The purpose of a paragraph is to express **one** point, idea or opinion.

This main idea is expressed through three sections of a paragraph:

1. Beginning - Introduce your idea.
2. Middle - Explain your idea.
3. End - Make your point again, transition to next paragraph.

*Students require more recreational time in order to better focus on lessons in class. In fact, studies have shown that students who enjoy a recess of more than 45 minutes consistently score better on tests immediately following the recess period. Clinical analysis further suggests that physical exercise greatly improves the ability to focus on academic materials. Longer periods of recess are clearly required to allow students the best possible chances of success in their studies. Clearly, physical exercise is just one of the necessary ingredients for improving student scores on standardized tests.*

There are four sentence types used to construct a paragraph:

1.**Topic sentence:** One sentence which states your idea, point, or opinion. This sentence should use a strong verb and make a bold statement.

2.**Supporting sentences:** Supporting sentences (notice the plural) provide explanations and support for the topic sentence (main idea) of your paragraph.

**3. Concluding sentence:** The concluding sentence restates the main idea (found in your topic sentence) and reinforces the point or opinion.

**4. Transitional sentence:** The transitional sentence prepares the reader for the following paragraph.

**Cohesion** : Having good coherence in a writing project means that your ideas stick together and flow smoothly from one sentence to the next, so that readers of your work can easily understand where you are taking them. Without cohesion, a written work can seem choppy and may not flow well; a lack of coherence challenges the reader and can hurt comprehension, thus rendering your attempt at communication ineffective at best. We will look at cohesion within paragraphs, but the basics below, along with organizational devices like headings, help to link sentences, paragraphs and sections coherently in longer, complex writing projects.

Here are four main components of cohesion:

* relevance
* order
* linking words
* repetition of key words

1. RELEVANCE : A simple way to build cohesion or flow between sentences is to look at the meaning of a sentence and compare it to the point of the next sentence. They should be related yet not the same. If the two sentences are not closely related, you will lose the readers‟ attention, because they will have to guess where you are going. If the two sentences are identical, you are not adding any new information to your work, and the reader will be annoyed.

2. ORDER : Writers should always ask themselves “Is this sentence relevant to the idea of this paragraph?” Every paragraph should have a main idea (typically stated in a topic sentence). To maintain cohesion, all sentences within a paragraph should relate to this main idea.

Common ways to order sentences

Chronological

Cause and Effect

Clarification (first sentence is broad, general statement, and the following sentences

explain it with details)

Compare/Contrast

3. LINKING/TRANSITION WORDS : Transition words can help a paragraph flow more smoothly.

**Addition:** also, again, besides, furthermore, in addition, likewise, moreover, as well as

**Result:** thus, therefore, as a result, consequently, for this reason, hence, otherwise, subsequently

**Generalizations:** typically, as usual, for the most part, generally, usually, in general

**Introducing Examples:** for example, for instance, as an illustration, as an example, in this case

**Emphasis:** above all, chiefly, especially, particularly, significantly, most importantly, primarily

**Similarity:** comparatively, correspondingly, likewise, similar, together with, combined with

**Exception:** aside from, barring, besides, except, excluding, exclusive of, other than, outside of

**Restatement:** in essence, in other words, namely, that is, in short, to put it differently

**Contrast /Compare:** in contrast, conversely, instead, on the other hand, on the contrary, rather, similarly, yet, but, however, still, nevertheless, in contrast, comparatively, likewise

**Order (time):** at first, to begin with, at the same time, now, the next step, in turn, later on, meanwhile, next, then, soon, later, while, earlier, simultaneously, afterward, before, prior, last, meanwhile

**Summary:** in brief, in conclusion, in short, in summary, in the final analysis, finally

[*Transitional words and phrases*](http://grammar.about.com/od/tz/g/transtermterm.htm)*can help make our writing clear and cohesive.* The most common transitional expressions in English:

**1. Addition Transitions**

and   
also   
besides   
first, second, third   
in addition   
in the first place, in the second place, in the third place   
furthermore   
moreover   
to begin with, next, finally

**2. Cause-Effect Transitions**

accordingly   
and so   
as a result   
consequently   
for this reason   
hence   
so   
then   
therefore

**3. Comparison Transitions**

by the same token   
in like manner   
in the same way   
in similar fashion   
likewise   
similarly

**Contrast Transitions**

but   
however   
in contrast   
instead   
nevertheless   
on the contrary   
on the other hand   
still   
yet

**5. Conclusion and Summary Transitions**

and so   
after all   
at last   
finally   
in brief   
in closing   
in conclusion   
on the whole   
to conclude   
to summarize

**6. Example Transitions**

as an example   
for example   
for instance   
specifically   
thus   
to illustrate

**7. Insistence Transitions**

in fact   
indeed   
no   
yes

**8. Place Transitions**

above   
alongside   
beneath   
beyond   
farther along   
in back   
in front   
nearby   
on top of   
to the left   
to the right   
under   
upon

**9. Restatement Transitions**

in other words   
in short   
in simpler terms   
that is   
to put it differently   
to repeat

**10. Time Transitions**

afterward   
at the same time   
currently   
earlier   
formerly   
immediately   
in the future   
in the meantime   
in the past   
later   
meanwhile   
previously   
simultaneously   
subsequently   
then   
until now

4. REPETITION OF KEY WORDS : Repeating key terms related to the main idea of the paragraph makes an invisible rope for readers to follow. However, do not repeat words for the sake of repetition; the reader needs to occasionally be reminded of your focus, not beaten over the head with unnecessary repetitions.

**To avoid needless repetition:**

As you read each sentence, you naturally expect the next sentence to relate directly to the previous sentence. And this sentence does relate because I am still talking about your, the reader‟s, expectation. But what happens if I don‟t follow-up on the preceding one? I would break your reader attention. In a cohesive paragraph, every sentence builds on the information in the previous sentence, so that you avoid creating a bumpy wooden roller-coaster ride for your reader.

If the subjects of two sentences are the same, typically a pronoun can be used to refer to the subject.

**Example:**

*As you Like It* was a universal play that, when set in modern times, still makes sense and can capture an audience. The play *As you Like It* uses modern costumes, props, and interactions with the audience to relate the story to our times.

Note how the repetition of the full name of the play makes the beginning of the second sentence awkward. With a pronoun, it reads

*As you Like It* was a universal play that, when set in modern times, still makes sense and can capture an audience. **It** uses modern costumes, props, and interactions with the audience to relate the story to our times.

5. REREAD & REVISE!

The best way to improve cohesion is to thoroughly reread your paragraphs. While everything that they write makes sense at the time, it may seem like a garbled mess to a reader. Rereading your work (or having a friend, professor or tutor read it) allows you to add any missing links, fill gaps in logic and create cohesion.

**Assignment**

**Write a paragraph on any one topic:**

1. a waiting room ( a descriptive paragraph)
2. a disastrous date (narration)
3. an experience that made you laugh until you cried (narration)
4. Facebook friendships
5. violence in video games
6. Bulimia and anorexia
7. Falling out of love