

## Cohesion and Coherence

**Exercise 1) Read the following text. Is there any problem with the text? Do not focus on individual words/phrases, but on the paragraph as a whole.**

Dogs are not only faithful; they are also *useful*. In fact, domesticated dogs have worked for their human masters for thousands of years. They have been used to hunt; they have been used to round up and guard livestock; they have even been used as pack animals, particularly in colder climates. Nowadays, they have a range of other, more sophisticated uses: to guide the blind, for example, and to locate drugs and explosives. They are a common sight at airports, through which most illegal drugs are smuggled into western countries. Last year, over twelve tons of heroin was seized at Heathrow airport, alone – an increase of 20% compared to the year before. It is unclear, however, whether this signifies success in the war against drugs, or whether criminal gangs are attempting to smuggle larger and larger amounts.

Paragraph = a group of related sentences which is set apart from the rest of the text. Paragraphs allow the reader to take a break from long sections of texts, indicate changes in the development of your argument, and help organize and clarify your ideas.

Generally, a paragraph is started by a topic sentence.

The uses of a paragraph:

- introduce and expand a claim which supports the central idea of your text
- change focus – from positives to negatives, from introducing a problem to its solution, etc.
- suggest movement in a sequence – from the first step to the second, ...
- highlight an important detail or point

## Cohesion vs. Coherence

- Cohesion – the words in the text flow well from one sentence to another
- Coherence – the sentences make sense as a unified paragraph

## Cohesion

- the “Old before new” rule; generally speaking, the words at the end of a sentence should be related to the words of the following sentence. Look at the following excerpt:  
*In order to reduce latency in accessing data, computer architects started designing caches in the 1960s. Because such memory is relatively expensive, caches are much smaller than main memory.*
- The excerpt is missing a sentence (or more) which would start with “cache” and end with “memory”. The following sentence is in active voice, but is not very cohesive:  
*In order to reduce latency in accessing data, computer architects started designing caches in the 1960s. **Fast, associative memory forms caches.** Because such memory is relatively expensive, caches are much smaller than main memory.*
- In contrast, the following sentence is in passive voice and **is** cohesive:

*In order to reduce latency in accessing data, computer architects started designing caches in the 1960s. A cache is typically made from a fast, associative memory. Because such memory is relatively expensive, caches are much smaller than main memory.*

- If we wanted to preserve the active voice in the inserted sentence, we could write the following:

*In order to reduce latency in accessing data, computer architects started designing caches in the 1960s. A cache typically comprises a fast, associative memory. Because such memory is relatively expensive, caches are much smaller than main memory.*

## Coherence

### Exercise 2) Look at the following paragraph. What is wrong with it?

In order to reduce latency in accessing data, computer architects started designing caches in the 1960s. The 1960s saw many cultural changes, and one of the focal points was San Francisco. In 1906, that beautiful city was ravaged by an earthquake. Seismic events occur all along the Pacific Rim. Indeed, the Pacific Rim has seen quite a diaspora, resulting in many fusion cuisines. Such cross-cultural cooking often appears on the television program Iron Chef.

The text above is a great example of the difference between cohesion and coherence. While any two sentences are cohesive, the paragraph as a whole is entirely incoherent. Note the importance of the topic sentence!

### Exercise 3) Revise the following passage to improve the flow of information by putting the new information (in bold) last in each sentence.

Two aims—the recovery of the American economy and the modernization of America into a military power—were in the president’s mind when he assumed his office. The drop in unemployment figures and inflation, and the increase in the GNP testifies to his success in the first. But our increased involvement in international conflict without any clear set of political goals indicates less success with the second. Nevertheless, increases in the military budget and a good deal of saber rattling pleased the American voter.

### Exercise 4) Develop the following topic sentence into a well-developed paragraph by using the relevant information from the “supporting information” section. Remove any piece of information you believe does not develop the topic sentence. Rewrite the text as you feel fit.

Topic sentence: Mozart’s accomplishments in music seem remarkable even today.

Supporting information:

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in 1756 in Salzburg, Austria.  
 He began composing music at the age of five.  
 He lived most of his life in Salzburg and Vienna.  
 His first concert tour of Europe was at the age of six.  
 On his first tour he played harpsichord, organ, and violin.  
 He published numerous compositions before reaching adolescence.  
 He married in 1782.  
 Mozart and his wife were both poor managers of money.  
 They were plagued by debts.  
 Mozart composed over six hundred musical compositions.  
 His most notable works are his operas, symphonies, quartets, and piano concertos.  
 He died at the age of thirty-five.

### **LIX index**

<http://www.lix.se/index.php>

- a measure of how hard a text is to read.
- defined as the percentage of words longer than six letters plus the average number of words per sentence.

Enter the text in the box and analyze it.

- LIX < 20: Very easy reading
- LIX < 30 - 40: Popular reading
- LIX < 40 - 50: Normal for newspapers
- LIX < 50 - 60: Normal for academic texts
- LIX < 60 and higher: Heavy to read, should be revised

#### *The End of Doggerland*

Ancient Britain was a large peninsula until a large tsunami flooded its land-links to Europe some 8000 years ago, this was when a large landslide off Norway – the Storegga Slide – triggered one of the largest tsunamis ever recorded on Earth and a large landlocked sea in the Norwegian trench burst its banks.

➔ LIX readability score of 80 (60 and more = very heavy language)

Ancient Britain was an extensive peninsula until a megatsunami flooded its land-links to Europe some 8000 years ago. This was when a substantial landslide off Norway – the Storegga Slide – triggered one of the greatest tsunamis ever recorded on Earth. As a result, a vast landlocked sea in the Norwegian trench burst its banks.

➔ LIX readability score of 46 (Average difficulty, normal for journals)

Ancient Britain was an **extensive** peninsula until a **megatsunami** flooded its land-links to Europe some 8000 years ago. This was when a **substantial** landslide off Norway – the Storegga Slide – triggered one of the **greatest** tsunamis ever recorded on Earth. **As a result**, a **vast** landlocked sea in the Norwegian trench burst its banks.

*See how many sentences begin with “the”:*

**The** last 20 years has seen overall growth. **The** international business community was shaken by the financial crisis in 2008. **The** banking sector was in trouble. **The** calls for better regulation resulted in...

→ LIX readability score is 36 (popularized text, easy reading)

**Although** the last 20 years has seen overall growth, **the** international business community was shaken by the financial crisis in 2008. **In particular**, the banking sector was in trouble **and consequently** the calls for better regulation resulted in...

→ LIX readability score is 51 (normal for official texts)

**Exercise 5) Look at the following two texts. What are they trying to say? Suggest revision.**

- a) Hereby I declare that this paper is my original authorial work, which I have worked out on my own. All sources, references, and literature used or excerpted during elaboration of this work are properly cited and listed in complete reference to the due source.
- b) I hereby declare that this thesis with title **Title of the Thesis** I submit for assessment is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my.