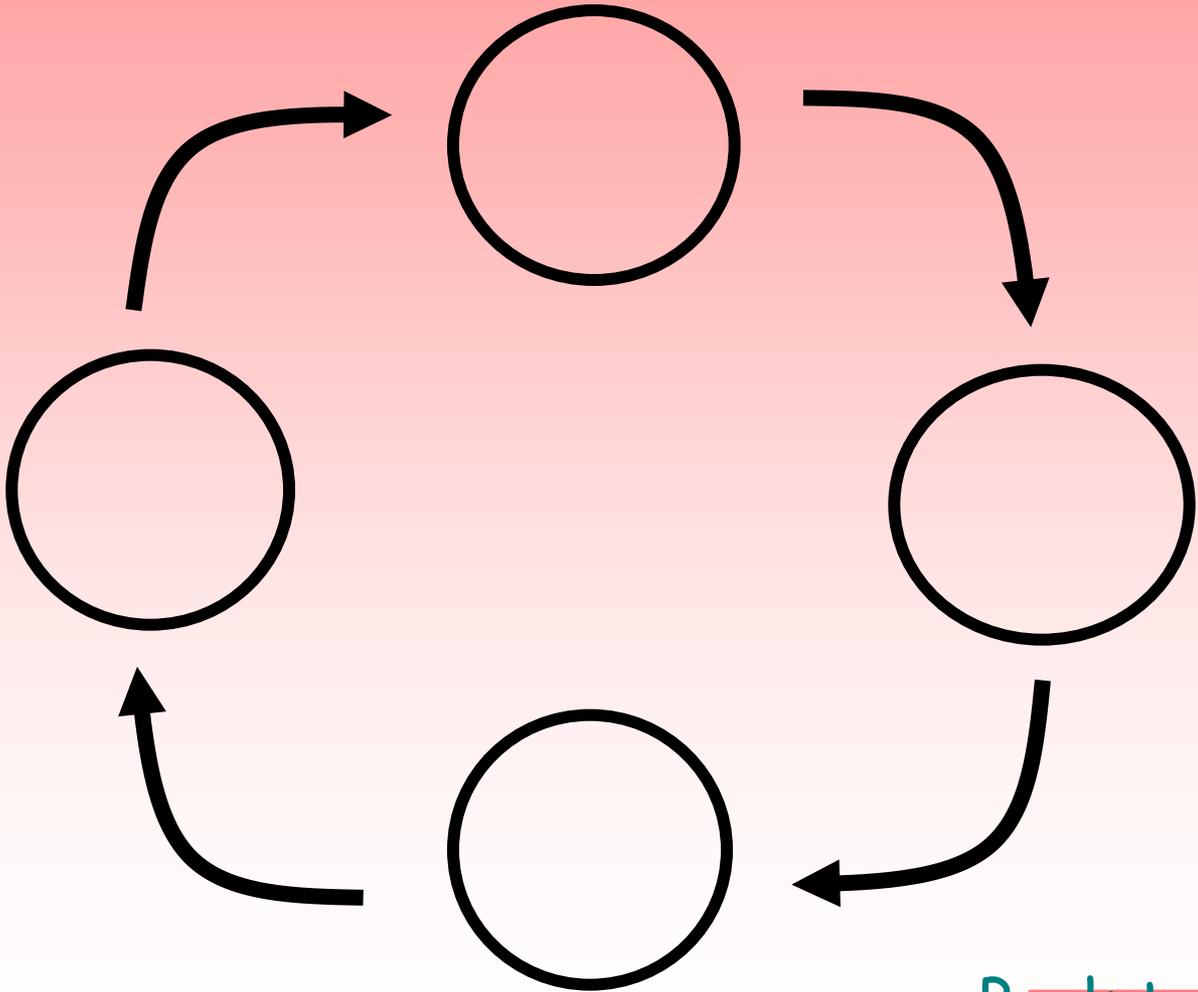
[Back to original](#)

More than one cause



[Back to original](#)

Cycle



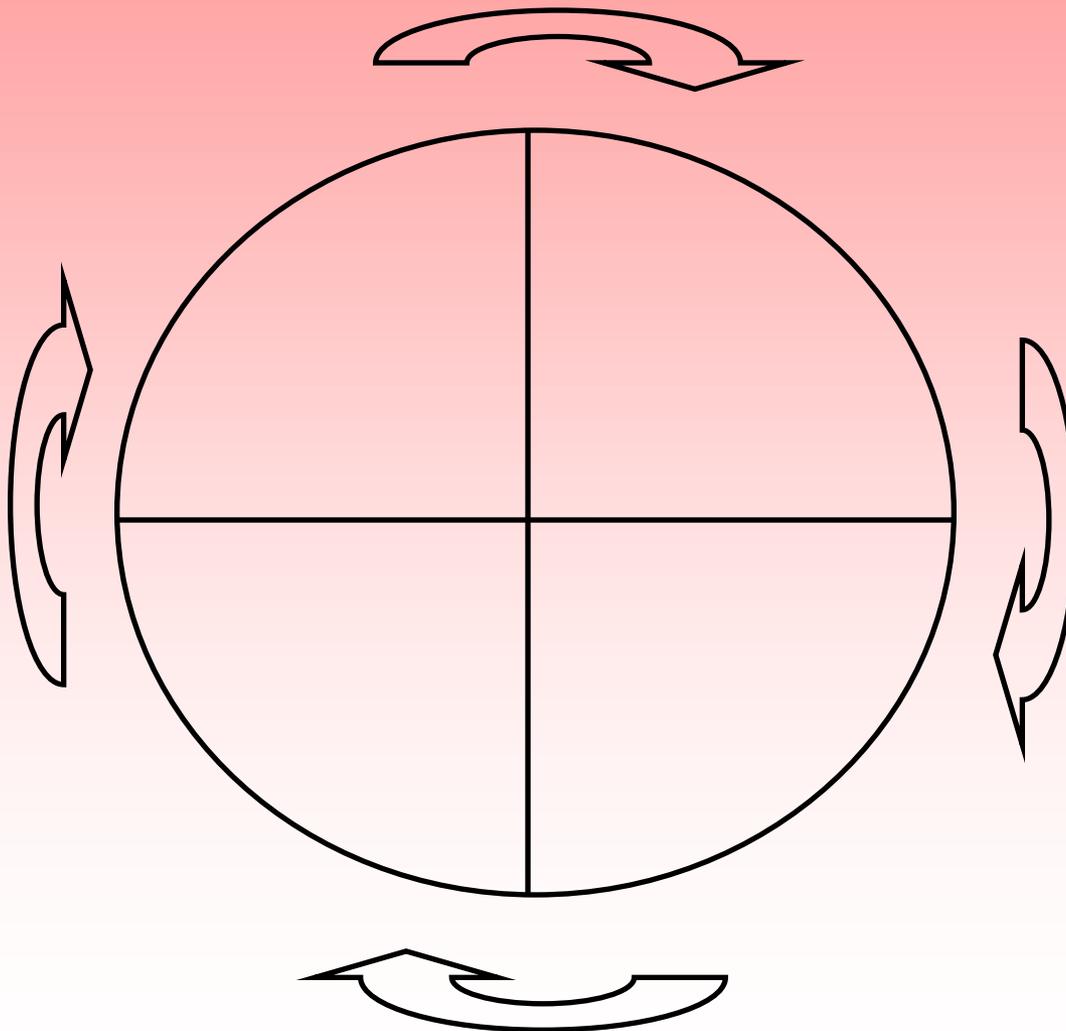
Back to original 

Alternative 'skeleton'
note-taking
frameworks

cause and effect grid

	effects				
c a u s e s					

'clockface' cycle



* labelled diagram(s)
(often with arrows)

* sequence of pictures

* cross-section

Examples of 'skeletons' in use

Taken from 'How to teach Writing Across the Curriculum' (KS1/2) by Sue Palmer, with many thanks to David Fulton Publishers

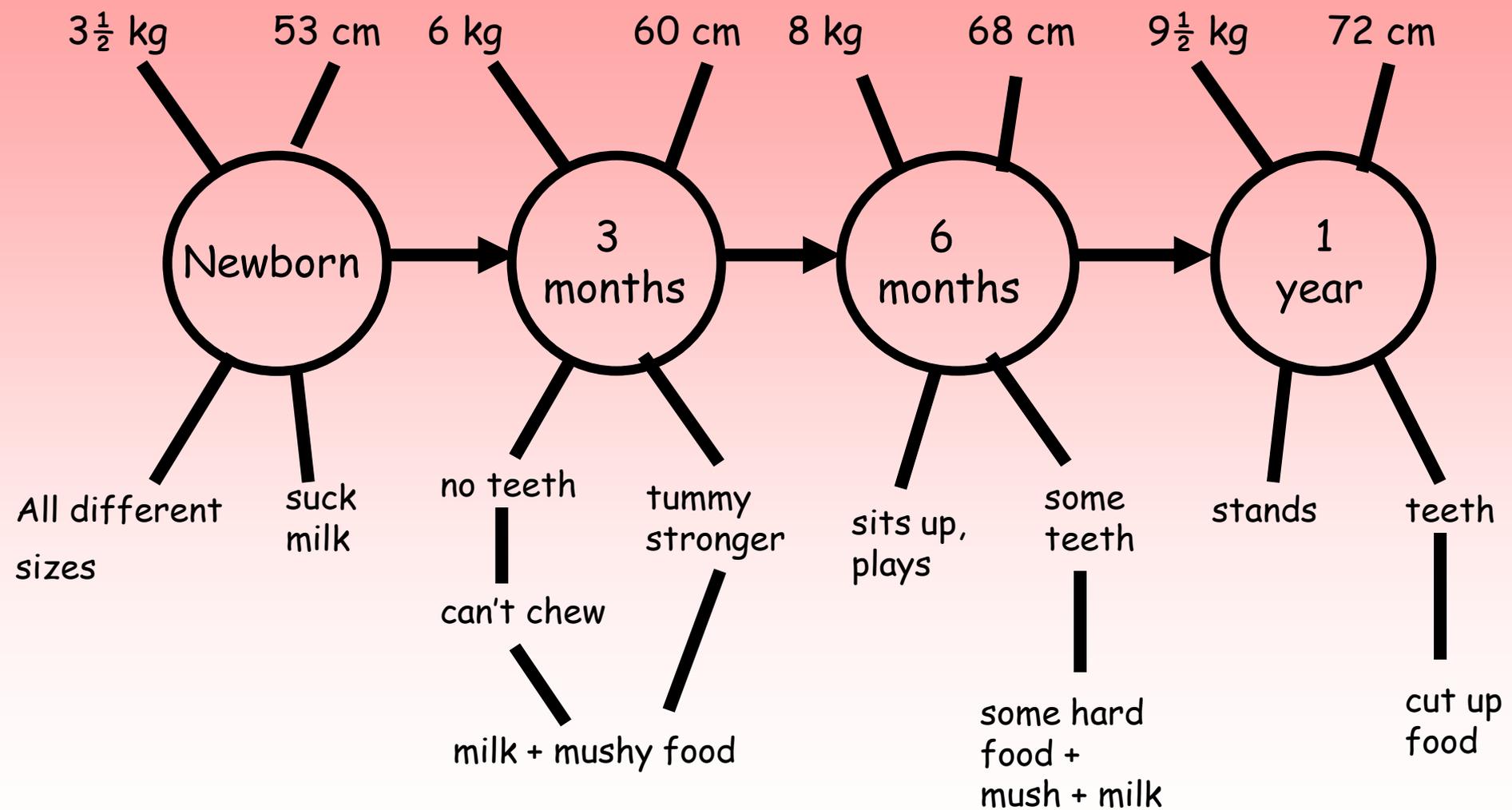
HOW DO BABIES GROW?

Newborn babies are very small. Most of them weigh round about $3\frac{1}{2}$ kilograms and are only about 53 centimetres from head to toe. Some are even smaller. However, soon after they are born, babies are ready to eat! Their food is milk, which they suck from their mummy's breast or from a bottle.

The milk helps the baby grow, so by 3 months old it weighs about 6 kilograms and is around 60 centimetres long. Its tummy is growing stronger too. This means mum can give the baby some solid food as well as milk. The food is special mushy baby food because the baby does not have any teeth, so it cannot chew it yet.

At 6 months old a baby is about 8 kilograms and 68 centimetres long. Its body is stronger now so it can sit up and play. Its little teeth are starting to come through. This means it can have some hard food like rusks as well as baby food and milk.

By one year old, most babies weigh around $9\frac{1}{2}$ kilograms and measure about 72cms. They can stand up, and will soon start to walk. They usually have several teeth, so they can eat the same food as older children, as long as it is cut up small. As they eat more and more, they will grow heavier, taller and stronger.



Text

Why do people die if they stop breathing?

In order to stay alive, human beings need a constant supply of **oxygen** (a gas found in the air) to all parts of the body. They also need to rid their bodies of a waste gas called **carbon dioxide**, which would otherwise poison them.

These two gases are carried round the body in the blood. **Veins** carry blood to the heart and **arteries** carry blood away from the heart. Both veins and arteries divide into millions of tiny **capillary blood vessels**. Gases can move between the blood in the capillaries and tiny **cells** which make up the human body.

When a human being breathes in, air goes into the **lungs**, which are like two spongy bags filled with millions of air sacs. Oxygen from the air passes through the sacs into the capillary blood vessels. The blood then carries the oxygen through a vein to the **heart**.

The heart pumps this oxygen-carrying blood around the whole body through arteries which divide into capillaries to reach the body cells. Oxygen passes from the blood to the cells, and carbon dioxide (the waste gas) passes from the cells into the blood. Veins take this waste-carrying blood back to the heart, which pumps it back to the lungs. There the carbon dioxide passes into the air sacs.

When the human being breathes out, the carbon dioxide is pushed back into the air. Breathing in and out is therefore essential because it ensures that life-giving oxygen is constantly replaced and poisonous carbon dioxide expelled.

