

# Unity and Coherence



Ancient Greek disk with hieroglyphs

## Unity

An important element of a good paragraph is **unity**. Unity means that a paragraph discusses one and only one main idea from beginning to end. For example, if your paragraph is about the advantages of owning a compact car, discuss only that. Do not discuss the disadvantages. Furthermore, discuss only *one* advantage, such as gas economy, in each paragraph. If you begin to discuss another advantage, start a new paragraph. Sometimes it is possible to discuss more than one aspect of the same idea in one paragraph *if they are closely related to each other*. For example, you could discuss gas economy and low maintenance costs in the same paragraph because they are closely related, but you should not discuss both gas economy and easier parking in the same paragraph because they are not closely related.

The second part of unity is that every supporting sentence must *directly* explain or prove the main idea. For example, in a paragraph about the high cost of prescription drugs in the United States, you could mention buying drugs from pharmacies

outside the United States as an alternative, but if you write several sentences about buying drugs outside the United States, you are getting off the topic, and your paragraph will not have unity.

## PRACTICE 1

### Unity

A. The three paragraphs that follow all discuss the same topic. Only one of them shows unity. First read the paragraphs. Then answer these questions.

1. Which paragraph has unity?
2. Which paragraph does not have unity because it discusses two different topics?
3. Which paragraph does not have unity because it has sentences that are not related to the main topic?

#### Paragraph 1

##### Effects of Color

Colors create biological reactions in our bodies. These reactions, in turn, can change our behavior. In one study, prisoners were put in a pink room, and they underwent a drastic and measurable decrease in muscle strength and hostility within 2.7 seconds. In another study, athletes needing short bursts of energy were exposed to red light. Their muscle strength increased by 13.5 percent, and electrical activity in their arm muscles increased by 5.8 percent. Athletes needing more endurance for longer performances responded best when exposed to blue light. Other studies have shown that the color green is calming. Green was a sacred color to the Egyptians, representing the hope and joy of spring. It is also a sacred color to Moslems. Many mosques and religious temples throughout the world use green (the color of renewal and growth) and blue (the color of heaven) to balance heavenly peace with spiritual growth. To sum up, color influences us in many ways (Daniels 10).<sup>1</sup>

#### Paragraph 2

##### Effects of Color

Colors create biological reactions in our bodies. These reactions, in turn, can change our behavior. In one study, prisoners were put in a pink room, and they underwent a drastic and measurable decrease in muscle strength and hostility within 2.7 seconds. In another study, athletes needing short bursts of energy were exposed to red light. Their muscle strength increased by 13.5 percent, and electrical activity in their arm muscles increased by 5.8 percent. Athletes needing more endurance for longer performances responded best when exposed to blue light. Other studies have shown that the color green is calming. After London's Blackfriars Bridge was painted green, the number of suicides decreased by 34 percent. These and other studies clearly demonstrate that color affects not only our moods but our behavior as well (Daniels 10).

<sup>1</sup>Daniels, Amanda. "Curing with Color." *From House to Home* Feb./Mar. 2004: 8–10. Published by the *Marin Independent Journal*, Novato, California.

**Paragraph 3****Effects of Color**

Colors create biological reactions in our bodies. These reactions, in turn, can change our behavior. In one study, athletes needing short bursts of energy were exposed to red light. Their muscle strength increased by 13.5 percent, and electrical activity in their arm muscles increased by 5.8 percent. Athletes needing more endurance for longer performances responded best when exposed to blue light. Blue is not a good color for dinnerware, however. Food looks less appetizing when it is served on blue plates, perhaps because very few foods in nature are of that color. Other studies have shown that the color green is calming. After London's Blackfriars Bridge was painted green, the number of suicides from it decreased by 34 percent. It is clear that color affects not just our moods, but our behavior as well (Daniels 10).

- B.** Both of the following paragraphs break the rule of unity because they contain one or more sentences that are off the topic.

**Step 1** Locate and underline the topic sentence of each paragraph.

**Step 2** Cross out the sentence or sentences that are off the topic.

**Paragraph 1**

Adventure travel is the hot trend in the tourism industry. Ordinary people are no longer content to spend their two weeks away from the office resting on a sunny beach in Florida. More and more often, they are choosing to spend their vacations rafting down wild rivers, hiking through steamy rain forests, climbing the world's highest mountains, or crossing slippery glaciers.<sup>1</sup> People of all ages are choosing educational study tours for their vacations.

**Paragraph 2**

Daredevil<sup>2</sup> sports are also becoming popular. Young people especially are increasingly willing to risk life and limb<sup>3</sup> while mountain biking, backcountry snowboarding, or high-speed skateboarding. Soccer is also popular in the United States now, although football is still more popular. One of the riskiest new sports is skysurfing, in which people jump out of airplanes with boards attached to their feet. Skysurfing rivals<sup>4</sup> skydiving and bungee jumping for the amount of thrills—and risk.

- C.** Both of the following paragraphs not only have sentences that are off the topic but also discuss two or more topics.

**Step 1** Decide where each paragraph should be divided into two paragraphs.

Underline the topic sentence of each.

**Step 2** Find sentence(s) that are off the topic and cross them out.

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<sup>1</sup>glaciers: slowly moving rivers of ice

<sup>2</sup>daredevil: very dangerous

<sup>3</sup>life and limb: death and injury (idiom)

<sup>4</sup>rivals: competes with

**Paragraph 1**

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<sup>5</sup> 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).<sup>6</sup>

**Paragraph 2**

Even when you try to be polite, it is easy to do the wrong thing inadvertently<sup>7</sup> in a new culture. For example, when someone offers you food or a beverage in the United States, accept it the first time it is offered. If you say, “No, thank you” because it is polite to decline the first one or two offers in your culture, you could become very hungry and thirsty in the United States. There, a host thinks that “no” means “no” and will usually not offer again. Meals in the United States are usually more informal than meals in other countries, and the times of meals may be different. Although North Americans are usually very direct in social matters, there are a few occasions when they are not. If a North American says, “Please drop by sometime,” he may or may not want you to visit him in his home. Your clue that this may not be a real invitation is the word “sometime.” In some areas of the United States, people do not expect you to visit them unless you have an invitation for a specific day and time. In other areas of the United States, however, “dropping by” is a friendly, neighborly gesture. Idioms are often difficult for newcomers to understand.

## Coherence

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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.

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<sup>5</sup>**crude:** rough, unfinished

<sup>6</sup>Gates, Bill. “One universal language for all on the Internet.” *Bill Gates: Technology*. Syndicated column, 1977.

<sup>7</sup>**inadvertently:** accidentally

There are four ways to achieve coherence:

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

## Repetition of Key Nouns

The easiest way to achieve coherence is to repeat key nouns frequently in your paragraph. Read the model paragraph about gold to see how it uses this technique to smooth the flow of sentences. The key noun in this paragraph is *gold*. Circle the word *gold* and all pronouns that refer to it.

### MODEL

#### Paragraph with Coherence

### Gold

<sup>1</sup>Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. <sup>2</sup>First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion. <sup>3</sup>Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes. <sup>4</sup>Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. <sup>5</sup>For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was made 25 centuries ago. <sup>6</sup>Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science. <sup>7</sup>For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications, such as photography and dentistry. <sup>8</sup>The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits. <sup>9</sup>Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection when they go outside spaceships in space. <sup>10</sup>In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty but also for its utility.

You should have circled the noun *gold* seven times, the pronoun *it* twice, and the pronoun *its* three times. (The word *it* in sentence 5 refers to *coin*, not *gold*, so you should not have circled it.)

There is no fixed rule about how often to repeat key nouns or when to substitute pronouns. You should repeat a key noun instead of using a pronoun when the meaning is not clear.

Throughout the following paragraph, the word *gold* has been replaced by pronouns, making the paragraph much less coherent.

### MODEL

#### Paragraph without Coherence

### Gold

Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. First of all, it has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion. Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes. It never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was made 25 centuries ago. Another of its important characteristics is its usefulness to industry and science. For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications, such as photography and dentistry. Its most recent use is in astronauts' suits. Astronauts wear heat shields made from it for protection when they go outside spaceships in space. In conclusion, it is treasured not only for its beauty but also for its utility.

## PRACTICE 2

### Repetition of Key Nouns

- A. In the following paragraph, the key noun is never repeated. Replace the pronoun *it* with the key noun *English* wherever you think doing so would make the paragraph more coherent.

#### English

<sup>1</sup>English has almost become an international language. <sup>2</sup>Except for Chinese, more people speak it than any other language. <sup>3</sup>Spanish is the official language of more countries in the world, but more countries have it as their official or unofficial second language. <sup>4</sup>More than 70 percent of the world's mail is written in it. <sup>5</sup>It is the primary language on the Internet. <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>Moreover, although French used to be the language of diplomacy, it has displaced it throughout the world. <sup>8</sup>Therefore, unless you plan to spend your life alone on a desert island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, it is a useful language to know.

- B. In the following passage about dolphins, replace some of the pronouns with appropriate singular or plural nouns.

#### Dolphins

<sup>1</sup>Dolphins are interesting because they display almost human behavior at times. <sup>2</sup>For example, they display the human emotions of joy and sadness. <sup>3</sup>During training, when they do something correctly, they squeal excitedly and race toward their trainer. <sup>4</sup>When they make a mistake, however, they droop<sup>1</sup> noticeably and mope<sup>2</sup> around their pool. <sup>5</sup>Furthermore, they help each other when they are in trouble. <sup>6</sup>If one is sick, it sends out a message, and others in the area swim to help it. <sup>7</sup>They push it to the surface of the water so that it can breathe. <sup>8</sup>They stay with it for days or weeks until it recovers or dies. <sup>9</sup>They have also helped trapped or lost whales navigate their way safely out to the open sea. <sup>10</sup>They are so intelligent and helpful, in fact, that the U.S. Navy is training them to become underwater bomb disposal experts.

### Key Noun Substitutes

If you do not wish to repeat a key noun again and again, you can use synonyms or expressions with the same meaning. For example, in sentence 8 of the first paragraph about gold, the writer substituted the noun *use* as a synonym for *application* in sentence 7, thereby smoothing the flow of thought from one sentence to the next.

<sup>1</sup>droop: sink down

<sup>2</sup>mope: act depressed

**PRACTICE 3****Key Noun  
Substitutes**

**Step 1** In the topic sentence of the following paragraph, underline the key noun that names the topic.

**Step 2** Then circle (a) repetitions of the key nouns, (b) pronouns that refer to them, and (c) synonyms that are substitutes for them. You should have a total of 10 circles: 3 circles around key nouns, 3 around pronouns, and 4 around synonyms.

**A Mardi Gras Custom**

<sup>1</sup>“Throw me something, mister,” is the customary plea for a Mardi Gras “throw.” <sup>2</sup>In the final days of Mardi Gras, the season of parties, parades, and revelry<sup>1</sup> that precedes the Christian period of fasting and penance<sup>2</sup> called Lent, crowds of spectators line the streets of New Orleans. <sup>3</sup>They hope to catch a Mardi Gras souvenir tossed from parading floats. <sup>4</sup>Mardi Gras organizations called “krewes” build the floats and sponsor the parades, and while cruising along parade routes, costumed krewe members throw plastic trinkets to the crowds below. <sup>5</sup>The trinkets, which are called “throws,” consist of bead necklaces, coins, cups, toys, Frisbees, and figurines stamped with the krewe’s symbol or the parade theme. <sup>6</sup>Mardi Gras throws are big business for the companies that supply them. <sup>7</sup>Krewe members spend an average of \$800 on them, and some spend \$2,000 or more. <sup>8</sup>By far the most treasured of the Mardi Gras mementos are gaudy bead necklaces. <sup>9</sup>Originally made of glass, they are now made of plastic (Roach).<sup>3</sup>

**Consistent  
Pronouns**

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). Notice the changes the writer made for consistency in the following example.

Students Know have  
A student who knows a few Latin and Greek roots and prefixes has an  
students do not  
advantage over a student who does not know them. They can often guess the  
students  
meaning of new words. If, for example, you know that the prefix *omni* means  
they  
“all,” you have a better chance of guessing the meanings of words such as  
students Know  
*omnibus*, *omnipresent*, and *omnidirectional*. Furthermore, a student who knows  
that the root *sci-* comes from *scire*, “to know,” can guess that *omniscient* means  
“all-knowing.”

<sup>1</sup>revelry: celebration, festivities

<sup>2</sup>penance: punishment that you accept to say that you are sorry for misbehavior

<sup>3</sup>Roach, John. “The Rich History of Mardi Gras’s Cheap Trinkets.” *National Geographic.com* 20 Feb. 2004. 24 Feb. 2004 <[http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/02/0220\\_040220\\_mardigras.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/02/0220_040220_mardigras.html)>.

**PRACTICE 4****Using Consistent Pronouns**

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

**Olympic Athletes**

Olympic athletes must be strong both physically and mentally. First of all, if you hope to compete in an Olympic sport, you must be physically strong. Furthermore, aspiring<sup>4</sup> Olympians must train rigorously<sup>5</sup> 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 that you have to be totally dedicated to your sport, often giving up a normal school, family, and social life. Being mentally strong also means that he or she must be able to withstand the intense pressure of international competition with its accompanying media<sup>6</sup> coverage. Finally, not everyone can win a medal, so Olympians must possess the inner strength to live with defeat.

**Transition Signals**

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.

**PRACTICE 5****Transition Signals**

Compare paragraphs 1 and 2 that follow. Which paragraph contains transition signals and is more coherent? Circle all the transition signals you can identify.

**Paragraph 1**

One difference among the world's seas and oceans is that the salinity<sup>7</sup> varies in different climate zones. The Baltic Sea in northern Europe is only one-fourth as salty as the Red Sea in the Middle East. There are reasons for this. In warm climates, water evaporates<sup>8</sup> rapidly. The concentration<sup>9</sup> of salt is greater. The surrounding land is dry and does not contribute much freshwater to dilute<sup>10</sup> the salty seawater. In cold climate zones, water evaporates slowly. The runoff created by melting snow adds a considerable amount of freshwater to dilute the saline seawater.

<sup>4</sup>aspiring: hopeful

<sup>5</sup>rigorously: strictly, without weakness

<sup>6</sup>media: radio, television, newspapers, magazines

<sup>7</sup>salinity: salt content

<sup>8</sup>evaporates: dries up

<sup>9</sup>concentration: percentage (of salt)

<sup>10</sup>dilute: reduce the concentration



**Paragraph 2**

One difference among the world's seas and oceans is that the salinity varies in different climate zones. For example, the Baltic Sea in northern Europe is only one-fourth as saline as the Red Sea in the Middle East. There are two reasons for this. First of all, in warm climate zones, water evaporates rapidly; therefore, the concentration of salt is greater. Second, the surrounding land is dry; consequently, it does not contribute much freshwater to dilute the salty seawater. In cold climate zones, on the other hand, water evaporates slowly. Furthermore, the runoff created by melting snow adds a considerable amount of freshwater to dilute the saline seawater.

Paragraph 2 is more coherent because it contains transition signals. Each transition signal has a special meaning; each shows how the following sentence relates to the preceding one.

*For example* tells you that an example of the preceding idea is coming.

*Two* tells you to look for two different reasons.

*First of all* tells you that this is the first reason.

*Second* and *furthermore* indicate that additional ideas are coming.

*Therefore* and *consequently* indicate that the second statement is a result of the first statement.

*On the other hand* tells you that an opposite idea is coming.

There are different kinds of transition signals. Some of them are listed in the chart on page 27. You will find a more complete list in Appendix C, pages 297–299. Each group has different rules for position in a sentence and punctuation.

**Transition Words and Phrases and Conjunctive Adverbs**

Most words and phrases in the first two columns of the chart can appear at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of one independent clause<sup>1</sup> and are usually separated by commas.

**For example**, the Baltic Sea in northern Europe is only one-fourth as saline as the Red Sea in the Middle East.

The runoff created by melting snow, **furthermore**, adds a considerable amount of freshwater to dilute the saline seawater.

The Mediterranean Sea is more saline than the Red Sea, **however**.

**EXCEPTIONS**

1. The words and phrases in the last four groups in the chart (for listing ideas and time sequences, for emphasizing, for giving reasons, and for conclusions) usually appear only at the beginning of a sentence, not in the middle or at the end.
2. *Too* usually appears only at the end of a sentence, sometimes preceded by a comma.
3. The short time words *then*, *now*, and *soon* usually do not need commas.

<sup>1</sup>**independent clause**: group of words containing a subject and a verb that expresses a complete thought

## Transition Signals

Meaning/ Function	Transition Phrases	Conjunctive Adverbs	Coordinating Conjunctions	Subordinating Conjunctions	Others
To introduce an <b>additional</b> idea	in addition	furthermore moreover besides also too	and		another (+ noun) an additional (+ noun)
To introduce an <b>opposite</b> idea or <b>contrast</b>	on the other hand in contrast	however nevertheless instead still nonetheless	but yet	although though even though whereas while	in spite of (+ noun) despite (+ noun)
To introduce a <b>choice</b> or <b>alternative</b>		otherwise	or	if unless	
To introduce a <b>restatement</b> or <b>explanation</b>	in fact indeed	that is			
To list in <b>order</b>	first, second, third next, last, finally				the first, second, third, etc. the next, last, final
To introduce an <b>example</b>	for example for instance				an example of (+ noun) such as (+ noun)
To introduce a <b>conclusion</b> or <b>summary</b>	clearly in brief in conclusion indeed in short in summary				
To introduce a <b>result</b>	accordingly as a result as a consequence	therefore consequently hence thus	so		

The words and phrases in the first two columns of the chart can also connect two independent clauses. In this case, we use them with a semicolon and a comma.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
In warm climate zones, water evaporates rapidly; **therefore**, the concentration of salt is greater.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
Both the Red Sea and the Mediterranean have narrow outlets to the ocean; **however**, the Mediterranean's is narrower.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
A few societies in the world are matriarchal; **that is**, the mother is head of the family.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
Some English words have no exact equivalents in other languages; **for example**, there is no German word for the adjective *fair*, as in *fair play*.

Look at Compound Sentences with Conjunctive Adverbs on pages 168–170 for more examples.

### Coordinators

This group includes the seven coordinating conjunctions *and*, *but*, *so*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, and *yet* and the five correlative (“paired”) conjunctions *both . . . and*, *not only . . . but also*, *neither . . . nor*, *either . . . or*, and *whether . . . or*. Coordinators may or may not have commas. When they connect two independent clauses, use a comma.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
In a matriarchy, the mother is the head of the family, **and** all the children belong to her clan.<sup>1</sup>

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
In warm climate zones, water evaporates rapidly, **so** the concentration of salt is greater.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
Children **not only** need love, **but** they **also** need discipline.

When coordinators connect two words or phrases, do not use a comma.

Would you rather take a written **or** an oral exam?

Children need **not only** love **but also** discipline.

*Exception:* Some writers use a comma before *but* and *yet* even when they do not connect independent clauses to emphasize the contrast of the connected ideas.

The poem is solemn, **yet** optimistic in tone.

Look at Compound Sentences with Coordinators on pages 165–167 and the section on Parallelism Correlative (Paired) Conjunctions on pages 181–183 for more examples.

<sup>1</sup>**clan:** extended family group

### Subordinators

A subordinator (subordinating conjunction) is the first word in a dependent clause.<sup>2</sup> A dependent clause is always connected to an independent clause to make a sentence. The sentence may or may not have a comma. The general rule is this: Put a comma after a dependent clause but not in front of one.

DEPENDENT CLAUSE      INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
**Although** the company's sales increased last year, its net profit declined.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE      DEPENDENT CLAUSE  
 The company's net profit declined last year **although** its sales increased.

For information about subordinators, see Chapter 13.

### Others

The transition signals in this group include nouns such as *example*, adjectives such as *additional*, prepositions such as *in addition to*, verbs such as *cause*, and adverbs such as *too*. There are no punctuation rules for this group, but it is important to notice what kinds of words follow these signals.

An **additional** reason for the company's bankruptcy was the lack of competent management. (*Additional* is an adjective, so it is followed by a noun.)

**In addition to** increased competition, the lack of competent management caused the company's bankruptcy. (*In addition to* is a preposition, so it is followed by a noun or noun phrase.)

Vocabulary differences between British and American English include words **such as** *bonnet/hood*, *petrol/gasoline*, *windscreen/windshield*, and *lorry/truck*. (*Such as* is followed by a noun or noun phrase.)

### PRACTICE 6

#### Recognizing Transition Signals

**Step 1** Circle all the transition signals in the following paragraphs.

**Step 2** Punctuate the transition signals if necessary.

#### Genetic<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> (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.

<sup>2</sup>**dependent clause:** group of words containing a subject and a verb that does *not* express a complete thought. A dependent clause always begins with a subordinator.

<sup>3</sup>**genetic:** from *gene*, the unit of heredity

<sup>4</sup>**gene splicing:** gene joining

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 annihilate<sup>1</sup> 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).<sup>2</sup> 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.

### PRACTICE 7

#### Choosing Transition Signals

- A. 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.

*Note:* All the transition signals in this practice are transition phrases and conjunctive adverbs. This is to give you more practice in using and punctuating these types of transition signals correctly.

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 \_\_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_ the government should take action to control wages. (**however, therefore, for example**)
4. In physics, the weight of an object is the gravitational force<sup>3</sup> with which Earth attracts it; \_\_\_\_, 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 gravitational force of Earth. \_\_\_\_ 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**)

<sup>1</sup>annihilate: wipe out, destroy completely

<sup>2</sup>Dreifus, Claudia. "2 Friends, 242 Eggs and a Breakthrough." *New York Times* 17 Feb. 2004: F1-2.

<sup>3</sup>gravitational force: the force that pulls things toward Earth

6. A **tsunami** is 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<sup>4</sup> because the water is shallow \_\_\_\_\_ the waves increase in height and can cause considerable damage when they finally reach land. (on the other hand, as a result, for example)

- B. Fill in each blank with an appropriate transition signal from the list provided. Use each signal only once. Add punctuation if necessary.

for example	in fact	similarly	also
indeed	third	second	final and most convincing

### Time

One stereotype about North Americans says that they are obsessed with<sup>5</sup> time. It sometimes seems true that for North Americans, time seems as valuable as money. (1) \_\_\_\_\_ they even say, "Time is money." (2) \_\_\_\_\_ have you noticed how many verbs can be followed by both time and money? (3) \_\_\_\_\_ you can *spend time*, *save time*, *lose time*, *find time*, *make time*, *waste time*, and *run out of time*. (4) \_\_\_\_\_ you can spend, save, lose, find, make, waste, and run out of money. (5) \_\_\_\_\_ North Americans seem to regard time as a "thing" that one can own. You can *have time*, *buy time*, and *take time*. (One wonders how much it costs and where it is taken.) A (6) \_\_\_\_\_ piece of evidence that North Americans are obsessed with time is their fanaticism about always being on time. (7) \_\_\_\_\_ people who are habitually late risk punishment ranging from frowning disapproval to losing their jobs. The (8) \_\_\_\_\_ proof is that these poor people sometimes take courses in time management! That is really overdoing it, don't you agree?

- C. Improve the coherence of the following paragraph by adding transitions in the blank spaces. Use the hints provided in parentheses to help you choose a transition.

### Move Over, DVD. Here Comes BD!

First, CDs brought digital sound into our homes. Then DVD technology brought digital sound and video and revolutionized the movie industry. Soon there will be (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (*additional idea*) revolution: Blu-ray discs (BDs). A Blu-ray disc will have several advantages. (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (*list in order*) it has an enormous data storage capacity. A single-sided DVD can hold 4.7 gigabytes of information, about the size of an average 2-hour movie. A single-sided BD, (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (*contrast*), can hold up to 27 gigabytes, enough for 13 hours of standard video. A (4) \_\_\_\_\_ (*list in order*)

<sup>4</sup>friction: resistance

<sup>5</sup>obsessed with: fanatical about

advantage is that a BD can record, store, and play back high-definition video because of its larger capacity. A double-layer BD can store about 50 gigabytes, enough for 4.5 hours of high-definition video. The cost will be about the same. (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (*additional idea*), a BD has a higher data transfer rate—36 megabits per second—than today's DVDs, which transfer at 10 megabits per second. (6) \_\_\_\_\_ (*result*) a BD can record 25 gigabytes of data in just over an hour and a half. (7) \_\_\_\_\_ (*conclusion*) because of their large storage capacity and comparable cost, BDs will probably take over the market when they become widely available.

### PRACTICE 8

#### Using Transition Signals

Choose one of the two topic sentences that follow and write a paragraph that develops it. Use transition signals to connect the supporting sentences smoothly. You may use the transition signals suggested for each topic, or you may use others not listed. Add other sentences without transitions if you need to in order to explain the topic completely.

Sentence 1. There are four noticeable differences between British and American English.

the most noticeable difference	such as
for example	finally
another difference	for instance
for example	in conclusion
a third difference	

Here are some possible subtopics for your paragraph. You may, of course, use your own if you wish.

Subtopics	Examples
Pronunciation	Speakers of British English do not always pronounce <i>r</i> . <i>schedule</i> : In British English it is pronounced [shed-u-al]; in American English it is pronounced [sked-u-al]
Spelling	colour/color; realise/realize; defence/defense
Vocabulary	petrol/gas; biscuit/cookie; pocket money/allowance; bonnet/hood

Sentence 2. Sometimes I enjoy being alone.

for instance	on the other hand
moreover	therefore

### 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.

**PRACTICE 9****Too Many  
Transition  
Signals**

The following paragraph has too many transition signals. Which ones are helpful to the reader? Which transition signals are an unnecessary distraction?

- Step 1** Improve the paragraph by deleting some transition signals. You may want to rewrite sentences, and you may have to change the capitalization and punctuation.
- Step 2** There are many possible ways to do this assignment. Discuss your changes with a partner or in a group.

### **How to Grow an Avocado Tree<sup>1</sup>**

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. **First**, wash the seed. **Second**, dry it. **Third**, insert three toothpicks into its thickest part. **Then** fill a glass or empty jar with water. **After that**, 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. **Next**, 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 **then** a stem will emerge from the top. **However**, wait until the stem is 6 to 7 inches long. **Then** cut it back to about 3 inches. **Now** wait until the roots are thick and the stem has leafed out again. **Then** fill an 8- to 10-inch diameter clay pot with enriched potting soil. Plant the seed, leaving the top half exposed. **Then** water it well. **After that**, water frequently but lightly; **also** give the plant an occasional deep soaking. **However**, do not overwater your little tree. Yellow leaves are a sign of too much water. **Then** place the potted plant in a sunny window and watch it grow. The more sunlight, the better: **Then, when** the stem is 12 inches high, cut it back to 6 inches to encourage the growth 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; **however, first** you will have to plant it outside and **then** wait anywhere from five to thirteen years.

<sup>1</sup>"Grow Your Own Tree." California Avocado Commission. 6 Dec. 2004 <<http://www.avocado.org/avocado-facts/growing-avocado.php>>.



**Logical Order**

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. The model paragraph on how to grow an avocado tree (page 33) uses time order to organize the steps.
- In *logical division of ideas*, a topic is divided into parts, and each part is discussed separately. The model paragraph about gold on page 3 uses logical division. First, it discusses gold's beauty, and second its utility.
- In a *comparison/contrast* paragraph, the similarities and/or differences between two or more items are discussed. The paragraph about synonyms on page 5 compares and contrasts word meanings.

**PRACTICE 10****Recognizing  
Kinds of Logical  
Order**

Read the following paragraphs and decide which kind of logical order is used in each: comparison/contrast, chronological order, or logical division of ideas. Be able to discuss the reasons for your choice. Circle all transition signals.

**Paragraph 1**

The process of machine translation of languages is complex. To translate a document from English into Japanese, for example, the computer first analyzes an English sentence, determining its grammatical structure and identifying the subject, verb, objects, and modifiers. Next, the words are translated by an English-Japanese dictionary. After that, another part of the computer program analyzes the resulting awkward jumble<sup>1</sup> of words and meanings and produces an intelligible sentence based on the rules of Japanese syntax<sup>2</sup> and the machine's understanding of what the original English sentence meant. Finally, a human bilingual editor polishes the computer-produced translation.

Kind of logical order: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup>jumble: confused mixture

<sup>2</sup>syntax: sentence structure, grammar

**Paragraph 2**

French and U.S. business managers have decidedly different management styles. French meetings, for example, are long and rambling<sup>3</sup> and rarely end on time. Furthermore, meetings often end without closure.<sup>4</sup> Managers in the United States, on the other hand, make an effort to start and stop a meeting on time, and North American business meetings typically end with decisions and action plans. Another difference involves documentation. North Americans adore documentation; they have a procedure manual for everything. The French, in contrast, think this is childish. French managers find it difficult to stick to a schedule, but U.S. managers are intolerant of delays. In addition, the French prefer to work alone, whereas North Americans like to work in teams. Another major difference in management style is that in French companies, authority comes from the top; French managers do not share information with subordinates and make decisions with little participation by employees beneath them. In U.S. companies, however, top managers share information and frequently solicit<sup>5</sup> input from subordinates (“How French Managers”).<sup>6</sup>

Kind of logical order: \_\_\_\_\_

**Paragraph 3**

It took more than 2,500 years to develop the calendar used in most Western countries today. In about 700 B.C.E.,<sup>7</sup> the ancient Romans used a calendar that had 304 days divided into 10 months; March was the beginning of each year. There were more than 60 days missing from the calendar, so very soon the calendar did not match the seasons at all. Spring arrived when the calendar said that it was still winter. A few decades later, the Romans added the months of January and February to the end of the year. This calendar lasted about 600 years. Then in 46 B.C.E., Julius Caesar, the Roman ruler, made a new calendar. His calendar had 365 days, with one day added every fourth year. He also moved the beginning of the year to January 1, and he renamed a month for himself: Julius (July). In Caesar’s calendar, February had 29 days. The very next emperor, Augustus, not only renamed a month for himself (August), but he also took one day from February and added it to August so that “his” month would be just as long as Caesar’s. This calendar worked better than the previous ones, but it still was not perfect. By 1580, the first calendrical day of spring was 10 days too early, so in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII, the leader of the Roman Catholic religion, made a small change to make the calendar more accurate. In the Gregorian calendar, the year is still 26.3 seconds different from the solar year, but it will be a long time before this causes a problem.

Kind of logical order: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>3</sup>**rambling**: not focused on a specific goal

<sup>4</sup>**closure**: decisions about points discussed

<sup>5</sup>**solicit**: ask for

<sup>6</sup>“How French Managers Compare to Americans.” Money Beat. *Marin Independent Journal* 30 Nov. 1993: B7.

<sup>7</sup>**B.C.E.**: Before the Common Era (The Common Era began in the year 1.)

**Paragraph 4**

The many different calendars used throughout the world are all based on the phases of the moon, on the revolution of Earth around the sun, or on a combination of the two. The first kind of calendar is the lunar calendar, based on the phases of the moon. A month is calculated as the time between two full moons, 29.5 days, and a year has 354 days. The Islamic calendar used in Muslim countries is a lunar calendar. It has 12 months and a cycle of 30 years in which the 2nd, 5th, 7th, 10th, 13th, 16th, 18th, 21st, 24th, 26th, and 29th years have 355 days, and the others 354 days. A second kind of calendar is the solar calendar, which is based on the revolution of Earth around the sun. The ancient Egyptians used a solar calendar divided into 12 months of 30 days each, which left 5 uncounted days at the end of each year. A very accurate calendar developed by the Mayan Indians in North America was also a solar calendar. It had 365 days, 364 of which were divided into 28 weeks of 13 days each. The new year began on the 365th day. Because the solar year is exactly 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds long, however, a solar calendar is not totally accurate, so many cultures developed a third kind of calendar, the lunisolar calendar. In a lunisolar calendar, extra days are added every so often to reconcile<sup>1</sup> the lunar months with the solar year. The Chinese, Hebrew, and Gregorian calendars used today are lunisolar calendars.

Kind of logical order: \_\_\_\_\_

## Review

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These are the important points covered in this chapter.

1. Every good paragraph has both unity and coherence.
2. You achieve unity by
  - discussing only one idea in a paragraph.
  - always staying on the topic in your supporting sentences.
3. You achieve coherence by
  - repeating key nouns.
  - using consistent pronouns.
  - using transition signals.
  - arranging your ideas in some kind of logical order.
4. There are different types of transition signals. Each type is punctuated differently.

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<sup>1</sup>reconcile: bring into agreement

In the following paragraph, notice how the four elements work together to create a unified and coherent paragraph.

### A Leap Year Custom Lives On

No one knows for certain the origin of the custom that allows women to propose marriage on Leap Day. Leap Day is February 29th, the extra day added every four years to put the calendar year in synch with the solar year. One explanation for the custom comes from Ireland. According to Irish legend, Saint Brigid, an Irish holy woman who lived in the fifth century, complained to Saint Patrick about women having to wait for men to propose. Saint Patrick agreed that this practice was unfair, so he decided that eager females could propose on this one day. A different explanation of the custom comes from medieval England. According to this explanation, people there thought that because Leap Day existed to fix a problem in the calendar, it could also be used to fix an old and unjust practice. In 1288, the custom became an actual law in Scotland. Not only did the Scottish law allow women to propose on any day during a Leap Year, but it also said that any man who declined a woman proposal had to pay a fine! Whatever its origins, the tradition of women taking the initiative one day a year lives on in Sadie Hawkins Day celebrations held in many communities in the United States even today.

ALL SENTENCES ARE RELATED TO THE TOPIC.

KEY NOUNS ARE REPEATED, AND SYNONYMS ARE USED.

PRONOUNS ARE CONSISTENT.

TRANSITION SIGNALS HELP THE READER FOLLOW THE PROGRESSION OF IDEAS.

IDEAS ARE PRESENTED IN LOGICAL ORDER.

## PRACTICE 11

### Review of Coherence

- Step 1** Turn back to Practice 1B on page 7, in which you selected the topic sentence in each group and marked it *TS*.
- Step 2** Now put the supporting sentences of Paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 in order and mark them *SS1*, *SS2*, *SS3*, and so on.
- Skip Paragraph 1, for it lacks transition words or other clues.
  - Use your knowledge of coherence—especially transition signals and repetition of key nouns—to determine the correct order.

## Writing Practice

## PRACTICE 12

### Unity and Coherence

- Step 1** Choose one of the topics suggested and write a paragraph that is 10 to 15 sentences in length. Focus on giving your paragraph unity and coherence. Follow the steps in the writing process. (See Appendix A.)
- Step 2** After you have completed your first draft, use Self-Editing Worksheet 2 on page 319. Revise your paragraph and write a second draft if necessary.
- Step 3** Exchange papers with a classmate and check each other's paragraph using Peer-Editing Worksheet 2 on page 320. After your classmate has completed the checklist, discuss it and decide what changes you should make.