



MODUL *ESSAY WRITING*
(PBI225)

MODUL SESI 4
THE BODY PARAGRAPHS
UNITY & COHERENCE

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THE BODY PARAGRAPHS

UNITY AND COHERENCE

A. The Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, students are expected to be able to

1. Organise the body paragraphs
2. Build a unity and coherence in the body paragraphs

B. THE BODY PARAGRAPHS

The body paragraphs in an essay are like the supporting sentences in a paragraph. They are the place to develop your topic and prove your points. You should organize body paragraphs according to some sort of **pattern**, such as chronological order or comparison/contrast. Sometimes, depending on your topic, you will need to use **a combination of patterns**.

1. Logical Division of Idea

A basic pattern for essays is **logical division of ideas**. In this pattern, you divide your topic into **subtopics** and then **discuss each subtopic in a separate paragraph**. Logical division is an appropriate pattern for explaining causes, reasons, types, kinds, qualities, methods, advantages, and disadvantages.

There are three keys to organising a logical division essay.

- 1) Divide your topic into subtopics, then discuss each subtopics in a separate paragraph.
- 2) Write a thesis statement that indicates logical division.
- 3) Use transitions between paragraphs to guide your reader from one subtopic to the next.

Thesis statement for logical division of idea

The thesis statement of a logical division essay often indicates **the number of subtopics**, for example,

Inflation has three causes.

The thesis statement may even name the specific subtopics. For example,

Inflation has three causes: excessive government spending, unrestrained consumer borrowing, and an increase in the supply of paper money.

Paired conjunctions (*both . . . and, not only . . . but also*) are an especially effective way to list two subtopics. For example,

Young people in my culture have less freedom than young people in the United States not only in their choice of lifestyle but also in their choice of careers.

A colon (:) is often useful before lists of two, three, or more subtopics in a thesis statement:

Young people in my culture have less freedom than young people in the United States in three areas: where they live, whom they marry, and what their job is.

Notice that subtopics are in parallel form, which means that they have the same grammatical form.

Thesis Statement Pitfalls

A thesis is the most important sentence in your essay, so write it with special thought and care. **Avoid these common problems:**

Problem 1: The thesis is too general

A college education is a good investment. → too general

A college education is a good investment for four reasons. → improved

Problem 2: The thesis makes simple announcement

I am going to write about sports injuries. → Announcement

Avoid sports injuries by taking a few simple precautions. → improved

Problem 3: The thesis states an obvious fact

The Internet is a communication superhighway. → obvious fact
The explosion of the Internet has had both positive and negative consequences. → improved

Transitional Signals for Logical Division of Idea

Transition Words and Phrases	
<p>first, first of all, second, third, etc. next, last, finally also, in addition, moreover, furthermore</p>	<p>First, excessive government spending can lead to inflation.</p> <p>In addition, unrestrained consumer borrowing can cause inflationary tendencies.</p> <p>Finally, an increase in the supply of paper money gives rise to inflation.</p>
Coordinators	
<p>and both . . . and not only . . . but also</p>	<p>Both an increase in the supply of paper money and unrestrained consumer borrowing can cause inflationary tendencies.</p> <p>To lose weight, one must not only exercise regularly but also eat wisely.</p>
Others	
<p>the first cause, reason, factor, etc. the/a second problem, result, advantage, etc. one problem, reason, important factor, etc. another way, reason, disadvantage, etc. an additional problem, result, etc. in addition to math and science, . . .</p>	<p>A second cause is an increase in the supply of paper money.</p> <p>Regular exercise is one way to get fit and lose weight.</p> <p>In addition to government spending, unrestrained consumer borrowing can cause inflationary tendencies.</p>

2. Transition Signal between Paragraphs

Linking paragraphs with transitions helps your reader see how the subtopics are related. Link one paragraph to the next by adding a transition to the topic sentence of the second paragraph. This transition may be a single word, a phrase, or a dependent clause that repeats or summarizes the main idea in the preceding paragraph.

Title	<p style="text-align: center;">Aggressive Drivers</p>
Introductory paragraph	<p>The number of vehicles on freeways and streets is growing at an alarming rate. This increase of motor vehicles is creating hazardous conditions. Moreover, drivers are in such a rush to get to their destinations that many become angry or impatient with other motorists who are too slow or who are in their way. Aggressive drivers react foolishly toward others in several dangerous ways.</p>
Body paragraph 1	<p>One way an angry driver may react is to cut off another motorists. <i>Transition words</i> (+ supporting sentences) ----- ----- -----</p>
Body paragraph 2	<p>Another way is to tailgate the other car. (+supporting sentences) <i>Transition words</i> ----- ----- -----</p>
Body paragraph 3	<p>In addition to cutting off and tailgating other cars, aggressive drivers often use rude language or gestures to show their anger. <i>Transition phrases</i> (+ supporting sentences) ----- ----- -----</p>
Body paragraph 4	<p>Although law enforcement authorities warn motorists against aggressive driving, the number who act out their angry impulses has not declined. (+ supporting sentences) ----- ----- -----</p>
Conclusion	<p>To conclude, aggressive drivers are endangering everyone because they create hazardous conditions by acting and driving foolishly. They should control their anger and learn to drive safely. After all, the lives they save could be their own.</p>

C. UNITY AND COHERENCE

We have already learned that an essay should be organised into an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The next step is to make sure that all three parts of the essay work together to explain your topic clearly.

1. UNITY

Unity in writing is the connection of all ideas to a single topic. In an essay, all ideas should relate to the thesis statement, and the supporting ideas in a main body paragraph should relate to the topic sentence.

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.

One way to keep unity in an essay is to edit the outline for ideas that are not relevant to the thesis statement or topic sentences. Likewise, after you have written the essay, it is helpful to review the text and look for ideas that do not relate to the thesis or the topic sentences.

2. COHERENCE

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.

Coherence is related to unity. Ideas that are arranged in a clear and logical way are coherent. When a text is unified and coherent, the reader can easily understand the main points.

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.

1) Repetition of key nouns

The easiest way to achieve coherence is to repeat key nouns frequently in your paragraph. This will help the reader remember the main ideas in the text. For example,

*Modern **medicine** focuses on illness. If a patient with a cough visits a modern doctor, then the doctor will give the patient a **medicine** to stop the cough. If the patient also has a fever, the doctor may give a different **medicine** to stop the fever. For every person with a cough, the doctor will probably recommend the same cough medicine. The philosophy of modern **medicine** is to stop problems like coughing and fever as quickly as possible.*

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.

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, the writer substituted the noun *give* as a synonym for *recommend*, thereby smoothing the flow of thought from one sentence to the next.

2) Use consistent pronouns

When you use pronouns, make sure that you use the same person and number throughout your paragraph. Do not change from *you* to *he* or *she* (change of person) or from *he* to *they* (change of number).

For 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."

3) Use transition signals to link ideas

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. Look at the following paragraph.

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.

The paragraph above is 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.

4) Arrange your ideas in 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
- *In logical division of ideas*, a topic is divided into parts, and each part is discussed separately.

- In a *comparison/contrast* paragraph, the similarities and/or differences between two or more items are discussed

When organising your ideas, think about what type of organisation is the best for your topic or essay type. Here are some examples of types of writing and good ways to organise them.

Type of writing	Type of organisation
Chronology (historical events, personal narratives, processes)	Order by time or order of events / steps
Description	Order by position, size, and shape of things
Classification	Group ideas and explain them in a logical order
Comparison / contrast	Organise in point-by-point or block style
Argumentation / persuasion and cause /effect	Order from least important to most important

D. REFERENCES

- Zemach, D.E & Rumisek, L.A.(2005). *Academic Writing: from paragraph to essay*. McMillan Publishing
- Oshima, A & Hogue,A. (2006). *Writing Academic English. 4th edition*. Pearson Longman