

II. 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. Arrange your ideas in logical order.
2. Use transition signals to link ideas.
3. Repeat key nouns or use synonymous words.
4. Use consistent pronouns.

Sample

Dolphins are interesting because they display almost human behavior at times. **For example**, they display the human emotions of joy and sadness. During training, when they do something correctly, they squeal excitedly and race toward their trainer. When they make a mistake, however, they droop noticeably and mope around their pool. **Furthermore**, dolphins help each other when they are in trouble. If one is sick, it sends out a message, and others in the area swim to help it. They push it to the surface of the water so that it can breathe. They stay with it for days or weeks until it recovers or dies. Dolphins have **also** helped trapped or lost whales navigate their way safely out to the open sea. Dolphins are so intelligent and helpful, in fact, that the U.S. Navy is training them to become underwater bomb disposal experts.

Sample

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Sample

Dolphins are interesting because they display almost human behavior at times. For example, **they** display the human emotions of joy and sadness. During training, when **they** do something correctly, **they** squeal excitedly and race toward their trainer. When **they** make a mistake, however, they droop noticeably and mope around their pool. Furthermore, **dolphins** help each other when they are in trouble. If **one** is sick, **it** sends out a message, and **others** in the area swim to help it. They push **it** to the surface of the water so that **it** can breathe. **They** stay with it for days or weeks until **it** recovers or dies. **Dolphins** have also helped trapped or lost whales navigate **their** way safely out to the open sea. **Dolphins** are so intelligent and helpful, in fact, that the U.S. Navy is training them to become underwater bomb disposal experts.

EXERCISE 1

old people

them

this

for one thing

their

also

finally

a third area

There are so many problems that old people in the United State have to grapple with. (1) _____, more than ten percent of all “senior citizens” in the United States are extremely poor. As a matter of fact, recent statistics suggest that approximately one-seventh of all people over the age of sixty-five live below the poverty level. Aged people (2) _____ have more health problems than younger people. (3) _____for concern stems from the fact that public transportation has not been designed with (4) _____in mind; (5) _____ activities are often limited to whatever is within walking distance. And (6) _____, there is the separation from family, which causes loneliness. Many older people live by themselves; (7) _____ is particularly true of widows and divorced women). And then there are the “forgotten five percent,” the older people who have been institutionalized—that is, sent to “old age homes” (sometimes called “nursing homes”) by families who either cannot or will not take care of (8) _____.

EXERCISE 2 (Using Key Nouns and Pronouns)

Find problems with the pronoun *it* in this paragraph. Replace *it* with the key noun *English* as necessary to make the paragraph more coherent

English has almost become an international language. Except for Chinese, more people speak **it** than any other language. Spanish is the official language of more countries in the world, but more countries have **it** as their official or unofficial second language. More than 70 percent of the world's mail is written in **it**. **It** is the primary language on the Internet. In international business, **it** is used more than any other language, and **it** is the language of airline pilots and air traffic controllers all over the world. Moreover, although French used to be the language of diplomacy, **it** has displaced it throughout the world. Therefore, it is a useful language to know.