***Coherence and Cohesion***

1. **Coherence** means the connection of ideas at the idea level, and **cohesion** means the connection of ideas at the sentence level. **Coherence** refers to the rhetorical aspects of your writing such as developing and supporting one’s argument. **Cohesion,** on the other hand, focuses on the grammatical aspects of writing and refers to connectivity in a certain text.

**It means clarity of relationship among sentences and paragraphs, and it is conveyed by two ways:**

**1. Order of organization: there are 4 types of order of organization:**

a. Chronological Order (e.g. events are put in time order)

b. Spatial Order (e.g. description of a place using prepositions of place)

c. Order of importance (from least/most to most/least important)

d. Order from specific/general to general/specific

**2. Cohesive devices,** are used to avoid problematic cohesion in writing, and they can be direct and indirect. There are **five** types of devices which are:

**Direct Cohesive links** refers to transitions such as those dealing with: time order, summary/conclusion, cause, effect, exemplification, addition, comparison, contrast, emphasis, restatement

**Indirect Cohesive links** refers to those dealing with the following:

a. consistency in pronoun reference b. repetition of key words c. tense consistency d. consistent point of view

1. **Exercises: Explain how coherence and cohesion are conveyed in the passages below.**

***Passage 1:*** *Nitrogen makes up over 75 percent of the atmosphere, though the isotope nitrogen 15 (a stable, but heavier form of the element with an extra neutron in its nucleus) accounts for less than 0.5 percent of that amount. The heavy nitrogen, however, is enriched in crops grown with natural fertilizer, like manure. Ammonia in the manure is a source of nitrogen—both the lighter nitrogen 14 and the isotope. Ammonia that is composed of molecular nitrogen 14 is more volatile and typically escapes the manure over time, leaving easily detectable amounts of nitrogen 15 present in the fertilizer as well as in the crops grown in it. Conventional crops are grown with synthetic fertilizers, which do not lead to isotopic enrichment.*

**Answer:** Coherence is conveyed through several cohesive devices/ there are several cohesive devices used by the writer. The first cohesive device is the use of transitions. “Though” “but” and “however” are transitions used to convey **contrast** relationship. The writer talks about the different characteristics of nitrogen, so he uses these contrast transitions. A second device is consistency in pronoun reference. For example “both” refers to “lighter nitrogen 14 and the isotope”, “it” refers to “fertilizer” and “which” refers to ‘the idea of growing conventional crops with synthetic fertilizers. A third device is repetition of key words that relate to jargon of atmosphere gases such as “Nitrogen”, “atmosphere”, “isotope nitrogen 15”, “neutron”, “nucleus” etc. A forth device is tense consistency. The writer is giving us facts about Nitrogen so he uses the present tense (makes up, is, accounts, escapes). Last cohesive devise is consistency of point of view. The passage is written from a third point of view because the writer talks about nitrogen and other gases. **The order of organization of this passage is from general to specific** because the writer starts with a general idea about nitrogen in the Atmosphere and then develops it by giving specific details about its amount, components, and types.

**Passage 2:** *If you eat a well-balanced diet, do you need to take a multivitamin, too? Each week there’s a new study trumpeting the benefits – or the risks – of certain supplements. The findings can be confusing. So we asked three doctors who are leaders in the nutrition field. Each “guru” offered additional advice on supplements. Here’s a rundown of their recommendations, their regimens and their reasoning.*

**Answer:** Coherence is conveyed through several cohesive devices/ there are several cohesive devices used by the writer. The first cohesive device is the use of transitions. “ if” and “so” are transitions used to convey **cause-effect** relationship. The writer talks about causes of taking multivitamins and the effects of this behavior and of having a balanced diet. A second device is consistency in pronoun reference. For example “you” refers to “general reader”, “we” refers to “writer and other researchers” and “each” refers to ‘guru”. A third device is repetition of key words that relate to jargon of health and nutrition such as “well-balanced diet”, “multivitamin”, “benefits”, “supplements”, “nutrition” etc. A forth device is tense consistency. The writer is giving us facts about multivitamins so he uses the present tense (eat, do, need, is, can be…etc), but then he uses the past tense (“asked”, “offered”) to relate a past experience of interviewing three doctors on this topic. Thus, it is a logical shift of tense. Last cohesive devise is consistency of point of view. The passage is written from a third point of view because the writer talks about diet and multivitamin and doctors’ opinion. **The order of organization of this passage is from general to specific.**

**Passage 3:** *Today's society places a lot of emphasis on healthy living by exercising three times a week and eating three good meals a day.* ***However****, we probably don¹t realize that to achieve this, correct breathing habits must be involved as the foundation for a healthy lifestyle.*

**Question: How does the use of transitions in the passage above convey coherence?**

**Answer:** Using transitions as cohesive device would help convey coherence. The word “however” is a transition word that conveys **contrast** relationship. The writer talks about two opposite ideas: the attitude of today’s society towards healthy living to be achieved by exercising and dieting and the new attitude towards the role of breathing for a healthier life style.

**Passage 4:** *Today's society places a lot of emphasis on healthy living by exercising three times a week and eating three good meals a day.* ***However****, we probably don¹t realize that to achieve this, correct breathing habits must be involved as the foundation for a healthy lifestyle.*

**Question: How does the use of transitions in the passage above convey coherence?**

**Answer:** Using transitions as cohesive device would help convey coherence. The word “however” is a transition word that conveys **contrast** relationship. The writer talks about two opposite ideas: the attitude of today’s society towards healthy living to be achieved by exercising and dieting and the new attitude towards the role of breathing for a healthier life style.

**Passage 5:** *Johannes R. Fisslinger of the Yoga Health Foundation and founder of Yoga Month, a nationwide campaign to promote health awareness, has a simple explanation for yoga’s growing popularity: “Because it works!”*

*C/2 He’s right. When you practice yoga even once, you can immediately see its benefits: Your posture is better, you feel more flexible, and your body becomes more toned. Need proof? Take a look at Madonna’s buff biceps or Gwyneth Paltrow’s firm figure. That’s yoga.*

**How is coherence conveyed between the two paragraphs above?**

Coherence is conveyed through the use of pronoun reference. Paragraph 2 starts with the pronoun “he” which refers back to Johannes R. Fisslinger mentioned in Paragraph 1 talking about the concept of Yoga. The use of the pronoun “he” is consistent with the antecedent “Johannes R. Fisslinger” at it helps the writer avoid repetition and boredom and clarifies his idea.

***Application***

***Explain how coherence and cohesion are conveyed in the passages below:***

**Passage 1:** Mickey’s friend Richard also was consumed with finding a miracle cure for his terminal brain cancer. But he was more willing to face his situation. Like Marsha, Richard sought often futile alternative treatments, but unlike Marsha, he was willing to talk about his disease and express his fears about dying. “Richard was most afraid of not having the people he loved around him,” says Mickey. “He was most afraid of being alone. “Richard’s honesty about his disease stemmed from watching Marsha suffer. He was horrified by how painful her death was”, says Mickey.

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**Passage 2:** A psychology student in New York rented out her spare room to a carpenter in order to nag him constantly and study his reactions. After weeks of needling, he snapped and beat her repeatedly with an axe, leaving her mentally retarded.

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**Passage 3:** Since news of the first ceases of SARS- short for severe acute respiratory syndrome- began emerging from mainland China a month ago, health authorities around the world have gone into high alert. For the first time in its 55 year history, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended last week that travelers avoid nonessential trips to an entire region- China’s Guangdong province and Hong Kong, right next door- for fear that they might contract and further spread the infectious agent. Even if all these measures fail to eliminate SARS quickly or completely, they should at least minimize the danger. “People should be concerned,” says one doctor, “but I don’t think they should be alarmed.

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**Passage 4:** During the whole of a dark and soundless day last autumn, when the clouds hung oppressively low in heavens, I was passing alone, on horseback, through a dreary tract of a country, and at length, I found myself within view of a deserted house. I don’t know how it was- but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of unbearable gloom gripped my spirit. I looked upon the scene before me- the mere house, full of windows.

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