

Cohesion summary

Introduction

Purpose

The effective use of cohesion will improve both the flow and clarity of your academic writing. Writing that lacks cohesion may be disjointed, repetitive, and difficult for readers to follow.

Techniques for better cohesion

Paragraph structure

Cohesive paragraphs are structured to aid the reader follow your point/argument. One method to achieve this in the body of your essay is TEEL/C.

- T topic sentence
- E explain/elaborate
- E evidence/example
- L/C link or conclude

Other types of paragraph, such as summaries, introductions and conclusions, and reflections have their own typical structures.

Parallel sentences

Sentences that are parallel use the same grammatical structure (or the same pattern of words) to express ideas in a list, perform the same function, or are similar in importance.

Old before new information

To help your reader follow the text and establish a clear connection between parts of a paragraph, put old or familiar information at the beginning of your sentence before introducing the new information.

Key word repetition

Repeating a key word aids cohesion and keeps the reader focused on the topic. However, it is possible to repeat key words too often – this can become irritating to the reader. To avoid this, consider repeating a key word every other line, changing the part of speech (e.g. if you have used *communication*, you can replace it with *communicate*), or use a synonym.

This/These + noun

To refer back to a previous idea, use *this/that + noun*. This technique helps link the text together and can use a synonym or summary word instead of repeating the key noun. For example

The population of Broome will reach 43, 000 by 2036. *This increase* will change the town in many ways.

Signposting

Signpost language refers to words which indicate the direction of your text. They may indicate ideas like comparison, sequence, transition, and condition. Overuse of signpost language can be irritating for some readers, so use this strategy with care and balance it with several of the previous strategies.

It is important to note that signposting words use a range of grammar and punctuation. For example:

- *Although the roads are dangerous in floods, many people still travel.*
- *The roads are dangerous in floods; however, many people still travel.*
- *Many people still travel despite the danger of flooded roads.*

Using headings

Headings are used in reports to help organise the text into sections. This makes the text more cohesive. When using headings, consider

- Is a template or specific headings provided?
- How does your plan for the text indicate suitable headings?

When writing headings, consider

- Using short headings
- Using the key word from your thesis or abstract
- Starting with the key word
- Using parallel structures throughout the report
- Expressing the purpose of the section clearly