Cohesion in Academic Writing

ELEMENTS OF GOOD COHESION

cohesion
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REPEATED WORDS/IDEAS

Cohesion can be achieved by repeating words. This can include using different forms of the word, or repeating the same idea using synonyms. E.g.

> ***Cohesion*** *is an important feature of academic* ***writing****. It can help ensure that your* ***writes*** ***coheres*** *or 'sticks together'.*

REFERENCE WORDS

Reference words refer to something mentioned elsewhere (usually earlier) in the text. The most common type is pronouns, such as *it* or *this* or *these*. E.g.

> *Cohesion is an important feature of academic writing.* ***It*** *can help ensure that your writing coheres or 'sticks together'.*

he she it
they them
which
this these
that those



TRANSITION SIGNALS

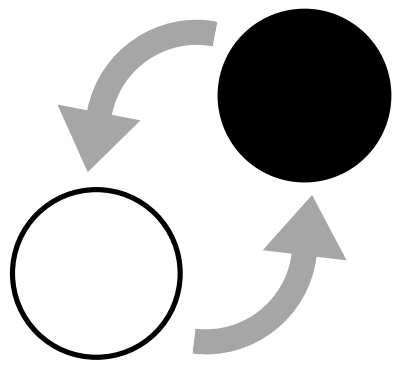
Also called cohesive devices or linking words, transition signals show the relationship between ideas. There are many different types, e.g.

- *for example* – to give examples
- *in contrast* – to show a contrasting idea
- *first* – to give the first item in a list
- *as a result* – to show an effect

SUBSTITUTION

Substitution means using one or more words to replace (substitute) for words used earlier in the text. The most common words for substitution are *one*, *so*, *do*, *have* and *be*. E.g.

> *You can achieve good cohesion by paying attention to five important features. The first of these is repeated words. The second is reference words. The third* ***one*** *is transition signals. The fourth...*



one = important feature



ELLIPSIS

Ellipsis means leaving out one or more words, because the meaning is clear from the context. E.g.

> *You can achieve good cohesion by paying attention to five important features. The first of these is repeated words.* ***The second is*** *reference words. The third one is transition signals. The fourth...*

The second is = The second *important feature* is

SHELL NOUNS

Shell nouns are abstract nouns which summarise the meaning of preceding or succeeding information. Examples are: *aspect*, *factor*, *feature*, *issue*, *method*, *reason*, *tendency* and *trend*. E.g.

> *An increasing number of overseas students are attending university in the UK. This* ***trend*** *has led to increased support networks for overseas students.*



theme + rheme
theme + rheme

THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT

Theme refers to the first element of a sentence. The development of the theme in the rest of the sentence is the *rheme*. It is common for the rheme of one sentence to form the theme of the next (given-to-new structure).

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For more on this topic, see:
https://www.eapfoundation.com/writing/cohesion/

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