

Unity and Coherence in the Composition

WS# 1.9

Unity

Maintaining unity in a paragraph necessitates that every sentence in a paragraph or every paragraph in a composition should be closely related to the topic. A strong paragraph will eliminate sentences that do not relate or help develop the paragraph's main idea. Thus, a unified composition will only have paragraphs that are crucial to developing the thesis. Ask a peer reviewer to read the checklist below and keep it in mind as they listen.

Unity Checklist

1. Does every detail I have selected support the main idea?
2. Have I organized the supporting details in the most logical way?
3. Have I included any sentences that are unnecessary because they simply
Restate the main point without adding any new information or meaning?
4. Have I made the relationships between my ideas clear?

Coherence

Maintaining coherence in a paragraph or composition not only requires unity, but also a logical, smooth, and natural flow from one idea to another. When this occurs, coherence has been established. There are three key ways to create coherence in a paragraph or multi-paragraph text:

(1) Arrange ideas to achieve emphasis

All the parts of the composition are not necessarily of equal importance in explaining your topic to your audience. How you arrange and develop the paragraphs in the body of the composition should, therefore, clearly indicate which ideas and details are most important. Place emphasis in one of these three ways:

- (1) direct statement
- (2) by position – first and last body paragraphs or weakest to strongest idea
- (3) by proportion – a topic may use several paragraphs if it has more value

Maintaining Coherence



(2) Arrange ideas to achieve coherence

Body paragraphs should be well developed and arranged in a logical order. Use a pattern of organization that is appropriate to the composition purpose and the audience.

Various Methods of organizing supporting details and the most common purposes for each are listed below. However, do not feel that you have to limit the organization of your writing to just what is shown here.

- Chronological Order
- Spatial Order
- Order of Importance
- Cause and Effect
- Comparison and Contrast
- Explanation
- Classification

Chronological Order

- ❑ Narrating a story
- ❑ Explaining a step-by-step process
- ❑ Relating a historical account
- ❑ Relating an incident or anecdote

Spatial Order

- ❑ Describing a scene or place

Order of Importance

- ❑ Presenting facts, examples, reasons
- ❑ Writing persuasively
- ❑ Evaluating a subject

Cause and Effect

- ❑ Explaining scientific findings
- ❑ Explaining a historical event

Classification

- ❑ Analyzing literature, a speech, etc.
- ❑ Defining a subject

Maintaining Coherence

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(3) Connect your ideas to achieve coherence

In an effective composition, the current of thought flows smoothly throughout the composition. Use one or more types of transitional words or phrases to connect ideas within and between paragraphs:

- (1) transitional expressions (see below)
- (2) direct pronoun references
- (3) repetition of key words

➤ **Words that can be used to show LOCATION:**

Against	Among	Away from
Beneath	Between	Beyond
In back of	In front of	Onto
Over	Throughout	Under

➤ **Words that can be used to show TIME:**

After	As soon as	At
Before	Finally	First
Immediately	Meanwhile	Second
Then	Third	Tomorrow
Until	When	Yesterday

➤ **Words that can be used to show SIMILARITIES:**

Also	As	Furthermore
Like	Likewise	Similarly

➤ **Words that can be used to show DIFFERENCES:**

Although	But	Even though
However	On the other hand	Yet

➤ **Words that can be used to EMPHASIZE A POINT:**

Again	For this reason	In fact
To emphasize	To repeat	Truly

➤ **Words that can be used to CONCLUDE:**

As a result	Finally	In conclusion
In summary	Therefore	To sum up

➤ **Words that can be used to ADD INFORMATION:**

Additionally	Also	And
Another	Equally important	Finally
In addition	Likewise	Moreover

➤ **Words that can be used to CLARIFY:**

For instance	In other words
That is	To put in another way

