

## Activity Two

### Organising content in archaeological writing

In this exercise, a short fieldwork report on a fictitious site has been broken up into six sections. You have to decide what each section is: background information, aims, methodology, results, interpretation or conclusions.

These are the 6 sections. In what order do you think they should be organised?

### Geophysical Survey at St Barton's Hall, Dorset

<p>A. This project set out to identify the original St Barton's and gain a better understanding of its surrounding landscape.</p>	<p>B. The site is an important example of the transition of use of farming landscapes through the medieval and post-medieval periods, and the knot garden a very unusual example of its type, worthy of further archaeological investigation.</p>
<p>C. Information from a 1590 estate map was used to locate the original St Barton's, then described as 'ruined'. Magnetometry and topographic data revealed a complex of buildings, and clear magnetometry readings suggest that a fire had taken place. The brick paths of a formal knot garden were picked up by the magnetometry survey, although no surface variation was found in the topographic survey.</p>	<p>D. The site of St Barton's Hall (hereafter St Barton's) lies to the southwest of the village of Nether Percy in Dorset. It consists of a Grade I listed 18<sup>th</sup> century house, set in a landscaped parkland. In the grounds are the archaeological remains of the original St Barton's, built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.</p>
<p>E. Archival work at Dorset County Archives was followed up with a topographic and magnetometry survey. The site was surveyed over 3 weeks in August 2008, using a Leica GPS 1200 and a Bartington Magnetometer. The data was processed using Leica GeoOffice and GeoPlot.</p>	<p>F. It seems that St Barton's developed during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries as a working farm, but by the 16<sup>th</sup> century part of the farm was a high status house with a fashionable knot garden. However, the complex was abandoned, perhaps as a result of a fire. The standing remains were probably removed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the whole site was grassed over, and preserved, under the landscaped parkland of the new St Barton's.</p>

**They should be in the order DAECFB**

**D Why is this background information?** As well as giving general information about the site, there is also a clue in the first sentence, as the unabbreviated name of the site (St Barton's Hall) only appears the first time the site is mentioned in the text. Therefore this must be the first sentence.

**A How can the aims be identified in this sentence?** Although it is not a question, it uses the verbs 'identify' and 'gain' which suggest a questioning approach, and that it must be near the beginning of the report.

**E How can the methodology be recognised here?** The extract describes the activities (consulting archives, doing survey) that have taken place to collect the data. Another clue is the references to the equipment used.

**C How can these be identified as results?** The extract refers to the techniques outlined in the methodology and discusses what was found after the data collected had been analysed. It refers to both positive e.g. "clear magnetometry readings" and negative evidence e.g. "no surface variation was found".

**F What makes this interpretation?** It takes the information from the results and reorganises it, matching together evidence from the different methods e.g. the site described as "ruins" in a map with evidence from the magnetometry survey – "a large fire" had taken place, to suggest that the farm had burnt to ruins. This is written in chronological order, to create a narrative or story of the changes at the site. If you compare this extract to the aims, the interpretation should address them.

**B Why is this considered a conclusion?** The extract explains the importance of the findings of the project in very general terms and specifically highlights the most important discovery. By suggesting what further work could be done in the future, it emphasises that this is the end of the report.