

Graduate School of Systems and Information Engineering

# Introductory Technical Writing

Essential skills for  
academic writing

*0AL0000*

## Topic 6: Cohesion

Instructor: Neil Millar

# What is cohesion?

*Cohesion is the **grammatical** and **lexical linking** within a text or sentence that holds a text together and gives it meaning.*

# What is cohesion?

It's not ...



# What is cohesion?

It is ...



# What is cohesion?

(1) Ideas are **ordered** in a way that the reader can understand. One idea follows the next logically.

(2) It also means that the **relationship between your ideas** is clear for the reader to understand; the ideas 'cohere' or stick together.

The result is a **smooth 'flow'** from one idea to the next.

# 1. Cohesive language items

## Introductory Technical Writing

**Task 1:** Read the following two paragraphs about the causes of poverty. With a partner discuss which you think is the better paragraph and why? Highlight any changes which make it 'better'?

[B] There is no single cause of poverty. It is too complex an issue to be the result of just one problem. There are, however, many interrelated factors that contribute to poverty in developing nations. The World Bank, for example, states that lack of education keeps children from obtaining jobs that would lift them and their (1) families out of poverty. Children are often kept from school because they are needed at home to support their family with additional income. Poor health also decreases the amount of work impoverished individuals can do, lowering their income and driving them deeper into poverty (2). In addition, the onset of diseases such as HIV / AIDS or malaria can result in death or high medical costs that many impoverished families cannot afford. Moreover, the poor often have very limited economic choices- (3) they are often prevented from receiving loans and other financial benefits. This makes it difficult for them to start businesses, increase incomes and break out of poverty. Finally, the governments of many developing countries are often dysfunctional, unstable and corrupt while the lack of government provided infrastructure such as public sanitation, schools, and social welfare can be crippling for the poor(4).



## Introductory Technical Writing

**Task 2:** Working in your group, highlight features of text B that make it more cohesive. Then try to fill in the table.

1. Pronouns
2. Linking adverbs
3. Conjunctions
4. Phrases to introduce examples
5. Lexical variety (i.e. using different words with similar meanings)
6. Grammatical parallelism (i.e. using the same grammatical pattern)

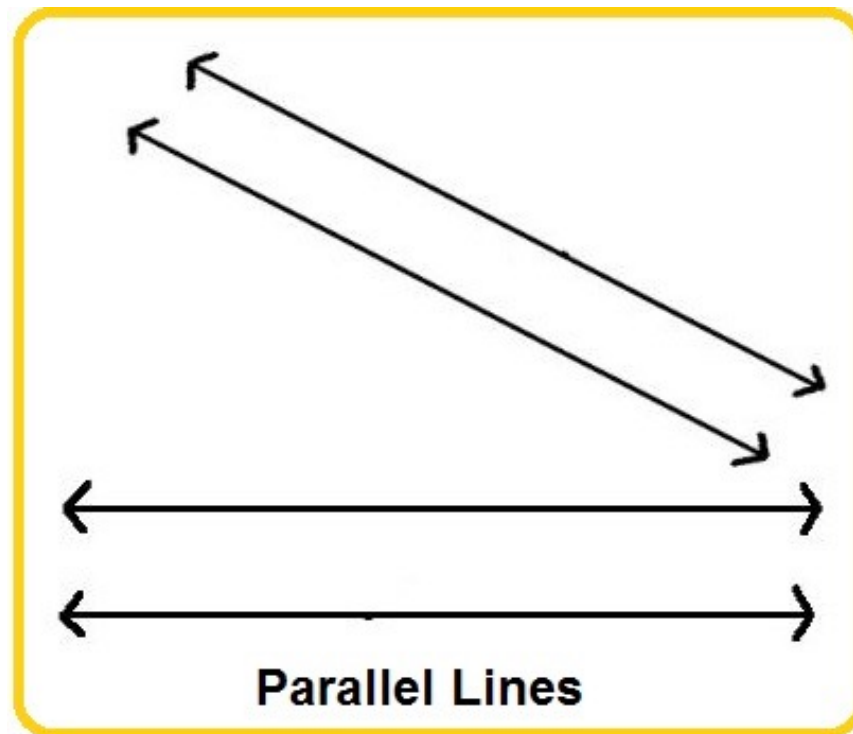


## Introductory Technical Writing

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# Grammatical parallelism



## Grammatical parallelism

"She likes cooking, jogging, and to read."

**Parallel:** "She likes cooking, jogging, and reading."

**Parallel:** "She likes to cook, jog, and read."

## ‘Linking’ words

Conjunction – links two sentences / clauses

*e.g. although, because, while*

### Adverbs

Adverb ‘not strong enough’ to join independent clauses without supporting punctuation

*e.g. therefore, however, consequently*

- *Although it is raining, I think I’ll walk home tonight.*
- *It is raining. However, I think I’ll walk home tonight.*

### What's the problem? How might we fix it?

- Although, one of the main obstacles is that new signs can be very similar to each other, therefore they can be easily confused by users.
- However, one of the main obstacles is that new signs can be very similar to each other, and, **therefore**, they can be easily confused by users.
- However, one of the main obstacles is that new signs can be very similar to each other. **Therefore**, they can be easily confused by users.

### Text B - pronouns

There is no single cause of poverty. **It** is too complex an issue to be the result of just one problem. There are, **however**, many interrelated factors that contribute to poverty in developing nations. The World Bank, **for example**, states that lack of education keeps children from obtaining jobs that would lift **them** and **their** (1) families out of poverty. Children are often kept from school because they are needed at home to support their family with additional income. Poor health **also** decreases the amount of work **impoverished individuals** can do, lowering their income and driving them deeper into poverty (2). **In addition**, the onset of diseases **such as** HIV / AIDS or malaria can result in death or high medical costs that many **impoverished** families cannot afford. **Moreover**, the poor often have very limited economic choices- **they** are often prevented from receiving loans and other financial benefits. **This** makes it difficult for them to start businesses, **increase incomes** and break out of poverty. **Finally**, the governments of many developing countries are often dysfunctional, unstable and corrupt **while** the lack of government provided infrastructure **such as** public sanitation, schools, and social welfare can be crippling for the poor.

### Text B - **adverbs & conjunctions**

There is no single cause of poverty. **It** is too complex an issue to be the result of just one problem. There are, **however**, many interrelated factors that contribute to poverty in developing nations. The World Bank, **for example**, states that lack of education keeps children from obtaining jobs that would lift **them** and **their** (1) families out of poverty. Children are often kept from school **because** they are needed at home to support their family with additional income. Poor health **also** decreases the amount of work **impoverished individuals** can do, lowering their income and driving them deeper into poverty (2). **In addition**, the onset of diseases **such as** HIV / AIDS or malaria can result in death or high medical costs that many **impoverished** families cannot afford. **Moreover**, the poor often have very limited economic choices- **they** are often prevented from receiving loans and other financial benefits. **This** makes it difficult for them to start businesses, **increase incomes** and break out of poverty. **Finally**, the governments of many developing countries are **often** dysfunctional, unstable and corrupt **while** the lack of government provided infrastructure **such as** public sanitation, schools, and social welfare can be crippling for the poor.



### Text B - phrases to exemplify

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### Text B - lexical variety

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### Text B - grammatical parallelism

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## Introductory Technical Writing

**Task 3:** Another feature which gives cohesion to a text is the use of sets of words which we expect to go together (lexical sets). Find examples of words and collocations relating to money or the lack of it.

### Words

- poverty
- poor
- income
- work
- loans
- businesses
- money

### Collocations

- financial benefits
- economic choices
- contribute to poverty
- lift (someone) out of poverty
- lower income
- drive deeper into poverty
- break out of poverty

## 2. Linking words and phrases

## Introductory Technical Writing

**Task 4:** Underline the linkers. Then match each of the types below to one of the sentences.

- a) A few inventions, **for instance** television, have had a major impact on everyday life.
- b) **In addition**, a large volume of used cars are sold through dealerships.
- c) The definition of motivation is important **since** it is the cause of some disagreement.
- d) The technology allows consumers a choice, **thus** increasing their sense of satisfaction.
- e) Four hundred people were interviewed for the survey, **then** the results were analysed.
- f) **However**, another body of opinion associates globalisation with unfavourable outcomes.

## Introductory Technical Writing

**Task 5:** When reading a text, linkers are a kind of signpost to help the reader follow the ideas. Read the paragraph below and underline the linkers, then decide what their functions are.

Newly published research examines some important questions about the growing use of biofuels, such as ethanol made from maize. The production of these has increased sharply recently, but the replacement of food crops with fuel crops has been heavily criticised. Although initially seen as a more environmentally-friendly type of fuel, the research shows that producing some biofuels, for instance biodiesel palm oil, is more polluting than using conventional oil. The ethanol produced from sugar cane, however, can have negative emissions, in other words taking carbon dioxide from the atmosphere instead of adding it. Consequently, it can be seen that the situation is rather confused, and that biofuels are neither a magic solution to the energy problem, nor are they the environmental disaster sometimes suggested.



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## Introductory Technical Writing

**Task 6:** Complete the table by placing the words in the correct column based on their functions.

after	albeit	also	although	and	as
as a result of	as well as	because	but	consequently	despite
due to	e.g.	for instance	furthermore	however	in addition
in particular	moreover	nevertheless	next	owing to	since
so	subsequently	such as	that is why	then	therefore
whereas	while	while	yet		

Addition	Result	Reason	Opposition	Example	Time

## Introductory Technical Writing

**Task 6:** Complete the table by placing the linking words and phrases in the correct column based on their functions.

### Addition

- also

**Moreover** and **furthermore** add extra information to the point you are making.

"The whole report is badly written. **Moreover**, it's inaccurate."  
"It was a good car; **moreover**, the price was reasonable."

- furthermore
- moreover

## Introductory Technical Writing

**Task 6:** Complete the table by placing the words in the correct column based on their functions.

### Result

- therefore
- consequently
- so (*but less academic*)
- Profits have declined **as a result of** the recent drop in sales.
- ~~as a result (of)~~

## Introductory Technical Writing

**Task 6:** Complete the table by placing the words in the correct column based on their functions.

### Reason

- because
- as
- since
- owing to
- as a result of
- due to

- Which take a **clause** (i.e. subject + verb)?
- Which take a **NOUN phrase**?



## Introductory Technical Writing

**Task 6:** Complete the table by placing the words in the correct column based on their functions.

### Opposition

- albeit
- although
- despite
- while
- whereas
- yet\*
- but
- however
- nevertheless\*

- **'albeit'** similar meaning to 'although'
- introduces a 'concessionary clause'

*We decided to buy a car, albeit a cheap one.*

*He was a welcome addition to the team, albeit a late one.*

- cannot be used to introduce an independent clause

~~*We decided to buy the car, **albeit** the price made us hesitate.*~~ X

*We decided to buy the car, **although** the price made us hesitate.*

## Introductory Technical Writing

**Task 6:** Complete the table by placing the words in the correct column based on their functions.

### Example

- e.g.
- for instance
- in particular
- such as

**Task 6:** Complete the table by placing the words in the correct column based on their functions.

### **Time**

- after
- while
- next
- subsequently
- then

## Introductory Technical Writing

**Task 7:** Identify relationship and insert a suitable linker into each gap.

It can be difficult for students to decide whether to attend business school. The drawbacks, (a) \_\_\_\_\_ the high fees and the loss of income, are clear, (b) \_\_\_\_\_ increasing numbers are applying, (c) \_\_\_\_\_ the competition to enter the highest-ranked schools is increasing. (d) \_\_\_\_\_ many well-known business people, (e) \_\_\_\_\_ Bill Gates, never went to business school, there is good evidence that an MBA helps students find a well-paid job more quickly. It can also be hard for students to choose which school to apply for, (f) \_\_\_\_\_ there are so many rankings published, (g) \_\_\_\_\_ those from *The Financial Times*, *Business Week* and *The Economist*. (h) \_\_\_\_\_, these tables frequently disagree, (i) \_\_\_\_\_ they give different weighting to different factors. (j) \_\_\_\_\_, this lack of agreement may have a positive aspect, reflecting the diversity of approach found in the world's great business schools.

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Task 7: Insert a suitable linker into each gap.

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### 3. Linkers of opposition - practice

## Introductory Technical Writing

**Task 8\*:** Write two sentences in each case.

Example:     The equipment was expensive. The equipment was unreliable.

- (1) Despite being expensive, the equipment was unreliable.
- (2) Although the equipment was expensive, it was unreliable.

**Task 9:** Finish these sentences appropriately. Then rewrite using an alternative linking word.

In contrast to America, where gun ownership is common, ...



# Summary

- Cohesion - linking within a text or sentence that holds it together and gives it meaning
- Logical ordering of ideas
- **Grammatical** and **lexical** linking
- Linking words and phrases
- You need to be clear about their function and grammar.

# HOMEWORK

## Self-study exercises

### Vocabulary

#### 8. Cause and effect (37)

### Grammar

#### 12. Future tenses (33)