



Handout week 10: Unity and Coherence + the Essay

Exercise 1: Coherence and repetition of Key nouns.

A. In the following paragraph, the key noun is never repeated. Replace the pronoun it with the key noun English wherever you think doing so would make the paragraph more coherent.

English

¹English has almost become an international language. ²Except for Chinese, more people speak it than any other language. ³Spanish is the official language of more countries in the world, but more countries have it as their official or unofficial second language. ⁴More than 70 percent of the world's mail is written in it. ⁵It is the primary language on the Internet. ⁶In international business, it is used more than any other language, and it is the language of airline pilots and air traffic controllers all over the world. ⁷Moreover, although French used to be the language of diplomacy, it has displaced it throughout the world. ⁸Therefore, unless you plan to spend your life alone on a desert island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, it is a useful language to know.

B. In the following passage about dolphins replace some of the pronouns with appropriate singular or plural nouns.

Dolphins

¹Dolphins are interesting because they display almost human behavior at times. ²For example, they display the human emotions of joy and sadness. ³During training, when they do something correctly, they squeal excitedly and race toward their trainer. ⁴When they make a mistake, however, they droop¹ noticeably and mope² around their pool. ⁵Furthermore, they help each other when they are in trouble. ⁶If one is sick, it sends out a message, and others in the area swim to help it. ⁷They push it to the surface of the water so that it can breathe. ⁸They stay with it for days or weeks until it recovers or dies. ⁹They have also helped trapped or lost whales navigate their way safely out to the open sea. ¹⁰They are so intelligent and helpful, in fact, that the U.S. Navy is training them to become underwater bomb disposal experts.

Exercise 2. If you do not wish to repeat a key noun again and again, you can use synonyms or expressions with the same meaning.

Step 1. In the topic sentence of the following paragraph, underline the key noun that names the topic

Step 2. Then circle (a) repetitions of the key nouns, (b) pronouns that refer to them, and (c) synonyms that are substitutes for them. You should have a total of 10 circles: 3 circles around key nouns, 3 around pronouns, and 4 around synonyms.

A Mardi Gras Custom

¹“Throw me something, mister,” is the customary plea for a Mardi Gras “throw.” ²In the final days of Mardi Gras, the season of parties, parades, and revelry¹ that precedes the Christian period of fasting and penance² called Lent, crowds of spectators line the streets of New Orleans. ³They hope to catch a Mardi Gras souvenir tossed from parading floats. ⁴Mardi Gras organizations called “krewes” build the floats and sponsor the parades, and while cruising along parade routes, costumed krewe members throw plastic trinkets to the crowds below. ⁵The trinkets, which are called “throws,” consist of bead necklaces, coins, cups, toys, Frisbees, and figurines stamped with the krewe’s symbol or the parade theme. ⁶Mardi Gras throws are big business for the companies that supply them. ⁷Krewe members spend an average of \$800 on them, and some spend \$2,000 or more. ⁸By far the most treasured of the Mardi Gras mementos are gaudy bead necklaces. ⁹Originally made of glass, they are now made of plastic (Roach).³

Exercise 3. Using consistent pronouns. In the following paragraph, the pronouns are not consistent. Correct them to make this paragraph more coherent.

Olympic Athletes

Olympic athletes must be strong both physically and mentally. First of all, if you hope to compete in an Olympic sport, you must be physically strong. Furthermore, aspiring⁴ Olympians must train rigorously⁵ for many years. For the most demanding sports, they train several hours a day, five or six days a week, for ten or more years. In addition to being physically strong, athletes must also be mentally tough. This means that you have to be totally dedicated to your sport, often giving up a normal school, family, and social life. Being mentally strong also means that he or she must be able to withstand the intense pressure of international competition with its accompanying media⁶ coverage. Finally, not everyone can win a medal, so Olympians must possess the inner strength to live with defeat.

Exercise 4. Transition signals. Compare paragraphs 1 and 2 that follow. Which paragraph contains transition signals and is **more coherent**? Circle all the transition signals you can identify.

Paragraph 1

One difference among the world's seas and oceans is that the salinity⁷ varies in different climate zones. The Baltic Sea in northern Europe is only one-fourth as salty as the Red Sea in the Middle East. There are reasons for this. In warm climates, water evaporates⁸ rapidly. The concentration⁹ of salt is greater. The surrounding land is dry and does not contribute much freshwater to dilute¹⁰ the salty seawater. In cold climate zones, water evaporates slowly. The runoff created by melting snow adds a considerable amount of freshwater to dilute the saline seawater.

Paragraph 2

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.

Transition Chart 1. (see full list on separate handout)

Transition Signals

Meaning/ Function	Transition Phrases	Conjunctive Adverbs	Coordinating Conjunctions	Subordinating Conjunctions	Others
To introduce an additional idea	in addition	furthermore moreover besides also too	and		another (+ noun) an additional (+ noun)
To introduce an opposite idea or contrast	on the other hand in contrast	however nevertheless instead still nonetheless	but yet	although though even though whereas while	in spite of (+ noun) despite (+ noun)
To introduce a choice or alternative		otherwise	or	if unless	
To introduce a restatement or explanation	in fact indeed	that is			
To list in order	first, second, third next, last, finally				the first, second, third, etc. the next, last, final
To introduce an example	for example for instance				an example of (+ noun) such as (+ noun)
To introduce a conclusion or summary	clearly in brief in conclusion indeed in short in summary				
To introduce a result	accordingly as a result as a consequence	therefore consequently hence thus	so		

Most words and phrases in the first two columns of the chart can appear at **the beginning, in the middle or at the end** of one independent clause and are usually separated by commas.

Exceptions:

1. The words and phrases in the last four groups in the chart (for listing ideas and time sequences, for emphasizing, for giving reasons and conclusions) usually only appear at the end.
2. *Too* usually appears only at the end of a sentence, sometimes preceded by a comma.
3. The short time words *then, now* and *soon* usually do not need commas.

Exercise 5. Recognizing transition signals.

Step 1. Circle all the transition signals in the following paragraphs.

Step 2. Punctuate the transition signals if necessary (add comma, colon, semi-colons etc.).

Genetic³ Engineering

Genetic research has produced both exciting and frightening possibilities. Scientists are now able to create new forms of life in the laboratory because of the development of gene splicing.⁴ (On the one hand) the ability to create life in the laboratory could greatly benefit humankind. One beneficial application of gene splicing is in agriculture. For example researchers have engineered a more nutritious type of rice that could help alleviate the serious problem of vitamin A deficiency. It is estimated that 124 million children worldwide lack vitamin A, putting them at risk of permanent blindness and other health issues. In addition genetic engineers have created larger fish, frost-resistant strawberries, and cows that produce more milk. Indeed agriculture has already benefited from the promise of genetic engineering.

On the other hand not everyone is positive about gene-splicing technology. Some people feel that it could have terrible consequences. In fact a type of corn engineered to kill a certain insect pest also threatened to annihilate¹ desirable monarch butterflies. In another accident, a genetically engineered type of corn that was approved only for animal consumption because it was toxic to humans accidentally cross-pollinated with corn grown for humans. As a result many countries banned imports of genetically modified corn for several years. Furthermore the ability to clone human beings is a possibility that frightens many people. In 2004, two South Korean scientists reported that they had successfully cloned a human embryo (Dreifus).² The embryo did not develop into a baby however it is possible that one could do so in the future, a possibility that not everyone is comfortable with.

Exercise 6. A. From the choices given in parentheses, choose the transition signal that best shows the relationship between the sentences in each group. Write the signal in the space. Add punctuation and change capital letters to small letters if necessary. The first one has already been done for you as an example.

Note: All the transition signals in this practice are transition phrases and conjunctive adverbs. This is to give you more practice in using and punctuating these types of transition signals correctly.

1. A recent article in *Era* magazine suggested ways to reduce inflation. The article suggested that the president reduce the federal budget _____; **furthermore** _____, it suggested that the government reduce federal, state, and local taxes. **(however, in contrast, furthermore)**
2. The same article said that the causes of inflation were easy to find _____ the cure for inflation was not so easy to prescribe. **(however, for example, therefore)**
3. *Era* also suggested that rising wages were one of the primary causes of inflation _____ the government should take action to control wages. **(however, therefore, for example)**
4. In physics, the weight of an object is the gravitational force³ with which Earth attracts it; _____, if a man weighs 150 pounds, this means that Earth pulls him down with a force of 150 pounds. **(moreover, therefore, for example)**
5. The farther away from Earth a person is, the less the gravitational force of Earth. _____ a man weighs less when he is 50,000 miles from Earth than when he is only 5,000 miles away. **(in conclusion, therefore, however)**
6. A **tsunami** is a tidal wave produced by an earthquake on the ocean floor. The waves are very long and low in open water, but when they get close to land, they encounter friction⁴ because the water is shallow _____ the waves increase in height and can cause considerable damage when they finally reach land. **(on the other hand, as a result, for example)**

Exercise 6.B. Fill in each blank with an appropriate transition signal from the list provided. Use each signal only once. Add punctuation if necessary.

For example, in fact, similarly, also, indeed, third, second, final and most convincing

Time

One stereotype about North Americans says that they are obsessed with⁵ time. It sometimes seems true that for North Americans, time seems as valuable as money. (1) _____ they even say, "Time is money." (2) _____ have you noticed how many verbs can be followed by both time and money? (3) _____ you can *spend time*, *save time*, *lose time*, *find time*, *make time*, *waste time*, and *run out of time*. (4) _____ you can spend, save, lose, find, make, waste, and run out of money. (5) _____ North Americans seem to regard time as a "thing" that one can own. You can *have time*, *buy time*, and *take time*. (One wonders how much it costs and where it is taken.) A (6) _____ piece of evidence that North Americans are obsessed with time is their fanaticism about always being on time. (7) _____ people who are habitually late risk punishment ranging from frowning disapproval to losing their jobs. The (8) _____ proof is that these poor people sometimes take courses in time management! That is really overdoing it, don't you agree?

Exercise 6.C. Improve the coherence of the following paragraph by adding transition in the blank spaces. Use the hints provided in parentheses to help you choose a transition.

Move Over, DVD. Here Comes BD!

First, CDs brought digital sound into our homes. Then DVD technology brought digital sound and video and revolutionized the movie industry. Soon there will be (1) _____ (*additional idea*) revolution: Blu-ray discs (BDs). A Blu-ray disc will have several advantages. (2) _____ (*list in order*) it has an enormous data storage capacity. A single-sided DVD can hold 4.7 gigabytes of information, about the size of an average 2-hour movie. A single-sided BD, (3) _____ (*contrast*), can hold up to 27 gigabytes, enough for 13 hours of standard video. A (4) _____ (*list in order*)

advantage is that a BD can record, store, and play back high-definition video because of its larger capacity. A double-layer BD can store about 50 gigabytes, enough for 4.5 hours of high-definition video. The cost will be about the same. (5) _____ (*additional idea*), a BD has a higher data transfer rate—36 megabits per second—than today's DVDs, which transfer at 10 megabits per second. (6) _____ (*result*) a BD can record 25 gigabytes of data in just over an hour and a half. (7) _____ (*conclusion*) because of their large storage capacity and comparable cost, BDs will probably take over the market when they become widely available.

Exercise 7. Read the following paragraphs and decide which kind of logical order is used in each: comparison/contrast, chronological order, or logical division of ideas. Be able to discuss the reasons for your choice. Circle all the transition signals.

Paragraph 1

The process of machine translation of languages is complex. To translate a document from English into Japanese, for example, the computer first analyzes an English sentence, determining its grammatical structure and identifying the subject, verb, objects, and modifiers. Next, the words are translated by an English-Japanese dictionary. After that, another part of the computer program analyzes the resulting awkward jumble¹ of words and meanings and produces an intelligible sentence based on the rules of Japanese syntax² and the machine's understanding of what the original English sentence meant. Finally, a human bilingual editor polishes the computer-produced translation.

Kind of logical order: _____

Paragraph 2

French and U.S. business managers have decidedly different management styles. French meetings, for example, are long and rambling³ and rarely end on time. Furthermore, meetings often end without closure.⁴ Managers in the United States, on the other hand, make an effort to start and stop a meeting on time, and North American business meetings typically end with decisions and action plans. Another difference involves documentation. North Americans adore documentation; they have a procedure manual for everything. The French, in contrast, think this is childish. French managers find it difficult to stick to a schedule, but U.S. managers are intolerant of delays. In addition, the French prefer to work alone, whereas North Americans like to work in teams. Another major difference in management style is that in French companies, authority comes from the top; French managers do not share information with subordinates and make decisions with little participation by employees beneath them. In U.S. companies, however, top managers share information and frequently solicit⁵ input from subordinates ("How French Managers").⁶

Kind of logical order: _____

Paragraph 3

It took more than 2,500 years to develop the calendar used in most Western countries today. In about 700 B.C.E.,⁷ the ancient Romans used a calendar that had 304 days divided into 10 months; March was the beginning of each year. There were more than 60 days missing from the calendar, so very soon the calendar did not match the seasons at all. Spring arrived when the calendar said that it was still winter. A few decades later, the Romans added the months of January and February to the end of the year. This calendar lasted about 600 years. Then in 46 B.C.E., Julius Caesar, the Roman ruler, made a new calendar. His calendar had 365 days, with one day added every fourth year. He also moved the beginning of the year to January 1, and he renamed a month for himself: Julius (July). In Caesar's calendar, February had 29 days. The very next emperor, Augustus, not only renamed a month for himself (August), but he also took one day from February and added it to August so that "his" month would be just as long as Caesar's. This calendar worked better than the previous ones, but it still was not perfect. By 1580, the first calendrical day of spring was 10 days too early, so in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII, the leader of the Roman Catholic religion, made a small change to make the calendar more accurate. In the Gregorian calendar, the year is still 26.3 seconds different from the solar year, but it will be a long time before this causes a problem.

Kind of logical order: _____