I'm not a robot

Coherent essays are identified by relevance to the central topic. They communicate a meaningful message to a specific audience and maintain pertinence to the main focus. In a coherent essay, the sentences and ideas flow smoothly and, as a result, the reader can follow the ideas developed without any issues.To achieve coherence in an essay, writers use lexical and grammatical cohesive devices. Examples of these cohesive devices are repetition, synonymy, antonymy, meronymy, substitutions, and anaphoric or cataphoric relations between sentences. We will discuss these devices in more detail below.This article will discuss how to write a coherent essay. We will be focusing on the five major points.We will start with definitions of coherence and cohesion.Then, we will give examples of how a text can achieve cohesion.We will see how a text can be cohesive but not coherent.The structure of a coherent essay will also be discussed.Finally, we will look in detail at ways to improve cohesion and write a coherent essay.Cohesion and Coherence in Essay WritingBefore illustrating how to write coherent essays, let us start with the definitions of coherence and cohesion and list the ways we can achieve cohesion in a coherent text.In general, coherence and cohesion refer to how a text is structured so that the elements it is constituted of can stick together and contribute to a meaningful whole. In coherent essays, writers use grammatical and lexical cohesive techniques so that ideas can flow meaningfully and logically.Coherence refers to the quality of forming a unified consistent whole. We can describe a text as being coherent if it is semantically meaningful, that is if the ideas flow logically to produce an understandable entity.If a text is coherent it is logically ordered and connected. It is clear, consistent, and understandable.Coherence is related to the macro-level features of a text which enable it to have a sense as a whole.Cohesion is commonly defined as the grammatical and lexical connections that tie a text together, contributing to its meaning (i.e. coherence.)While coherence is related to the macro-level features of a text, cohesion is concerned with its micro-level – the words, the phrases, and the sentences and how they are connected to form a whole.If the elements of a text are cohesive, they are united and work together or fit well together.To summarize, coherence refers to how the ideas of the text flow logically and make a text semantically meaningful as a whole. Cohesion is what makes the elements (e.g. the words, phrases, clauses, and sentences) of a text stick together to form a whole.There are two types of cohesion: lexical and grammatical. Writers connect sentences and ideas in their essays using both lexical and grammatical cohesive devices.We can achieve cohesion through lexical cohesion by using these techniques:Repetition.Synonymy.Antonymy.Hyponymy.Meronymy.Now let’s look at these in more detail.Repeating words may contribute to cohesion. Repetition creates cohesive ties within the text.Example:Birds are beautiful. I like birds.You can use a word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word to achieve cohesion.Example:Paul saw a snake under the mattress. The serpent was probably hiding there for a long time.Antonymy refers to the use of a word of opposite meaning. This is often used to create links between the elements of a text.Example:Old movies are boring, the new ones are much better.This refers to the use of a word that denotes a subcategory of a more general class.Example:I saw a cat. The animal was very hungry and looked ill.Relating a superordinate term (i.e. animal) to a corresponding subordinate term (i.e. cat) may create more cohesiveness between sentences and clauses.Meronymy is another way to achieve cohesion. It refers to the use of a word that denotes part of something but which is used to refer to the whole of it for instance faces can be used to refer to people as in “I see many faces here”. In the following example, hands refer to workers.Example:More workers are needed. We need more hands to finish the work.Grammatical cohesion refers to the grammatical relations between text elements. This includes the use of:Let us illustrate the above devices with some examples.Anaphora is when you use a word referring back to another word used earlier in a text or conversation.Example:Jane was brilliant. She got the best score.The pronoun “she” refers back to the proper noun “Jane”.Cataphora is the opposite of anaphora. Cataphora refers to the use of a word or phrase that refers to or stands for a following word or phrase.Example:Here he comes our hero. Please, welcome John.The pronoun “he” refers back to the proper noun “John”.Ellipsis refers to the omission from speech or writing of a word or words that are superfluous or able to be understood from contextual clues.Example:Liz had some chocolate bars, and Nancy an ice cream.In the above example, “had” in “Nancy an ice cream” is left because it can be understood (or presupposed) as it was already mentioned previously in the sentence.Elliptic elements can be also understood from the context as in:A: Where are you going?B: Home.Substitutions refer to the use of a word to replace another word.Example:A: Which T-shirt would you like?B: I would like the pink one.Conjunctions and transition words are parts of speech that connect words, phrases, clauses, or sentences.Examples of conjunctions: but, or, and, although, in spite of, because,Examples of transition words: however, similarly, likewise, specifically, consequently, for this reason, in contrast to, accordingly, in essence, chiefly, finally.Here are some examples:I called Tracy and John.He was tired but happy.She likes neither chocolates nor cookies.You can either finish the work or ask someone to do it for you.He went to bed after he had done his homework.Although she is very rich, she isn’t happy.I was brought up to be responsible. Similarly, I will try to teach my kids how to take responsibility for their actions.Cohesive but not coherent textsSometimes, a text may be cohesively connected, yet may still be incoherent.Learners may wrongly think that simply linking sentences together will lead to a coherent text.Here is an example of a text in which sentences are cohesively connected, yet the overall coherence is lacking:The player threw the ball toward the goalkeeper. Balls are used in many sports. Most balls are spheres, but American football is an ellipsoid. Fortunately, the goalkeeper jumped to catch the ball. The crossbar in the soccer game is made of iron. The goalkeeper was standing there.The sentences and phrases in the above text are decidedly cohesive but not coherent.There is a use of:Repetition of: the ball, goalkeeper, the crossbar.Conjunctions and transition words: but, fortunately.The use of the above cohesive devices does not result in a meaningful and unified whole. This is because the writer presents material that is unrelated to the topic. Why should a writer talk about what the crossbar is made of? And is talking about the form balls in sports relevant in this context? What is the central focus of the text?A coherent essay has to be cohesively connected and logically expressive of the central topic.To achieve the coherence defined earlier, we need to follow these strategic steps:An outline is the general plan of your essays. It contains the ideas you will include in each paragraph and the sequence in which these ideas will be mentioned.It is important to have an outline before starting to write. Spending a few minutes on the outline can be rewarding. An outline will organize your ideas and the end product can be much more coherent.Here is how you can outline your writing so that you can produce a coherent essay:Start with the thesis statement – the sentence that summarizes the topic of your writing.Brainstorm the topic for a few minutes. Write down all the ideas related to the topic.Sift the ideas brainstormed in the previous step to identify only the ideas worth including in your essay.Organize ideas in a logical order so that your essay reflects the unified content that you want to communicate.Each idea has to be treated in a separate paragraph.Think of appropriate transitions between the different ideas.Under each idea/paragraph, write down enough details to support your idea.After identifying and organizing your ideas into different paragraphs, they have to fit within the conventional structure of essays.Essay Outline TemplateIt is also important to structure your essay so that you the reader can identify the organization of the different parts of your essay and how each paragraph leads to the next one.Here is a structure of an essayParts of the essayContentIntroductionIntroduces the topic.Provides background informationPresents the thesis statement of the essayBodyThe body of the essay is made up of several paragraphs depending on the complexity of your argument and the points you want to discuss.Each paragraph discusses one main point.Each paragraph includes a topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence.All paragraphs must relate to the thesis.ConclusionThe conclusion summarizes the main points of the essay.It must not include new ideas.It draws a final decision or judgment about the issues you have been discussing.May connect the essay to larger topics or areas of further study.Paragraphs have to be well-organized. The structure of each paragraph should have:A topic sentence that is usually placed at the beginning,Supporting details that give further explanation of the topic sentence,And a concluding sentence that wraps up the content of the paragraph.The supporting sentences in each paragraph must flow smoothly and logically to support the purpose of the topic sentence. Similarly, each paragraph has to serve the thesis statement, the main topic of the essay.4. Relevance to the main topicNo matter how long the essay is, we should make sure that we stick to the topic we want to talk about. Coherence is about making everything flow smoothly to create unity. So, sentences and ideas must be relevant to the central thesis statement.The writer has to maintain the flow of ideas to serve the main focus of the essay.Essays must be clear and serve a purpose and direction. This means that the writer’s thoughts must not go astray in developing the purpose of the essay.Essays are of different types and have different purposes. Accordingly, students have to stick to the main purpose of each genre of writing.An expository essay aims to inform, describe, or explain a topic, using essential facts to teach the reader about a topic.A descriptive essay intends to transmit a detailed description of a person, event, experience, or object. The aim is to make the reader perceive what is being described.A narrative essay attempts to tell a story that has a purpose. Writers use storytelling techniques to communicate an experience or an event.In argumentative essays, writers present an objective analysis of the different arguments about a topic and provide an opinion or a conclusion of positive or negative implications. The aim is to persuade the reader of your point.6. Use cohesive devices and signposting phrasesSentences should be connected using appropriate cohesive devices as discussed above:Cohesive deviceExamplesLexicalRepetition.Synonymy.Antonymy.Hyponymy.Meronymy.GrammaticalAnaphora.Cataphora.Ellipsis.Substitutions.Conjunctions and transition words.Cohesive devices such as conjunctions and transition words are essential in providing clarity to your essay. But we can add another layer of clarity to guide the reader throughout the essay by using signpost signals.What is signposting in writing?Signposting refers to the use of phrases or words that guide readers to understand the direction of your essay. An essay should take the reader on a journey throughout the argumentation or discussion. In that journey, the paragraphs are milestones. Using signpost signals assists the reader in identifying where you want to guide them. Signposts serve to predict what will happen, remind readers of where they are at important stages along the process, and show the direction of your essay.Essay signposting phrasesThe following are some phrases you can use to signpost your writing:SignpostingFunctionsExamplesTransition wordsExpressing additionin addition – as well as – moreover – what is more…Expressing contrasthowever – yet – nevertheless – nonetheless – on the contrary – whereas…Expressing cause and effectconsequently – as a consequence – as a result – therefore…Expressing purposein order to – in order not to – so as to…Summarizingin conclusion – to conclude – to sum upOther signposting expressionsTo introduce the essay– This essay aims at…– This essay will be concerned with…– It shall be argued in this essay…– This essay will focus on…To introduce a new idea– Having established…, it is possible now to consider…– … is one key issue; another of equal importance is…– Also of significant importance is the issue of…– With regard to…– With respect to…– Firstly, …– Secondly, …– Finally, …To illustrate something– One aspect that illustrates … is …– An example of…– …can be identified as…– The current debate about… illustrates– This highlights…To be more specific and emphasize a point– Importantly,– Indeed,– In fact,– More importantly,– It is also important to highlight– In particular, In relation to, More specifically, With respect to, In terms ofChanging direction– To get back to the topic of this paper, …– Speaking of…, …– That reminds me of…– That brings to mind…– On a happier/sad note, …– Another point to consider is …Comparing– In comparison, …– Compared to…– Similarly, …– Likewise,…– Conversely– In contrast, …– On the one hand, …– On the other hand, …Going into more detail on a point– In particular…– Specifically…– Concentrating on …– By focusing on …. in more detail, it is possible… to…– To be more precise …Rephrasing– In other words, …– To put it simply, …– That is to say…– To put it differently, …– To rephrase it, …– In plain English, …Reintroducing a topic– As discussed/explained earlier, …– The earlier discussion on… can be developed further here, …– As stated previously, …– As noted above,…Introducing an opposing/alternative view– An alternative perspective is given by… who suggests/argues that…– This conflicts with the view held by…– Alternatively, …Concluding– It could be concluded that…– From this, it can be concluded that…– The evidence shows that…– In conclusion,…-In summary, …Note:It should be noted though that using cohesive devices or signposting language may not automatically lead to a coherent text. Some texts can be highly cohesive but remain incoherent. Appropriate cohesion and signposting are essential to coherence but they are not enough. To be coherent, an essay has to follow, in addition to using appropriate cohesive devices, all the tips presented in this article.After preparing the ground for the essay, students produce their first draft. This is the first version of the essay. Other subsequent steps are required.The next step is to revise the first draft to rearrange, add, or remove paragraphs, ideas, sentences, or words.The questions that must be addressed are the following:Is the essay clear? Is it meaningful? Does it serve the thesis statement (the main topic)?Are there sufficient details to convey ideas?Are there any off-topic ideas that you have to do without?Have you included too much information? Does your writing stray off-topic?Do the ideas flow in a logical order?Have you used appropriate cohesive devices and transition words when needed?Once the revision is done, it is high time for the editing stage. Editing involves proofreading and correcting mistakes in grammar and mechanics. Pay attention to:Verb tense.Subject-verb agreement.Sentence structure. Have you included a subject a verb and an object (if the verb is transitive.)Punctuation.Capitalization.Spelling.Coherent essays are identified by relevance to the thesis statement. The ideas and sentences of coherent essays flow smoothly. One can follow the ideas discussed without any problems. Lexical and grammatical cohesive devices are used to achieve coherence. However, these devices are not sufficient. To maintain relevance to the main focus of the text, there is a need for a whole process of collecting ideas, outlining, reviewing, and editing to create a coherent whole.More writing lessons are here.Related Pages:Figures of speechArticles about writing Cohesion and coherence are two important parts of good writing. They help your sentences and ideas flow smoothly and make your writing easy to understand. Whether you are writing a paragraph, an essay, or answering questions, knowing how to use cohesion and coherence can really improve your work. These skills are very useful in school exams, English grammar tests, writing sections of IELTS, TOEFL, and other competitive exams where clear writing is important. In this blog, we will learn what cohesion and coherence mean, see simple examples, and explore the best ways to use them. You will also find an easy exercise to help you practice and become more confident in writing. In English writing, cohesion refers to the way sentences and paragraphs are connected at a grammatical and lexical (vocabulary) level, creating a smooth and interconnected flow of ideas. It’s like the ‘glue’ that holds your writing together, ensuring that the relationships between different parts of your text are easy for the reader to follow. Important Features of Cohesive Writing: Smooth Transitions: One idea flows naturally into the next. Clear Relationships: The reader can understand how each idea connects to the next. No Abrupt Jumps: Sentences don’t feel random or out of place. Less Repetition: Instead of repeating the same words, we use pronouns or similar words. Writers use cohesive devices — special tools that help connect ideas. Here are the most common ones: Cohesive DeviceWhat It DoesExamplePronouns (Referencing)Replaces nouns to avoid saying the same name or word again and again.‘Ravi has a bike. He rides it every day.’Conjunctions / Linking WordsJoin sentences and show how ideas are connected (add, contrast, result).‘It was cold, so she wore a jacket.’Repetition / SynonymsRepeating key words or using similar words to stay on the same topic.‘Water is precious. We must save this resource.’SubstitutionReplacing a longer phrase or noun with a shorter word.‘I need a pen. Can I borrow one?’EllipsisLeaving out words that are already understood from the sentence.‘He can play the guitar, and she can too.’ (No need to repeat ‘play the guitar’) Also Read: Juxtaposition vs Oxymoron Coherence in writing refers to the logical and rational organization of ideas, making the overall message clear, understandable, and easy for the reader to follow. While cohesion is about the grammatical and lexical connections between sentences, coherence is about the meaningful and logical connections among ideas, paragraphs, and the entire text. Think of it as the ‘sense’ or the ‘blueprint’ of your writing. Even if all your sentences are grammatically correct and linked together (cohesive), your writing won’t be coherent if the ideas jump around randomly, or if there’s no clear progression of thought. Important Features of Coherent Writing: Logical flow: Ideas come in the right order (step-by-step or cause to effect). Clear purpose: The main message or topic is easy to see and stays the same. Unified writing: Everything supports the main idea; nothing goes off-topic. Easy to follow: The reader doesn’t get lost or confused while reading. To make your writing easy to understand and follow, you need to organize your ideas clearly. This is called coherence. Below are some simple and effective ways to create coherence in your writing: MethodExplanationExampleLogical Order of IdeasPut ideas in a way that makes sense, like a story or steps.‘First we went to the park, then we played, and finally we ate.’Clear Topic SentenceBegin each paragraph with a sentence that tells the main idea.‘Pollution is a big problem in cities.’Unified ParagraphAll sentences in a paragraph must relate to one main idea.Don’t talk about movies in a paragraph about food.Consistent Point of ViewUse the same voice (I, he, they) throughout your writing.Don’t switch from ‘I’ to ‘they’ randomly.Thesis Statement (Essays)In essays, start with one strong sentence that tells what your writing is about.‘Exercise is important because it keeps us healthy and happy.’Transitions Between IdeasUse words or short phrases to move from one idea to the next smoothly.‘First,’ ‘Then,’ ‘As a result,’ ‘On the other hand,’ etc. Cohesion means making sure all your sentences in a paragraph are connected and flow smoothly. Here are some easy ways to do that: Way to Create CohesionSimple ExplanationExampleUse PronounsUse words like he, she, it, they to avoid repeating names.Sara is kind. She helps everyone.Use Linking WordsUse words like and, but, because, so to join ideas.‘It was raining, so we stayed inside.’Repeat Important WordsRepeat key words or use similar words (synonyms) to stay focused.‘Dogs are loyal. These animals love their owners.’Use SubstitutionReplace a word with another one to avoid repetition.‘I need a pen. Can I borrow one?’ (Instead of saying ‘pen’ again)Use EllipsisLeave out words that the reader can understand from the context.‘She likes apples, and he does too.’ (Ellipsis leaves out ‘like apples’) Also Read: Difference Between Reflexive and Emphatic Pronouns Coherence means your ideas in a paragraph are clear and follow each other in a logical order. Here are some easy ways to make your paragraph coherent: Way to Create CoherenceSimple ExplanationExampleStart with a Clear Topic SentenceBegin the paragraph by saying what it is about.‘Exercise is good for health.’Arrange Ideas LogicallyPut your ideas in order that makes sense (time, cause-effect, importance).‘First, exercise makes your heart stronger. Then, it improves mood.’Stick to One Main IdeaMake sure every sentence supports the main idea of the paragraph.Don’t talk about food in a paragraph about exercise.Use Transition WordsUse words like next, then, because, for example, to connect ideas.‘Exercise is fun. For example, you can play football or swim.’Keep the Same Point of ViewUse the same person or tense throughout the paragraph.Don’t suddenly switch from ‘I’ to ‘they’ or from past to present. Understanding the difference between cohesion and coherence helps you write better and clearer paragraphs. Here’s a simple comparison to help you: AspectCohesionCoherenceMeaningHow sentences are connected using grammar and words.How ideas are organized logically and clearly.FocusSentence-level connection (words and grammar).Whole text or paragraph makes sense and flows well.PurposeTo link sentences smoothly.To make the writing easy to understand.ExamplesUsing pronouns, conjunctions, linking words.Arranging ideas in order, clear topic sentences.ResultWriting feels joined and smooth.Writing makes sense and is easy to follow.Helps ReaderSee how sentences relate to each other.Understand the main message and ideas clearly. To make your writing clear and easy to understand, follow these simple rules for cohesion and coherence: RuleExplanationExample1. Use Pronouns CarefullyReplace nouns with pronouns to avoid repetition but be clear about who or what you mean.‘Ravi went to school. He was happy.’2. Use Linking WordsUse words like and, but, because, so to connect ideas smoothly.‘It was cold, so we wore jackets.’3. Repeat Important Words or Use SynonymsRepeat key words or use similar words to keep the paragraph focused.‘The sun is hot. This heat makes plants grow fast.’4. Arrange Ideas in Logical OrderOrganize your sentences in a sensible way that the reader can easily follow.‘First, water the plants. Then, give them sunlight.’5. Start Paragraphs with Topic SentencesBegin each paragraph with a sentence that tells the main idea.‘Exercise is good for health.’6. Keep Each Paragraph About One IdeaDon’t mix different topics in one paragraph.Write about pollution in one paragraph, not about sports.7. Use Transitions Between ParagraphsUse words or phrases to link paragraphs smoothly.‘Next,’ ‘However,’ ‘In addition,’ ‘On the other hand.’8. Maintain Consistent Point of ViewStay with the same person (I, we, they) and tense throughout your writing.Don’t switch from past tense to present tense suddenly. Read each exercise carefully and follow the specific instructions for each. After attempting all exercises, compare your answers with the provided answer key. Instructions: Read the following short passage. Underline or highlight all the cohesive devices (pronouns, linking words, repeated keywords, synonyms, etc.) you can find. Then, identify what type of cohesive device each one is. Passage: ‘Learning a new language can be a challenging but rewarding experience. It requires dedication and consistent practice. For example, mastering pronunciation often takes time and effort. However, the benefits of being bilingual are immense. They include improved cognitive skills and enhanced cultural understanding. Consequently, many people are now choosing to enroll in language courses.’ Your Analysis: It: (Type: _____, Refers to: _____) However: (Type: _____, Shows: _____) They: (Type: _____, Refers to: _____) Consequently: (Type: _____, Shows: _____) language (repeated): (Type: _____, Connects to: _____) mastering pronunciation (Synonym for part of ‘learning a new language’): (Type: _____, Connects to: _____) It: (Type: Pronoun, Refers to: ‘Learning a new language’) However: (Type: Conjunctive Adverb/Linking Word, Shows: Contrast) They: (Type: Pronoun, Refers to: ‘the benefits of being bilingual’) Consequently: (Type: Conjunctive Adverb/Linking Word, Shows: Cause/Effect or Result) language (repeated): (Type: Keyword Repetition, Connects to: ‘Learning a new language’ at the start) mastering pronunciation (Synonym for part of ‘learning a new language’): (Type: Lexical Cohesion/Synonymy, Connects to: ‘Learning a new language’ in the first sentence) Instructions: The following sentences are a bit choppy and repetitive. Rewrite them to improve cohesion, primarily using pronouns and appropriate linking words. My brother loves video games. My brother plays video games every evening. My brother bought a new video game console last week. The city council discussed the new park project. The new park project needs more funding. The city council decided to postpone the new park project. She studied hard for the exam. She failed the exam. My brother loves video games. He plays them every evening. He even bought a new video game console last week. The city council discussed the new park project. However, it needs more funding. Consequently, they decided to postpone it. She studied hard for the exam; however, she failed it. / She studied hard for the exam, but she failed it. Instructions: The following sentences belong to a single paragraph, but they are jumbled. Rearrange them into a logical and coherent paragraph. Write down the correct order of the letters (A, B, C, D, E). Sentences: A. As a result, they can effectively combat many common diseases. B. Vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet. C. This is because they are packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber. D. Therefore, nutritionists always recommend including a variety of vegetables in your daily meals. E. Eating them regularly provides numerous health benefits. Correct Order: Correct Order: B, E, C, A, D (B) Vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet. (E) Eating them regularly provides numerous health benefits. (C) This is because they are packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber. (A) As a result, they can effectively combat many common diseases. (D) Therefore, nutritionists always recommend including a variety of vegetables in your daily meals. Instructions: Read the following short passage. It has some coherence problems. Identify what makes it incoherent and suggest how to fix it. ‘The sun was shining brightly. My favorite color is blue. Because of the heavy traffic, I was late for work. Learning to play the guitar requires patience. However, I enjoy spending time outdoors.’ Coherence Problems: 1. 2. 3. Suggestions for Improvement: 1. 2. 3. Coherence Problems: Lack of logical connection: The sentences jump randomly from weather to personal preference, to traffic, to a hobby, and then back to weather. There’s no single unifying theme or progression of ideas. No topic sentence: There’s no central idea introduced at the beginning that the rest of the sentences support. Irrelevant information: Most sentences are unrelated to each other. Suggestions for Improvement: Choose a single topic: Decide on one main topic for the paragraph (e.g., ‘a sunny day,’ ‘my hobbies,’ ‘challenges of commuting’) and ensure all sentences relate to it. Create a topic sentence: Start with a sentence that introduces the main idea. Remove unrelated sentences: Delete sentences that don’t fit the chosen topic. Add cohesive devices: Once the ideas are logical, use linking words and pronouns to connect them. Instructions: Use the given topic sentence and the bulleted ideas to write a coherent paragraph. Make sure to use appropriate cohesive devices to connect your sentences. Topic Sentence: Online learning offers several distinct advantages over traditional classroom instruction. Ideas: Flexibility in scheduling Access to diverse courses Learning from anywhere with internet Self-paced learning Reduced commuting time Your Paragraph: Example Answer (Variations are possible): ‘Online learning offers several distinct advantages over traditional classroom instruction. First, it provides immense flexibility in scheduling, allowing students to fit their studies around work or other commitments. Moreover, learners gain access to a far more diverse range of courses, often from institutions worldwide. Furthermore, the ability to learn from anywhere with an internet connection eliminates the need for daily commuting, saving both time and money. Finally, online platforms often facilitate self-paced learning, which caters to individual learning styles and speeds, ensuring a more personalized educational experience.’ Instructions: Fill in the blanks with appropriate cohesive devices (linking words, pronouns, etc.) to make the paragraph flow logically and coherently. Choose from the words provided in the box, or use your own if more suitable. however consequently they in addition this for example ‘Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming various industries. _____ is enabling businesses to automate complex tasks and analyze vast amounts of data. _____ saves time and resources. _____ many people express concerns about job displacement. _____ is a valid point that needs careful consideration. _____ AI also creates new job opportunities in areas like development and maintenance. _____ the overall impact of AI on the job market is still being debated.’ ‘Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming various industries. It is enabling businesses to automate complex tasks and analyze vast amounts of data. This saves time and resources. However, many people express concerns about job displacement. That is a valid point that needs careful consideration. In addition, AI also creates new job opportunities in areas like development and maintenance. Consequently, the overall impact of AI on the job market is still being debated.’ Also Read: Difference Between Abstract and Concrete Nouns with Examples What is cohesion and coherence? Cohesion and coherence are both important for good writing, but they focus on different things. Cohesion is about how sentences are connected on the surface using grammar, linking words, punctuation, and sentence structure. It helps the text flow smoothly. On the other hand, coherence is about how clearly and logically the ideas in the writing connect to each other. It makes sure the overall message makes sense and is easy for the reader to follow. What is cohesion with examples? Cohesion means staying closely connected. For example, if a group of friends walks to the lunchroom together and sits at the same table, they are showing good cohesion. The word originally comes from science, where it describes how similar particles, like water molecules, stick to each other and stay together. What is coherence in grammar? In a coherent text, the words, sentences, and paragraphs are all connected in a clear and logical way. The word ‘coherence’ comes from a Latin verb meaning ‘to stick together.’ Simply put, coherence means the writing flows smoothly and the ideas fit together well, making it easy for the reader to understand. How to write cohesion? To make their writing more cohesive, writers can use several helpful tools. These include transition words, repeated key ideas, similar sentence patterns (parallelism), linking words, a clear point of view, and using the same structure throughout. These techniques help connect sentences and ideas smoothly so the writing flows better. What is syntax in writing? Syntax is the way words are arranged in a sentence, including word order, verb tense, subject-verb agreement, and sentence length. How we put words together can change the tone and meaning of what we write. Related Reads We hope this blog on ‘Cohesion and coherence’ helps you improve your English skills. You can also follow the Learn English page of Leverage Edu for more exciting and informative blogs related to English grammar and the English language. 2. Cohesion and coherence Cohesion can be thought of as all the grammatical and lexical links that link one part of a discourse to another. This includes use of synonyms, lexical sets, pronouns, verb tenses, time references, grammatical reference, etc. For example, 'it', 'neither' and 'this' all refer to an idea previously mentioned. 'First of all', 'then' and 'after that' help to sequence a discourse. 'However', 'in addition' and 'for instance' link ideas and arguments in a discourse. Coherence can be thought of as how meanings and sequences of ideas relate to each other. Typical examples would be general> particular; statement> example; problem> solution; question> answer; claim> counter-claim. 4. What does cohesion mean? You might think of cohesion as a means of establishing connections within a discourse at all sorts of different levels, e.g., section, paragraphs, sentences and even phrases. 5. How is cohesion different from coherence? It is difficult to separate the two. However, think of coherence as the discourse making sense as a whole at an ideas level, and cohesion as rather more mechanical links at a language level. You can imagine that it is possible for a piece of writing to contain plenty of cohesion yet little coherence. Cohesion is the glue that holds a piece of writing together. In other words, if a paper is cohesive, it sticks together from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph. Cohesive devices certainly include transitional words and phrases, such as therefore, furthermore, or for instance, that clarify for listeners/readers the relationships among ideas in a piece of writing. However, transitions aren't enough to make writing cohesive. Repetition of key words and use of reference words are also needed for cohesion. 6. Coherence When sentences, ideas, and details fit together clearly, listeners/readers can follow along easily, and the writing is coherent. The ideas tie together smoothly and clearly. To establish the links that readers need, you can use the methods listed here. Repetition of a Key Term or Phrase This helps to focus your ideas and to keep your listener/ reader on track. Example: The problem with contemporary art is that it is not easily understood by most people. Contemporary art is deliberately abstract, and that means it leaves the viewer wondering what she is looking at. 7. Synonyms Synonyms are words that have essentially the same meaning, and they provide some variety in your word choices, helping the listener/ reader to stay focused on the idea being discussed. Example: Myths narrate sacred histories and explain sacred origins. These traditional narratives are, in short, a set of beliefs that are a very real force in the lives of the people who tell them. 8. Pronouns This, that, these, those, he, she, it, they, and we are useful pronouns for referring back to something previously mentioned. Be sure, however, that what you are referring to is clear. Example: When scientific experiments do not work out as expected, they are often considered failures until some other scientist tries them again. Those that work out better the second time around are the ones that promise the most rewards. 9. Transitional Words There are many words in English that cue our listeners/readers to relationships between sentences, joining sentences together. Words such as however, therefore, in addition, also, but, moreover, etc. Example: I like autumn, and yet autumn is a sad time of the year, too. The leaves turn bright shades of red and the weather is mild, but I can't help thinking ahead to the winter and the ice storms that will surely blow through here. In addition, that will be the season of chapped faces, too many layers of clothes to put on, and days when I'll have to shovel heaps of snow from my car's windshield. 10. Sentence Patterns Sometimes, repeated or parallel sentence patterns can help the listener/reader follow along and keep ideas tied together. Example: (from a speech by President John F. Kennedy) And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you--ask what you can do for your country. http:// www.missouri.edu/~pattonmd/cohesion.html 11. "Cohesion is determined by lexically and grammatically overt intersentential relationships, whereas coherence is based on semantic relationships." Connor In lesson 1, we covered how the structure of the sentence cues the reader to important information. If you structure your sentences carefully, you encourage readers to interpret your meaning correctly. Structure has several other important uses: First, you can structure sentences for emphasis, drawing attention to the most important part of the sentence. Second, you can structure your sentences and paragraphs to flow — that’s what cohesion and coherence are all about. Cohesion is the degree to which sentences “glue.” Coherence is the logical division of the writing into internally consistent units (usually paragraph units). In this lesson, you will learn ways to improve the cohesion and coherence of your writing. Principles Put new information last Use passive voice judiciously Make sure the first and last sentences of a paragraph match Principle 1: Put new information last Ideas or characters that have not yet appeared in your manuscript are called New information. New means unfamiliar. “Old information” is something familiar to the reader, either because it’s background knowledge or because you’ve already introduced it. Your sentences will contain both new and old information — think carefully about where you put them. Most readers will find your writing more clear if you consistently begin sentences with familiar (old) information and conclude sentences with unfamiliar (new) information. What happens when you begin a sentence with new information? Your reader gets a new idea without any context. He or she may try (incorrectly) to link this information to the previous sentence. After reading the rest of the sentence, the reader may have to revise his or her understanding. If you do this too much, it makes your writing confusing because it lacks cohesion. Going backwards like this slows the reader down and takes energy. Beginning sentences with old information makes writing cohesive. It also allows you to put new, important information in the position of emphasis at the end of the sentence. Imagine these sentences in an article about farming: Farmers try to provide optimal growing conditions for crops by using soil additives to adjust soil pH. Garden lime, or agricultural limestone, is made from pulverized chalk, and can be used to raise the pH of the soil. Clay soil, which is naturally acidic, often requires addition of agricultural lime. It is difficult to see at first, but the second and third sentences have the same problem: they begin with new information. If we separate the sentences and color the old information and the new information it becomes easier to notice: Farmers try to provide optimal growing conditions for crops by using soil additives to adjust soil pH. Garden lime, or agricultural limestone, is made from pulverized chalk, and can be used to raise the pH of the soil. Clay soil, which is naturally acidic, often requires addition of agricultural lime. Now, let’s follow the reader through this paragraph. When the reader begins sentence #2, reading “Garden lime…”, there is little context; the reader may guess “limes” are a crop we will now discuss, or that it is a “soil additive”. There are at least two possible connections to the previous sentence, and readers will be split. At the end of the sentence, we are given the context and the connection: “raise the pH”. This backward-glance at the end of the sentence causes the reader to backtrack, costing concentration. The third sentence is also problematic. It begins with “Clay soil…”, similarly without context. The reader may then think “clay soil” as another additive, perhaps one that lowers the pH? At the end of the sentence (requires…lime), you finally get the connection back to the previous sentence and the context for “clay soil,” but this causes the reader to backtrack. To solve the problem, we can try swapping the new and old info. Here’s one possible revision: Farmers try to provide optimal growing conditions for crops by using soil additives to adjust soil pH. One way to raise the pH of the soil is an additive made from pulverized chalk called garden lime or agricultural limestone. Agricultural limestone is often added to naturally acidic soils, such as clay soil. In the revision, each sentence leans forward to new information at the end, instead of tying backward at the end. This makes the sentences easier to read, because the reader doesn’t need to jump around in thought process. When your sentences “glue”, your writing is said to be cohesive. If your sentences are regularly beginning with unfamiliar concepts, your writing won’t be very cohesive. This is where the passive can be so useful: if it improves cohesion. More on that in the next principle. Putting new information last also helps with emphasis: readers naturally emphasize the ideas at the end of the sentence. Putting the new, important information at the end will help inform the readers of what you intend to emphasize. Read through your manuscript carefully. In each sentence, underline any pieces of new information (unfamiliar to the reader at this point in the manuscript). Make sure your sentences begin with an appropriate backwards link, and not with an unfamiliar concept. Principle 2: Use passive voice judiciously Sentences are in passive voice when the subject in the sentence is the object of the action. For example: Active: The dog chased the ball. Passive: The ball was chased by the dog. Passive: The ball was chased. Using passive can have two important consequences: 1. The order of the subject and verb are switched. (First passive example above) Active: Dog → Ball Passive: Ball → Dog 2. The doer of the action can be omitted. (Second passive example above) Active: Dog → Ball Passive: Ball → ??? Passive voice isn’t inherently bad. It can actually be quite useful. The problem is that some writers incorrectly think passive voice is inherently scientific. In fact, some students are taught that passive voice is more objective. Really, the way you write doesn’t make your experiments any more objective; instead, your results should speak for themselves. For whatever reason, many scientists rely on passive voice excessively. But scientific journals would rather you use active voice: Nature journals like authors to write in the active voice…-Nature Choose the active voice more often than you choose the passive… -Science Why? Here are some possible consequences of relying on passive voice: 1. Ambiguous characters A consequence of passive voice is that the actor can be omitted, which is common in scientific writing. Sometimes this makes sense, other times is causes confusion. It’s OK to omit the actor if it is self explanatory, understood, or unimportant. For example, passive voice can be effectively used in a methods section to focus the reader on the method (instead of on the actor). It is not OK to omit the actor if there are multiple possibilities, leaving your reader to guess. For example: The DNA was sequenced using the n-terminus method (Smith et al. 2004). In this example, who sequenced the DNA? Is the paper being cited because Smith et al. did the sequencing, or because they invented the n-terminus method? Any time you leave multiple possibilities, you divide your readers. Some readers will misinterpret your intent. 2. Dangling modifiers When you write passive sentences, be careful not to dangle your modifiers! From an editorial in Science: Our chief objection to the passive voice is that it sometimes seems to make authors forget to watch for dangling modifiers. A dangling modifier is a modifying phrase whose implicit subject does not match the explicit subject of the clause it modifies. Dangling modifiers are common errors in scientific writing. If you want to learn more, I wrote a focus article on dangling modifiers. 3. Wordiness All else being equal, shorter writing is better: it takes less time to read and it uses less space. These are important things to consider in scientific writing. Readers benefit from less reading (it takes less time), and scientists are also regularly subject to journal space constraints. Whatever else is true of passive voice, it is a fact that passive voice tends to increase length (however slightly). When every word counts, active voice can help keep writing concise. Advantage of passive voice The key use of passive voice is that it switches the order of a sentence. This is hugely important in light of principle 1 in this lesson. Use passive voice when it moves the old information to the front and new information to the back (see Principle 1). Guide your writing with the rule “Put new information last” instead of the rule “Always use passive voice.” Use the passive as needed to keep the flow, and always provide the actors if there is a possibility of confusion. The point of this principle is not to eliminate passive voice, but to increase your awareness. Choose passive voice for a reason, not because you think it “sounds scientific.” There’s a lot more to be said about passive voice. If you’re interested in a more in-depth treatment of the active/passive voice discussion, I wrote a focus article on passive voice in science writing. When you revise for new/old information placement, use active/passive switching to keep the placement of information consistent with expected structure. Principle 3: Make sure the first and last sentences of a paragraph match This principle is called coherence. Usually, when readers refer to the “flow” of writing, they are referring either to coherence, or to cohesion (Principle 1). When writing is coherent, it stays on topic in expected units. Readers usually expect thoughts to be expressed in paragraph units. A single paragraph corresponds to a single thought. Each sentence in the paragraph should support that main point. Just because your sentences stick together by including appropriate backwards links, it doesn’t mean your writing is coherent. Here is an example of a paragraph that is cohesive, but lacks coherence: My favorite animal is the domestic cat. Cats were domesticated almost 10,000 years ago in ancient Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia is a name that literally means “the land between two rivers,” taken from Greek. The Greek language is one of the oldest written languages, and its alphabet forms the basis of many other writing systems, including Latin. Latin … This paragraph has great cohesion (one sentence leads to another), but it wanders through topics. Coherence is a paragraph-level principle (which makes it difficult to provide examples for). Test for coherence: Read the first and last parts of each paragraph. Do the topics match? To be more thorough, make sure each sentence in a paragraph supports the main point of that paragraph. Examples Example 1 At the beginning of a paper wanting to emphasize detecting positive selection: Detecting positive Darwinian selection at the DNA sequence level has been a subject of considerable interest. Readers naturally emphasize the end of sentences. What do we want to emphasize? Probably it would be better to emphasize either “positive selection” or “DNA sequence level”, depending on the point of the paper. Here are some possibilities: One subject of considerable interest has been detecting positive Darwinian selection at the DNA s