



Improving Cohesion in Your Text

Here you can learn how to

- **create more cohesion in your text**

General Information

Cohesion is an essential element of a well-written academic text. When a text is cohesive, sentences and paragraphs are connected seamlessly, allowing ideas to flow logically. Cohesion can be achieved using several techniques. This information sheet focuses on three main methods: reference words, repetition of key words, and connecting words. An associated worksheet is also available.

Reference Words: Reference words are usually pronouns and include words such as *this, these, those, they, she* etc. These words can be used to refer back to something mentioned previously in the text.

1. The pronoun *they* clearly refers back to the three glaciers.

2. The reference word *these* with the repeated noun *eruptions* helps the text flow.

1. e.g., Three glaciers meet at the summit. They flow through a deep trench that is more than 2 kilometres below sea level.
2. e.g., Studies show that the number of vulcanian eruptions per year has risen. These eruptions have increased due to the rise in the earth's temperature since the ice age.

The phrase *short-term memory* is repeated. This technique makes it easier for readers to follow –in this case, repetition is more helpful than using a synonym or a pronoun.

Repetition of Key Words: You may have been taught that repetition is bad style and should be avoided. However, in academic writing, repeating key words (especially nouns) and phrases throughout a text is a good way to link ideas and help the reader follow your argument. Using synonyms for keywords or ideas can sometimes confuse the reader and interrupt the flow of your text.

e.g., Short-term memory involves remembering information for a minute or less, Sensory memory is also considered short-term memory.

Connecting Words: Connecting words can be used to develop cohesion in a paragraph and prevent your text from being disjointed or having abrupt jumps between thoughts. Below are some examples of connecting words.





Addition	In addition/Additionally/An additional
Comparison	Similarly/Similar to/In comparison with/Compared to/Compared with
Contrast	However/Nevertheless/Nonetheless/Although/Even though/Though/Despite/In spite of/In contrast/Whereas
Example	For example (e.g.)/for instance/to illustrate/to exemplify/that is (i.e.)/such as
Result	As a result/As a consequence (of)/Consequently/Therefore/Thus/Hence
Sequence	First/Second/Third/Next/Lastly/Finally/Subsequently/The latter and the former
Emphasis	Undoubtedly/Generally/In fact/Particularly/In particular/Clearly/Importantly
Reason	Owing to/Due to/Because (of)/Since/As
Conclusion	In summary/To summarize/In conclusion/To conclude/Overall/ To sum up

Useful Resources

Aliotta, M. 2018. *Mastering Academic Writing in the Sciences*. Baton Rouge, CRC Press.

Swales, J. & Feak C. 2012. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. 3rd ed. Ann Arbor, Michigan Publishing.

<https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/cohesion-and-coherence>

Final Comments/Tips

- The subject should be as close to the beginning of the sentence as possible. This closeness will help readers see how your ideas are connected and make your writing clearer.
- Use consistent verb tenses. Do not shift from one verb tense to another if the time frame for each action or state is the same.
- Indicate to the reader what is coming. Words and phrases that signal up-coming information create a smooth transition from one point to another. These phrases include *the following*, *as follows*, *below*, *next*, *subsequently*.
- Structure your paragraphs. Paragraphs should focus around one main idea. Beginning with a topic sentence will orientate the reader to the paragraph's main focus; See Information Sheet 10: Structuring Paragraphs.

