

Unity and Coherence



Objectives

- Organize a unified paragraph around one central idea
- Construct a coherent paragraph by
 - Repeating key nouns
 - Using consistent pronouns
 - Using transition signals to link ideas
 - Arranging ideas in logical order

Unity



- A unified paragraph focuses on one main idea. Every supporting sentence must directly explain or prove the main idea. In a unified paragraph each sentence is directly linked to the topic or the controlling idea.

No Unity

The start of this paragraph is **incorrect**:

"Sunday is my favorite day, because I can watch football with my dad. There are other sports on other days to watch on TV."

Don't include unrelated details

Sentences like these don't relate to the main idea in the topic sentence:

"There are other sports on other days to watch on TV."

OR

"Some days my dad doesn't make it home from work until after I'm in bed."

Example of Unity

This is a better start to the paragraph:

"Sunday is my favorite day, because I can watch football with my dad. **He spends the whole day watching football on TV with me, since he doesn't have to work that day.**"

Secrets of Good Ads

A good ad has three characteristics. First of all, a good ad is simple. It lets pictures, and very few words, tell the story. ~~Television ads are more effective than ads in newspapers and magazines.~~ Second, a good ad targets a particular group of consumers. For example, ads for face creams usually target middle-aged and older women, while ads for motorcycles target young, single men. Third, a good ad appeals to people's emotions. For instance, women in the 30-to-50 age group often want to look and feel younger, so face-cream ads promise them that using a specific product will make them look more youthful. Teenagers, on the other hand, often want to be popular, so ads directed at teens often show a happy, confident-looking group of young people using the products in the ads. Teenagers have a surprising amount of money to spend, so advertisers research teenage fads. In conclusion, a good ad is simple, targets a specific group, and appeals to that group's emotions.

Incoherent Writing Model

- Snow creates problems. Streets need shoveling. Snowplows cannot always access streets. Driveways are hard to clear. Many communities leave the expense of clearing snow up to the homeowner. Building up dangerously high on a roof, it can break roof framing. Snow may seem harmless. It can damage houses. Snow is always potentially hazardous. It can endanger people.

Coherent Revision

- Snow creates **two** problems for homeowners. **First**, it requires shoveling to keep driveways and streets clear, **but** snowplows cannot always access them. **Furthermore**, many communities leave the expense of clearing snow up to the homeowner; **thus** some homeowners cannot afford the expense of hiring a snowplow. **Second**, snow may seem harmless, **yet** it is not. Snow can build up dangerously high on a roof **and** break roof framing. Always potentially hazardous, snow can damage houses **and** endanger those who live in them

Coherence



In a coherent paragraph, sentences hold together; that is, the movement from one sentence to the next is logical and smooth. There are no sudden jumps. Each sentence should flow smoothly into the next one.

Here are four ways to achieve coherence:



- Repeat key nouns
- Use consistent pronouns
- Use transition signals to link ideas
- Arrange your ideas in logical order

Repetition of Key Nouns



Repeating key nouns is an easy way to achieve coherence. In the following paragraph the repetition of the noun (fear) smooths the flow of the sentences and creates coherence.

Look at the two model paragraphs on p. 27

Key Noun Substitutes



- In order to avoid repeating the same word or key nouns too often, synonyms, expressions with the same meaning or pronouns can be used.

Look at P. 29

Consistent Pronoun



Same person and number should be used throughout a paragraph when using pronouns. For example, don't change from *you* to *he* (change of person) or from *he* to *they* (change of number). If you begin with a plural noun such as *students* don't change it to singular noun.

A tip

Here's a tip to help you use pronouns consistently.

Use a plural noun (*employees*) rather than a singular noun (*an employee*) when writing about a group of people of both sexes. When you need to use pronouns, the plural pronouns *they*, *them*, and *their* are less awkward than the singular phrases *he or she*, *him or her*, and *his or hers*.

AWKWARD

An employee must wear his or her ID badge at all times.

BETTER

Employees must wear their ID badges at all times.

Word Roots

^{Students} ~~A student~~ who ^{knows} ~~knows~~ a few Latin and Greek word roots ^{has} ~~has~~ an advantage over ^{students} ~~a student~~ who ^{don't} ~~doesn't~~ know them. They can often guess the meaning of unfamiliar words. If, for example, ^{they} ~~you~~ know that the Latin word root *circum-* means "around," ^{they} ~~you~~ can guess the meaning of words such as *circumference*, *circumvent*, *circumstance*, and *circumnavigate* when ^{they} ~~you~~ read them in a sentence. Similarly, the Greek word root *mon-* or *mono-*, which means "one, single, alone," appears in dozens of English words. ^{Students} ~~A student~~ armed with this knowledge can often discover the meanings of new words such as *monocle*, *monarchy*, *monotone*, *monologue*, and *monolingual* without getting help from a dictionary. ^{They} ~~You~~ also might be able to figure out that a monorail is a train that uses one rail.

Transition Signals

- The use of transition signals is another element of a smooth and coherent paragraph. These signals can be:
 - **Single words:** First, firstly, and however
 - **Phrases:** in conclusion, on the other hand, and as a result
 - **Subordinators:** when, although
 - **Coordinators:** and, but
 - **Adjectives:** another, additional
 - **Prepositions:** because of, in spite of

Look at the two paragraphs on page 31

Look at pages 33 and pages 296-299 for a complete list.

Time Subordinators

after	He goes to school after he finishes work.
as*	Several overcrowded buses passed as we were waiting.
as soon as	She felt better as soon as she took the medicine.
before	Before you apply to college, you have to take an entrance exam.
since	It has been a year since I left home.
until	We can't leave the room until everyone has finished the test.
when	When you start college, you sometimes have to take a placement test.
whenever	Whenever I don't sleep well, I feel sick the next day.
while	Several overcrowded buses passed while they were waiting.

Reason Subordinators

because	Jack excels at sports because he trains hard.
since	Since she works out daily, Jill is in great condition.
as*	As they want to compete in a marathon, they run every day.

Place Subordinators

where	I can never remember where I put my house keys.
wherever	A baby animal follows its mother wherever she goes.

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Transition Phrases and Conjunctive Adverbs

Independent clause

In warm climate zones, water evaporates rapidly;

independent clause

therefore, the concentration of salt is greater.



Independent clause

Both the Red Sea and the Mediterranean have narrow

Independent clause

outlets to the ocean; however, the Mediterranean's is
narrower.



Independent clause

A few societies in the world are matriarchal; **that is,**

Independent clause

the mother is head of the family.



Independent clause

Some English words have no exact equivalents in other

Independent clause

languages; **for example**, there is no German word
for the adjective fair, as in fair play.

Coordinators

1. Seven coordinating conjunctions

and but so or for yet nor

FANBOYS

2. Correlative (paired) conjunctions

both...and

not only...but also

neither...nor

either...or

whether...or

Examples



Independent clause

In a matriarchy, the mother is the head of the family,

Independent clause

and all the children belong to her extended family group.



Independent clause

In warm climates zones, water evaporates rapidly, **so**

Independent clause

the concentration of salt is greater.



Independent clause

independent clause

Children **not only** need love, **but also** discipline.



When coordinators connect two words or phrases, do not use comma.

Would you rather take a written **or** an oral exam?

Children need **not only** love **but also** discipline.

Exception



Some writers use a comma before *but* and *yet* even when they do not connect independent clauses to emphasize the contrast of the connected ideas.

The poem is solemn, **yet** optimistic in tone.

Subordinator



A subordinator (subordinating conjunction) is the first word in a dependent clause. A dependent is a group of words containing a subject and a verb that does not express a complete thought. A dependent clause always begins with a subordinator and must be connected to an independent clause to form a sentence.

Example sentences

Dependent clause

Although the company's sales increased last year, its

Independent clause

net profit declined.

Independent

The company's net profit declined last year

Dependent

although its sales increased.

Other Signals

Additional (n.) is followed by a noun.

An **additional** reason for the company's bankruptcy was the lack of competent management.

In addition to (preposition) is followed by a noun or noun phrase

In addition to increased competition, the lack of competent management caused the company's bankruptcy

Such as is followed by a noun or noun phrase and no comma.

Vocabulary differences between British and American English include words **such as** petrol/gasoline, windscreen/windshield and lorry/truck.