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# Understanding and teaching IELTS: Coherence and Cohesion

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# Achieving Coherence & Cohesion in Task 1 and Task 2: Writing

*To achieve good coherence and cohesion in your essay, there are several main things to consider:*

1. *Present your ideas in a logical order.* Use linking words **between your paragraphs** to make it easy for the reader to follow your ideas:

| |
|---|
| *One reason for ....is....* |
| *Another reason for this is because...* |
| *The most important reason of all, however, relates to .....* |
| *To conclude,....* |

2. Make sure that every paragraph focuses on one main idea. Begin with a topic sentence. Support it with explanation and examples. Everything in the paragraph should relate to the topic sentence.

| Paragraph |
|---|
| Topic Sentence<br>Explanation<br>Example |

3. Use a range of linking words, cohesive devices and referencing within your paragraphs to clearly show the relationship between your ideas. Focus on using a variety of different cohesive devices, but only use them when it is logical and when it helps to make the relationships between your ideas clear.

| Tip! |
|---|
| Don't use too many cohesive devices! Band 5 in Coherence and Cohesion says:<br>• Makes inadequate, inaccurate or over-use of cohesive devices<br>• May be repetitive because of a lack of referencing and substitution. |



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## Using Linking Words

Make sure you use a variety of linking words from the list below to help you get a high score in Coherence and Cohesion.

| Listing and Sequencing | Giving your Opinion | Giving Examples |
|---|---|---|
| first,<br>second,<br>third,<br>fourth,<br>last,<br>last but not least,<br>finally, | I believe<br>I think<br>in my opinion,<br>As for me,<br>to my way of thinking,<br>in my view,<br>I agree that/with…<br>I disagree that/with… | one example is…<br>to illustrate,<br>for example,<br>for instance,<br>namely<br>such as<br>like |
| **Adding information** | **Emphasizing** | **Result** |
| and<br>in addition<br>additionally<br>furthermore<br>moreover<br>also<br>as well<br>not only…but also… | particularly<br>specifically<br>especially<br>obviously<br>without doubt<br>clearly<br>of course<br>it goes without saying that | as a result<br>therefore<br>thus<br>so<br>for this reason<br>consequently |
| **Contrast** | **Reason or Cause** | **Conclusion** |
| however<br>but<br>nevertheless<br>although<br>even though<br>in spite of<br>despite<br>on the other hand<br>whereas<br>in contrast<br>alternatively | because<br>because of<br>since<br>due to<br>as<br>owing to | in conclusion<br>to conclude<br>to sum up |



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**Write the example sentences in the corresponding box in the Example Sentence column.**

Example Sentences:

1. Agricultural pesticides continue to be used despite contaminating the environment.
2. Public transport is beneficial for our environment but sometimes it is not dependable.
3. Solar energy is not common in many countries although the technology already exists.
4. Global warming is threatening the forests and, in addition, it is harming wildlife.
5. Some people dislike windmills because they are noisy and look ugly.
6. Hybrid cars are significantly cheaper to run than regular cars.
7. Fossil fuels create carbon monoxide whereas hydrogen combustion produces only water.
8. In some cities people wear face masks since they do not want to breathe in smoggy air.
9. Severe droughts are becoming more common because of the lack of rainfall.

## Exercise A

| Relationship | Word/ Phrase | Example Sentences |
|---|---|---|
| Comparison and contrast | A **is faster than** B.<br><br>A **is more expensive than** B.<br><br>C **is the fastest/the most expensive**.<br><br>C **is significantly faster than** B.<br><br>C is fast **whereas** A is slow.<br><br>A is quite small. **On the other hand**, C is very large.<br><br>**The main difference between** A and C is that A is fast whereas C is slow.<br><br>A is cheap. **Alternatively**, B is quite expensive. | |
| Cause and effect | Overeating **is the cause** of obesity.<br><br>Overeating **causes /leads to / results in** obesity.<br><br>Obesity is **caused by / is the result of** overeating.<br><br>Obesity occurs **because of** overeating.<br><br>Obesity occurs **because /since** people overeat.<br><br>**As a result of** overeating, obesity occurs. | |



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| Relationship | Word/ Phrase | Example Sentences |
|---|---|---|
| Additional information | A is large **and** expensive.<br><br>A is large. A is **also** expensive.<br><br>Not only is A large **but** it is **also** expensive.<br><br>**As well as / In addition to** being large, A is expensive.<br><br>A is large. **In addition**, A is expensive. | |
| Contrast | Homework is boring, **but / yet** it is important.<br><br>**Although** homework is boring, it is important.<br><br>**Despite / In spite of** homework being boring, it is important.<br><br>Homework is boring. **However**, it is important. | |

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# Task 2: The essay

## Writing the Introduction Paragraph

Every essay must have a separate introduction paragraph. About 35- 55 words is long enough. The introduction paragraph includes 2 important elements:

The Introduction Paragraph

1. A background statement that paraphrases the question prompt
2. A thesis statement that contains your position and introduces your main ideas

*You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.*
*Write about the following topic:*
***An increasing number of young people are traveling overseas to study.***
***Is this a positive or a negative development?***
*Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.*
Write at least 250 words.

First, you need to write a **background statement that paraphrases the question prompt**. Paraphrase means use different words to write the same meaning. Think of synonyms or words with similar meaning to help you write a paraphrase:

An increasing number = more and more
Young people =young adults
Traveling overseas = going abroad/going to different countries

Background statement: More and more young adults are going abroad to study.

Then, write a **thesis statement that includes your position**. You should say what you believe about the question prompt and introduce your main ideas.
Here is the introduction:

More and more young adults are going abroad to study. In my opinion, this is a positive development because they learn about new cultures, become more independent, and bring new ideas back to their home country.

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## Writing the Supporting Paragraphs

How many supporting paragraphs should you write? It depends on how many parts there are to the question prompt. Usually you will only need to write two or three supporting paragraphs but it is important to provide explanation and examples to support each main idea.

Supporting Paragraph

1. Topic Sentence
2. Explanation
3. Example

Every paragraph must have one main idea expressed in a Topic Sentence. All the other sentences in the paragraph should explain, and give reasons or examples about this one main idea.

**Topic Sentence:** One positive development of young people traveling overseas to study is that they learn about new cultures.

***Explanation:*** *They not only learn about what other people eat and how they dress, but after a few years of living overseas, they also start to understand how people in other countries think and behave in both social and professional situations.*

**Example:** For example, my cousin traveled to Houston in the USA in 2013. He registered as an undergraduate student at the University of Houston-Clear Lake and majored in international business. Through interacting with American and international students in the classroom and during his internship at Texas Instruments, he acquired valuable communication and intercultural skills. When my cousin returned to Saudi Arabia with his B.A., he discovered that many companies in Riyadh valued his overseas experience, which enabled him to get a good job with a global company.

Two or three good supporting paragraphs like this is all you need.



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## Writing the Conclusion Paragraph

You must always finish your essay with a brief conclusion paragraph. Begin with a linking phrase:

| |
|---|
| In conclusion,<br><br>To conclude, |

Then look back at the thesis statement that you wrote in your introduction paragraph. The thesis statement expressed your opinion about the topic and introduced your main ideas:

*More and more young adults are going abroad to study. In my opinion, this is a positive development because they learn about new cultures, become more independent, and bring new ideas back to their home country.*

Paraphrase your thesis statement. Make sure you clearly express your opinion about the topic and briefly summarize your main ideas. This is your conclusion paragraph. Do not introduce any new ideas in the conclusion.

| |
|---|
| In conclusion, increasingly these days, students are seeking education in different countries. As I have discussed, this is beneficial because they become familiar with different cultures, gain in independence, and bring a fresh perspective on their return home. |

Finally, check that you have written enough. Count the number of lines. If you average 10 words per line, you should have written at least 25-27 lines. You may want to add a sentence or two to the conclusion if you think you have not written enough. You can add a recommendation or a prediction:

| |
|---|
| Recommendation: In this globalized world, it is recommended that students continue getting an education overseas if they possibly can.<br><br>OR<br><br>Prediction: It is predicted that the number of students going overseas to study will continue to increase in the future. |

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## Understanding Paragraphing

It is very important to write in paragraphs in your Task 2 essay. At first glance, your essay must have the right shape and look.

**Tip!**
To get above band 5 in Coherence and Cohesion you must write in paragraphs.

Look at the Task 2 essay below. Notice how the writer makes it very clear where each paragraph begins and ends by leaving a blank line between every paragraph. It is also a good idea to indent every new paragraph. Indent means "leaving a space" at the beginning of each paragraph.

Xxxxxxxx xxxx xxxxxx xxxx xxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxx xxxx xxxx xxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxx.

Overall, the advantages are xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxx; however, there were some disadvantages too.

The first disadvantage relates to xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxx xxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx.

As I have shown, xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx



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