‘Understanding Coherence’ Exercise Answers/Explanation:

1) Correct order of the paragraph: 6 – 3 – 2 – 7 – 4 – 1 – 5

2) Analyze the paragraph as it was written and describe how coherence is achieved: i) how it develops (logical bridges) and ii) how the author uses language (or verbal bridges) to connect the ideas. Here I have offered explanatory notes in *italics*. And I have put some of the verbal bridges in **bold.**

Slave spirituals often had hidden double meanings. *The topic sentence clearly indicates the main idea of the paragraph*. **On one level**, spirituals referenced heaven, Jesus, and the soul; **but on another level**, the songs spoke about slave resistance. *The second sentence explains the idea more deeply.* **For example**, according to Frederick Douglass, the song “O Canaan, Sweet Canaan” spoke of slaves’ longing for heaven, **but** it also expressed their desire to escape to the North. *The third sentence offers a specific example.* Careful listeners heard this second meaning in the following lyrics: “I don’t expect to stay / Much longer here. / Run to Jesus, shun the danger. / I don’t expect to stay.” *The fourth sentence digs deeper and offers specific information about the example.* When slaves sang this song, they could have been speaking of their departure from this life and their arrival in heaven; **however**, they also could have been describing their plans to leave the South and run, not to Jesus, but to the North. *The fifth sentence ties the general idea and the specific information together to make the point abundantly clear.* Slaves **even** used songs like “Steal Away to Jesus (at midnight)” to announce to other slaves the time and place of secret, forbidden meetings. *The sixth sentence offers another example to show another piece of evidence to prove the main point.* What whites heard as merely spiritual songs, slaves discerned as detailed messages. *The seventh sentence emphasizes the main point.* The **hidden meanings** in spirituals allowed slaves to sing what they could not say *The eighth sentence stylistically concludes the main point of the paragraph*.

* The verbal bridges in bold highlight words used to add coherence/cohesion to the paragraph. Transitions like **on one level… but on another level** are verbal ways of highlighting the idea “double meaning”. The use of **but / however** are often used to highlight this aspect of “double meaning” and the sentence structures reflect that idea. The repeated use of **hidden meanings** repeats key content words in the concluding sentence that make the main idea more coherent for the reader.
* The logical bridges are basically explained in the italicized explanatory notes that are added. This paragraph begins with a straightforward, simple topic sentence. It uses key content words like “slave spirituals” and “hidden meanings”. Then the paragraph begins to delve deeper into the topic by giving a clearer explanation and specific examples. Careful attention is paid to develop the example and link it to the main idea. The paragraph uses a very effective and simple writing strategy: write from the general to the specific. The paragraph then offers a second specific example to further develop the main point. Finally, the paragraph returns to the main idea to reinforce it in the mind of the reader.