Adjunct displays “appear outside of the text, such as pictures, geographic maps, concept maps, graphs, diagrams, outlines, advance organizers, and so forth” (Robinson, Robinson, & Katayama, 1999, pp. 38–39). There is evidence that these displays of information promote recall of text when used in concert with one another. It is believed that adjunct displays are effective because they provide the learner with two avenues to memory—verbal (the text) and spatial (the placement of information in relation to other facts), and that the spatial and verbal memories work in conjunction with one another (Kulhavy, Lee, & Caterino, 1985).

So, what are the conditions that support the use of adjunct displays in conjunction with written text?

Effective Displays Reflect the Structure of the Information. This may seem obtuse, but it’s really not. Consider a topic you know a lot about—probably something you teach. Given a few minutes’ time, you could sketch a pretty good representation of the information using visual and structural cues for hundreds of words of text. For example, most science teachers would create a visual representation of the rock cycle by using a circle diagram (see Figure 1.1). Let the structure do some of the work for you.

The Graphic Organizers Given to Students Should be Blank or Partially Completed. Many teachers routinely provide graphic organizers to students, and they are often featured in textbooks as chapter organizers. However, should these be completed, blank, or partially filled in with keywords and phrases? It appears that blank or partially completed graphic organizers promote higher text comprehension compared to those that are completed in advance for students (Katayama & Robinson, 2000). Interestingly, it doesn’t seem to matter much whether they’re blank or partially completed. The level of recall among participants in this study was similar. This should be comforting news for teachers who feel guilty for giving some students partially completed graphic organizers.

For Real Learning to Occur, Students Must Use the Graphic Organizer to Transform Information. The goal of an adjunct display is not to fill it out; that’s a worksheet. This visual tool is an external storage device for information. If they’re going to be useful, adjunct displays should be used to transform information into verbal or written form. Discussion, retelling, summaries, essays—these represent ways in which students demonstrate that they have made the information their own. Plan activities that necessitate the use of the adjunct display they’ve worked hard to complete.
4 Chapter 1

FIGURE 1.1 ROCK CYCLE

APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

Ms. Seymour will be introducing a chapter from the sixth-grade social studies textbook on ancient Egypt. The first section of the chapter deals with the hierarchical structure of Egyptian society. She
knows that they need to become familiar with the social classes in order to understand the contrast between the elaborate lifestyle of the pharaoh and his family, and that of the largest group, the unskilled laborers.

She has selected a pyramid adjunct display for two reasons. First, it conveys the rigid hierarchy as well as the relative size of each class. Second, the space of a pyramid is closely associated with ancient Egypt, and she hopes to strengthen the relationship between this new information and the schema, or mental organization system, they have already formed about this culture.

“Class, we’re going to be studying life in ancient Egypt, and it’s important that you know what life was like for people in every social class. Life could be very, very, good if you were pharaoh.
The people who rented farms or cattle lived near the Nile in simple huts. They ate fruits and vegetables, bread, and little meat.

However, it was much more likely that you would be a poor and unskilled worker,” she begins. Ms. Seymour distributes the partially completed graphic organizer (see Figure 1.3) and continues. “You’ll notice that I have put some of the information in it for you. This is because I want you to have an idea of what other information you should be looking for in the reading.”

Ms. Seymour briefly introduces the five social classes and their lifestyles as an advance organizer to the reading. She also tells them that at this time they will be using this information in small groups to create a presentation on a single social class. “You’ll want to get lots of good information down on this graphic organizer, because you’ll need it to prepare.”

She goes on to assign the reading from the textbook and then moves about the classroom to check graphic organizers for accuracy and completeness. As students finish, she has brief conversations with students to check for understanding, and then transitions to a whole-group discussion. For the remainder of the period, Ms. Seymour presents more information about the ancient Egyptian social classes, encouraging students to add details to their graphic organizers. As the bell rings, Ms. Seymour says, “Bring your organizer to class tomorrow—you’ll need it for your group presentations!”

**REFERENCES**

