

Identifying Organizational Structures

A. The Panama Canal

In the 1800's, a ship traveling from New York to California had to go around the southern tip of South America before sailing northward to California. The trip took several months! A faster route was needed, and Panama seemed the best choice.

The Panama Canal is only about 50 miles long. But it took ten years to build! Workers had to dig all across Panama. They hauled away tons of dirt. It was not easy to dig through jungles, hills, and swamps. Insects were a big problem. Some spread yellow fever and other diseases. To kill the insects, workers drained swamps and cleared brush. It was a hard job, but it worked! In 1914, workers finished the canal - a 7,000-mile short-cut for ships!

A. Organizational Structure: _____

B. *Voyager* Sets Distance Record

Voyager, a U.S. spacecraft carrying Earth's message to the universe, is now the most distant human-made object. In February 1998, *Voyager* surpassed the distance reached by the older *Pioneer 10* spacecraft. Launched in 1977, *Voyager* has traveled more than 6.5 billion miles from home. It passed by Jupiter in 1979 and Saturn in 1980. *Voyager* should continue sending back signals from the edge of the solar system until 2020.

B. Organizational Structure: _____

C. Frogs and Toads - Alike, Then Different

Frogs and toads start out like a lot alike. They are both amphibians, so they lay their eggs in water. After the eggs hatch, both frogs and toads spend part of their lives - the tadpole stage - in water breathing with gills. The difference comes after the tadpoles lose their tails, grow legs, and develop lungs. Frogs have a smooth, moist skin and spend the rest of their lives in and near water. Toads have a rough dry skin and live on land.

C. Organizational Structure: _____

D. A Gourd for Every Reason

Gourds, a fruit that grows on long vines, have a hard outer shell when they dry out. HOLLOWED out, gourds have many uses. In some parts of Africa, they are used in the home to store grain, scoop water, and serve food and drinks. Gourds are also used to create musical instruments, such as drums and rattles. Carved and painted, gourds become works of art. Artists turn gourds into wall decorations and masks worn by actors in plays.

D. Organizational Structure: _____

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E. Wild, Wild Snowstorm!

A blizzard is a wild snowstorm. It snows for hours and hours. Sometimes, it snows for days! The air is freezing cold. Strong gusts of wind make trees sway and cause high snow drifts. These drifts can bury cars. It might take days, even weeks, to uncover them!

Swirling snows cause whiteouts. That's when the sky and ground look like a big white sheet! It's easy to get lost in a whiteout.

Protect yourself and your pets during a blizzard. Stay inside until the snow stops. Then go out and have some fun!

E. Organizational Structure: _____

F. Save Our Wetlands

Wetlands are low, wet places like marshes and swamps. They are flooded with water at least part of the time.

People used to think that wetlands were useless. They thought that they were just soggy places. Now we know that's not true. Wetlands are home to many birds and other animals. Some of them are endangered species. That means that very few of them are left on Earth. How can we make sure that they don't disappear?

One way is to protect the places where wildlife lives. Laws now make it illegal to use wetlands as garbage dumps. Also, roads can't be built through wetlands. If we're careful, wetland animals will be around for a long time.

F. Organizational Structure: _____

G. Space Station Comes Together

A new space era began on December 2, 1998, when the space shuttle *Endeavour* lifted off. Its crew's mission was to place the first two sections of the International Space Station in orbit.

The astronauts' first task was to capture the Russian-built command module, *Zarya*, which had been launched November 20. That task accomplished, the astronauts connected *Zarya* to the American-made module, *Unity*. Together, *Zarya* and *Unity* formed a 77-foot, 35-ton tower. Once the two modules were docked, two spacewalking astronauts hooked up electrical connections between them.

Then it was lights on! On December 11, six astronauts swung open the doors to the new space station and flipped on the lights. Entering the station, they became the first guests aboard the 250-mile-high outpost in space.

G. Organizational Structure: _____

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H. Celebrations and Festivals

Around the world many people hold celebrations and festivals at the same time of year.

Spring is an important time in many parts of the world. Christians celebrate Easter at that time. In Iran, the arrival of spring is heralded with the *Noruz* (noh-ROOZ) festival, when families do many special things together. In Thailand, everyone has fun splashing water on people to celebrate *Songkran* (SONG-krahn,) or New Year.

Fall is another time when people of many cultures celebrate the harvest as well as the changing seasons. Thanksgiving is a time for feasting in the United States. The Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, comes in the fall. In India, people place lighted lamps everywhere to celebrate *Diwali* (dee-WAH-lee,) the Festival of Lights.

Light is also a part of many festivals held in midwinter, such as Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and the Swedish festival of *Luciadagen* (loo-SEE-ah-dah-gen.)

H. Organizational Structure: _____

I. Why Penguins Wear Tuxedos

All Species of penguin developed a similar color pattern. They have black or dark blue feathers on their backs and white features on their chests and stomachs. Scientists think that this basic pattern evolved because it protected penguins so well from their enemies, such as seals, in the water. From below, its white chest and stomach hide a penguin in the glare of sunlight. From above, its dark back makes a penguin hard to see against the darkness of the water.

I. Organizational Structure: _____

J. The Bear Facts

Although black bears and polar bears are different in many ways, they also have a lot in common. Their body shape is similar, and they both have thick coats of fur. Newborn bear cubs of all kinds are very tiny and stay with their mother for a year or more.

A major difference between black bears and polar bears is their size. A full-grown black bear can be 4 to 5 feet long and weigh 150 to 400 pounds. The huge polar bear, at 6 to 8 feet long, can weigh up to 1500 pounds! Black bears eat mostly green plants, berries, nuts, ants and small animals such as mice. The chief food of polar bears is seals, although they also eat birds' eggs and berries.

Black bears have black or dark brown fur. Polar bears have fur that is yellowish-white.

J. Organizational Structure: _____