**UNITY AND COHERENCE**

Another element of a good paragraph is coherence. The Latin verb *cohere* means "hold together." For coherence in writing, the sentences must hold together; that is, the movement from one sentence to the next must be logical and smooth. There must be no sudden jumps. Each sentence should flow smoothly into the next one.

There are four ways to achieve coherence:

1. Repeat key nouns or synonyms.
2. Use consistent pronouns.
3. Use transition signals to link ideas.
4. Arrange your ideas in logical order.

1) The easiest way to achieve coherence is to repeat key nouns frequently in your paragraph. If you do not wish to repeat a key noun again and again, you can use synonyms or expressions with the same meaning.

2) When you use pronouns, make sure that you use the same person and number throughout your paragraph. Don't change from *you* to *he* or *she* (change of person) or from *he* to *they* (change of number).

3) Transition signals are expressions such *as first, finally,* and *however,* or phrases such as *in conclusion, on the other hand,* and *as a result.* Other kinds of words such as subordinators *(when, although),* coordinators *(and, but),* adjectives (*another, additional),* and prepositions *(because of, in spite of)* can serve as transition signals.

Transition signals are like traffic signs; they tell your reader when to go forward, turn around, slow down, and stop. In other words, they tell your reader when you are giving a similar idea *(similarly, and, in addition),* an opposite idea (*on the other hand, but, in contrast),* an example *(for example),* a result *(therefore, as a result),* or a conclusion *(in conclusion).* Transition signals give a paragraph coherence because they guide your reader from one idea to the next.

**Don't Overuse Transition Signals**

Read your paragraph aloud and pay attention to your own language. Are you using too many transition signals? Too many can be distracting rather than helpful. There is no rule about how many to use in one paragraph. Use them only when they will help your reader follow your ideas.

4) In addition to using transition signals and repeating key nouns and pronouns, a fourth way to achieve coherence is to arrange your sentences in some kind of logical order.

Your choice of one kind of logical order over another will, of course, depend on your topic and your purpose. You may even combine two or more different logical orders in the same paragraph. The important point to remember is to arrange your ideas in some kind of order that is logical to a reader accustomed to the English way of writing.

Some common kinds of logical order in English are *chronological order, logical division of ideas,* and *comparison/contrast.*

• *Chronological order* is order by time – a sequence of events or steps in a process.

* In *logical division of ideas,* a topic is divided into parts, and each part is discussed separately.
* In a *comparison/contrast* paragraph, the similarities and/or differences between two or more items are discussed.

TASK 1 The following paragraph not only has sentences that are off the topic but also discuss two or more topics. Decide where each paragraph should be divided into two paragraphs. Find sentence(s) that are off the topic and cross them out.

**Paragraph**

Because the Internet makes the world a smaller place, the value of having a common language is greatly increased. The question is – which language? Because the Internet grew up in the United States, the largest percentage of its content is now in English. Bill Gates, Microsoft's president, believes that English will remain valuable for a long time as a common language for international communication. His company spends $200 million a year translating software into other languages. He says, "Unless you read English passably well, you miss out on some of the Internet experience."

Someday, software may be available to instantly translate both written and spoken language so well that the need for any common language could decline. That day is decades away, however, because flawless machine translation is a very tough problem. Computer spelling checkers also exist for various languages. Software that does crude translations already exists. It is useful if all you are trying to do is understand the general idea of something you see on your computer screen. However, if you are trying to negotiate a contract or discuss a scientific subject where details are important, machine translation is totally useless (Gates).

TASK 2 Put the sentences in order to make the paragraph coherent. Highlight the words that helped you do it.

B, C, A, F, E, D.

A. In the first year of the loan scheme, 45,000 students had loans.

B. Year by year more students are borrowing money for their education, and they are borrowing more money.

C. The total levels of student debt have reached unsustainable levels for the New Zealand economy.

D. It is now $10,600, according to figures supplied by the Alliance Party (Gordon, 2015).

E. By 2015, the number had grown to 300,000.

F. Two years ago, the average loan debt was NZ$5,000.

TASK 3 In the following paragraphs, the pronouns are not consistent. Correct them to make this paragraph more coherent.

**1) Olympic Athletes.** Olympic athletes must be strong both physically and mentally. First of all, \_ to compete in an Olympic sport, they must be physically strong. Furthermore, aspiring Olympians must train rigorously for many years. For the most demanding sports, they train several hours a day, five or six days a week, for ten or more years. In addition to being physically strong, athletes must also be mentally tough. This means \_ being totally dedicated to sport, often giving up a normal school, family, and social life. Being mentally strong also means \_ being withstand the intense pressure of international competition with its accompanying media coverage. Finally, not everyone can win a medal, so Olympians must possess the inner strength to live with defeat.

2) Filing taxes properly is an important part of good business practice. To ensure it is done correctly, many businesses choose to work with accountants. They are skilled in tax law and can help maximize tax savings. Also, accountants can even provide knock-on benefits in future years.

TASK 4 Fill in the gaps to build cohesion between sentences and ensure a smooth flow. Use pronouns, word forms and synonyms.

1. According to Jared Diamond, society tends to reject or adopt new technologies for many reasons. Some \_\_\_\_of them\_\_\_\_\_ may seem illogical at first glance.
2. Desmond notes that while many inventions are more efficient than older technologies, \_\_\_it\_\_\_\_\_ is not always the main factor in embracing a new technology.
3. Another example is the preference of Japan’s *kanji* writing system over the *kana* system. Many people \_\_?\_\_\_\_\_\_ using *kanji*, even though it is quite a difficult system, because it holds social prestige.
4. In some lecture halls, students spend their time searching the web or answering emails instead of paying attention to the lecture. \_\_\_These kind of \_\_ activities may distract the students around them.
5. The ways in which cultures differ in their conversational styles have long interested language researchers. For example, in some cultures, when two people meet they must exchange information about their families’ health, whereas \_\_\_other\_\_ would be a conversational topic in \_\_their\_\_ cultures.

TASK 5 Punctuate the transition signals if necessary.

**Genetic Engineering**

Genetic research has produced both exciting and frightening possibilities. Scientists are now able to create new forms of life in the laboratory, because of the development of gene splicing. On the one hand, the ability to create life in the laboratory could greatly benefit humankind. One beneficial application of gene splicing is in agriculture. For example, researchers have engineered a more nutritious type of rice, that could help alleviate the serious problem of vitamin A deficiency. It is estimated that 124 million children worldwide lack vitamin A, putting them at risk of permanent blindness and other health issues. In addition, genetic engineers have created larger fish, frost-resistant strawberries, and cows that produce more milk. Indeed agriculture has already benefited from the promise of genetic engineering.

On the other hand, not everyone is positive about gene-splicing technology. Some people feel that it could have terrible consequences. In fact, a type of corn engineered to kill a certain insect pest also threatened to annihilate1 desirable monarch butterflies. In another accident, a genetically engineered type of corn that was approved only for animal consumption because it was toxic to humans accidentally cross-pollinated with corn grown for humans. As a result, many countries banned imports of genetically modified corn for several years. Furthermore, the ability to clone human beings is a possibility that frightens many people. In 2004, two South Korean scientists reported that they had successfully cloned a human embryo (Dreifus).The embryo did not develop into a baby however it is possible that one could do so in the future, a possibility that not everyone is comfortable with.

TASK 6 From the choices given in parentheses, choose the transition signal that best shows the relationship between the sentences in each group. Write the signal in the space. Add punctuation and change capital letters to small letters if necessary. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. A recent article in *Era* magazine suggested ways to reduce inflation.  
*The article suggested that the president reduce the federal budget ;furthermore, it suggested that the government reduce federal, state, and local taxes.* ***(however, in contrast, furthermore)***

2. The same article said that the causes of inflation were easy to find \_\_\_ **however** \_ the cure for inflation was not so easy to prescribe. **(however, for example, therefore)**

3. *Era* also suggested that rising wages were one of the primary causes of inflation \_ **therefore** \_ the government should take action to control wages. **(however, for example, therefore)**

4. In physics, the weight of an object is the gravitational force with which Earth attracts it; \_ **for example**, if a man weighs 150 pounds, this means that Earth pulls him down with a force of 150 pounds. **(moreover, therefore, for example)**

5. The farther away from Earth a person is, the less the gravitation force of Earth. **therefore** \_a man weighs less when he is 50,000 miles from Earth than when he is only 5,000 miles away. **(in conclusion, therefore, however)**

6**.** A tsunamiis a tidal wave produced by an earthquake on the ocean floor. The waves are very long and low in open water, but when they get close to land, they encounter friction because the water is shallow **as a result** \_\_ the waves increase in height and can cause considerable damage when they finally reach land. **(on the other hand, as a result, for example)**

TASK 7 The following paragraph has too many transition signals. Improve the paragraph by deleting some transition signals. You may want to rewrite sentences, and you may have to change the capitalization and punctuation.

**How to Grow an Avocado Tree**

After you have enjoyed the delicious taste of an avocado, do not throw out the seed! You can grow a beautiful houseplant or even your own tree by following these simple steps. Wash the seed, then dry it and insert three toothpicks into its thickest part. And then fill a glass or empty jar with water, suspend the seed in the water with the pointed end up and the broad end down. The water should cover about an inch of the seed. After, put the glass in a warm place, but not in direct sunlight. Add water when necessary to keep the bottom of the seed under water at all times. In two to six weeks, you should see roots begin to grow. Furthermore, the seed will crack open and a stem will emerge from the top. Wait until the stem is 6 to 7 inches long and cut it back to about 3 inches. Now roots become thick and the stem has leafed out again. Fill an 8- to 10-inch diameter clay pot with enriched potting soil. Plant the seed, leaving the top half exposed. It should be watered well. Give the plant an occasional deep soaking, but be careful and do not overwater your little tree. Yellow leaves are a sign of too much water. At this point you should pot plant in a sunny window and watch it grow. When stem will be 12-inch-high, cut it in half. of side branches. In just a few more weeks, you will have a beautiful indoor plant. In conclusion, enjoy your new plant, but do not expect it to bear fruit. Avocados grown from seed occasionally flower and bear fruit; but firstly it should be plant outside and grow from five to thirteen years.