



Academic Writing in Practice

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Coherence

Coherence • Why?

- **The most convincing ideas in the world, expressed in the most beautiful sentences, will not form a readily understandable text unless those ideas are properly connected.**

Coherence • Why?

- What do you want your text to achieve?
 - Your text cannot achieve anything if it is not accessible to the reader
 - Do not assume your readers know everything you know
 - Unless you provide your reader with a certain amount of guidance, they may lose track of your reasoning

Coherence • What?

- Coherence is the property of unity in a written text that stems from the links among its underlying ideas and from the logical organization and development of its thematic content.

Coherence • What?

- Coherence is the result of tying information in your writing together so that **connections you have made in your own mind are apparent to the reader.**



YOU

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

your (potentially) coherent text

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

READER



Post a sign!





YOU

This way!

TEXT

This way!

TEXT

This way!

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

TEXT

This way!

This way!

TEXT

your (potentially) coherent text

TEXT

This way!

This way!

TEXT

This way!

This way!

TEXT

TEXT

This way!

TEXT

TEXT

This way!

TEXT

READER

Coherence • What?



- A well-written text is like honey.
 - > It flows.
 - > It sticks together.

Coherence • What?

- A well-written text is like a chain.
 - Each component links to the next.
 - Your text is only as strong as its weakest link.



**The harder it is to write,
the easier it is to read –
and vice-versa.**

Coherence • How?

- How can **you** guide **your** reader through **your** text?
 1. Ordering ideas in logical and expected ways
 2. Using transitional expressions to interconnect ideas
 3. Using parallel forms
 4. Repeating key words and phrases as needed
 5. Focusing on information flow

Exercise No. 1a

Coherence › Order of Ideas



Paragraph Coherence › Order of Ideas

- › The Egyptians were experts at preserving dead bodies by making mummies of them. Mummies several thousand years old have been discovered nearly intact. The skin, hair, teeth, finger- and toe-nails, and facial features of the mummies were evident. It is possible to diagnose the diseases they suffered in life, such as smallpox and arthritis. The process was remarkably effective. Sometimes apparent were fatal injuries: a middle-aged king died from a blow on the head, for example. Mummification consisted of removing the internal organs, applying natural preservatives inside and out, and then wrapping the bodies in layers of bandages.



Paragraph Coherence > Order of Ideas

1. The Egyptians were experts at preserving dead bodies by making mummies of them.
2. Mummies several thousand years old have been discovered nearly intact.
3. The skin, hair, teeth, finger- and toe-nails, and facial features of the mummies were evident.
4. It is possible to diagnose the diseases they suffered in life, such as smallpox and arthritis.
5. The process was remarkably effective.
6. Sometimes apparent were fatal injuries: a middle-aged king died from a blow on the head, for example.
7. Mummification consisted of removing the internal organs, applying natural preservatives inside and out, and then wrapping the bodies in layers of bandages.



Paragraph Coherence › Order of Ideas

1. The Egyptians were experts at preserving dead bodies by making mummies of them.
7. Mummification consisted of removing the internal organs, applying natural preservatives inside and out, and then wrapping the bodies in layers of bandages.
5. The process was remarkably effective.
2. Mummies several thousand years old have been discovered nearly intact.
3. The skin, hair, teeth, finger- and toe-nails, and facial features of the mummies were evident.
4. It is possible to diagnose the diseases they suffered in life, such as smallpox and arthritis.
6. Sometimes apparent were fatal injuries: a middle-aged king died from a blow on the head, for example.

Exercise No. 1b

Coherence › Order of Ideas



Coherence ➤ Order of Ideas

- Each of these factors plays its part in influencing national-level environmental decisions and personal-level environmental values and behaviors. Protection of the environment is needed due to various human activities. Environmental protection is influenced by three interwoven factors: environmental legislation, ethics and education. For environmental protection to become a reality, it is important for societies to develop each of these areas that, together, will inform and drive environmental decisions. Waste production, air pollution, and loss of biodiversity (resulting from the introduction of invasive species and species extinction) are some of the issues related to environmental protection.



Coherence › Order of Ideas

1. Each of these factors plays its part in influencing national-level environmental decisions and personal-level environmental values and behaviors.
2. Protection of the environment is needed due to various human activities.
3. Environmental protection is influenced by three interwoven factors: environmental legislation, ethics and education.
4. For environmental protection to become a reality, it is important for societies to develop each of these areas that, together, will inform and drive environmental decisions.
5. Waste production, air pollution, and loss of biodiversity (resulting from the introduction of invasive species and species extinction) are some of the issues related to environmental protection.



Coherence > Order of Ideas

2. Protection of the environment is needed due to various human activities.
5. Waste production, air pollution, and loss of biodiversity (resulting from the introduction of invasive species and species extinction) are some of the issues related to environmental protection.
3. Environmental protection is influenced by three interwoven factors: environmental legislation, ethics and education.
1. Each of these factors plays its part in influencing national-level environmental decisions and personal-level environmental values and behaviors.
4. For environmental protection to become a reality, it is important for societies to develop each of these areas that, together, will inform and drive environmental decisions.

Exercise No. 1c

Coherence › Order of Ideas



Coherence > Order of Ideas

> Click!

Coherence • How?

- How can **you** guide **your** reader through **your** text?
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Basic relationships between ideas

- Addition
- Cause & effect
- Comparison
- Concession
- Contrast
- Emphasis
- Example
- Exception
- Summary
- Time sequence

Exercise No. 2a

Coherence › Transitions

Coherence > Transitions

- _____ using transitional expressions may seem like the single best way to produce a coherent text, it is _____ only one of the many strategies _____ employed by good writers. _____ using transitions, good writers _____ focus on the order their ideas are presented in. _____, the correct usage of parallel forms is a vital component _____. _____, if you wish to produce a great text, you must be able to tackle a variety of issues at the same time and, _____, be able to keep an open mind, _____ you will always run into unexpected problems – _____ you plan ahead!

Coherence > Transitions

- **Although** using transitional expressions may seem like the single best way to produce a coherent text, it is **in fact** only one of the many strategies **generally** employed by good writers. **In addition to** using transitions, good writers **also** focus on the order their ideas are presented in. **Furthermore**, the correct usage of parallel forms is a vital component **too**. **In short**, if you wish to produce a great text, you must be able to tackle a variety of issues at the same time and, **above all**, be able to keep an open mind, **because** you will always run into unexpected problems – **even if** you plan ahead!

Exercise No. 2b

Coherence › Transitions

Paragraph Coherence > Transitions

Medical science has succeeded in identifying the hundreds of viruses that can cause the common cold. It has _____ discovered the most effective means of prevention. One person transmits cold viruses to another most often by hand. _____, an infected person covers his mouth to cough. _____ he picks up the telephone. _____, his daughter picks up the _____ telephone. _____, she rubs her eyes. _____, she, _____, has a cold. _____ it spreads. To avoid colds, _____, people should wash their hands often and keep their hands away from their faces.

Paragraph Coherence > Transitions

Medical science has succeeded in identifying the hundreds of viruses that can cause the common cold. It has **also** discovered the most effective means of prevention. One person transmits cold viruses to another most often by hand. **For instance**, an infected person covers his mouth to cough. **Then** he picks up the telephone. **Subsequently**, his daughter picks up the **same** telephone. **Afterwards**, she rubs her eyes. **Within a few days**, she, **too**, has a cold. **Thus** it spreads. To avoid colds, **therefore**, people should wash their hands often and keep their hands away from their faces.

Exercise No. 2c

Coherence › Transitions

Paragraph Coherence > Transitions

Shopping at K-Mart enriches my vocabulary. _____ I don't like spending money, I like shopping _____ it gives me a chance to practice my English. K-Mart is the best place to practice. _____ it is a large store, there are many customer assistants who speak English fluently. I look for many items in the store, _____ in each area I find a different customer assistant who is eager to help me practice English. _____, I am careful to read the section names of the various parts of the store, _____ I read the information on the packages of the items that I want to buy; _____, every time I shop at K-Mart, I leave the store with some new words that increase my English vocabulary.

Paragraph Coherence > Transitions

Shopping at K-Mart enriches my vocabulary. **Although (even though)** I don't like spending money, I like shopping **because (since, as)** it gives me a chance to practice my English. K-Mart is the best place to practice. **Since (because, as)** it is a large store, there are many customer assistants who speak English fluently. I look for many items in the store, **and (so)** in each area I find a different customer assistant who is eager to help me practice English. **Also (in addition, furthermore, moreover)**, I am careful to read the section names of the various parts of the store, **so (and)** I read the information on the packages of the items that I want to buy; **in fact (indeed, as a matter of fact, as a result)**, every time I shop at K-Mart, I leave the store with some new words that increase my English vocabulary.

Coherence • How?

- How can **you** guide **your** reader through **your** text?
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Exercise No. 3a

Coherence › Parallel Structures

Coherence › Parallel Forms I

- › Mary likes hiking, swimming, and to ride a bike.
- › Mary likes hiking, swimming, and biking.

- › In English class, Paul learned to read poems critically and he appreciated good prose.
- › In English class, Paul learned to read poems critically and to appreciate good prose.

- › Raoul's motivation to succeed in this program seems to be greater than his sister's.
- › Raoul's motivation to succeed in this program seems to be greater than his sister.

Coherence > Parallel Forms II

- He was a poor student because he waited until the last minute to study for the exam, completed his lab problems in a careless manner, and his motivation was low.
- He was a poor student because he waited until the last minute to study for the exam, completed his lab problems in a careless manner, and lacked motivation.
- The dictionary is useful for these purposes: to find word meanings, pronunciations, correct spellings, and irregular verbs.
- The dictionary is useful for these purposes: to find word meanings, pronunciations, correct spellings, and looking up irregular verbs.
- The dictionary is useful for these purposes: to find word meanings, to find pronunciations, to find correct spellings, and to find irregular verbs.

Exercise No. 3b

Coherence › Parallel Structures

Coherence › Parallel Forms

- › Smith worked at the English Department and wanted to become the Head. This was because he wanted more money. Status was also something he desired. Another strong motivation was that he didn't want to teach so many hours. But he never got the job because of his terrible English. The fact that the Dean didn't like him was another reason. So he stayed at the English Department as an ordinary teacher and spent most of his time teaching Pragmatics. He also liked to surf the Internet for hours.

Coherence ➤ Parallel Forms

- Smith worked at the English Department and wanted to become the Head.
- This was because he wanted more money.
- Status was also something he desired.
- Another strong motivation was that he didn't want to teach so many hours.
- But he never got the job because of his terrible English.
- The fact that the Dean didn't like him was another reason.
- So he stayed at the English Department as an ordinary teacher and spent most of his time teaching Pragmatics.
- He also liked to surf the Internet for hours.

Coherence > Parallel Forms

- It is not terrible but it could be improved by using parallel structures in three different places:
 - > to express why Smith wanted to become the Head
 - > to explain why he didn't get the job
 - > to describe his activities as an ordinary teacher

Coherence ➤ Parallel Forms

- Smith worked at the English Department and wanted to become the Head.
- This was because he wanted more money.
- Status was also something he desired.
- Another strong motivation was that he didn't want to teach so many hours.
- But he never got the job because of his terrible English.
- The fact that the Dean didn't like him was another reason.
- So he stayed at the English Department as an ordinary teacher and spent most of his time teaching Pragmatics.
- He also liked to surf the Internet for hours.

Coherence > Parallel Forms

Smith, an ordinary teacher at the English Department, wanted to become the Head because _____

_____. However, he never got the job because (of) _____

_____. Therefore, he stayed at the Department as an ordinary teacher, spending _____

_____.

Coherence • How?

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Theme and Rheme

- In order for a paragraph to be easy to read, the information in it must flow easily from one sentence to the next.
- The terms **theme** and **rheme** refer to how information is distributed in a sentence. If information is carefully distributed, it enhances the coherence of a text.
- Theme = known information
- Rheme = new information

Theme and Rheme

1. I live in Prague. Prague is the largest city in the Czech Republic.
2. I live in Prague. The largest city in the Czech Republic is Prague.

Theme and Rheme

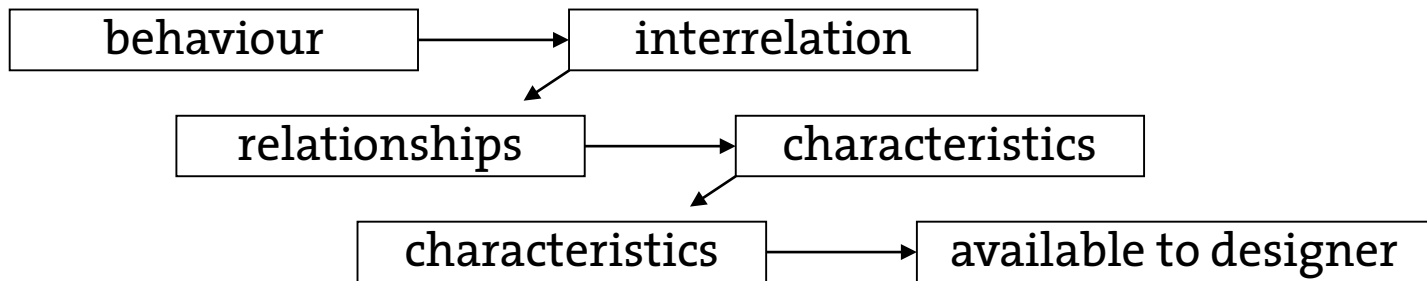
1. In the past 60 years, as many as 65 different classification systems have been developed to define the dimensions of leadership. The scheme proposed by Bass (1990, pp. 11-20) is one such classification system.
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Theme and Rheme

Darwin's *The Origin of Species* published in 1859 was hugely influential in the field of science and in society in general. Indeed it has often been referred to as the 'book that shook the world'. The book outlined how there could be a relatively gradual change in the characteristics of successive generations of a species and that higher plants and animals evolved slowly over time from lower beings. This evolution occurred as a result of competition within local interacting communities. Darwin's book helped throw the idea that there was a complete difference between humans and the animal world into turmoil as he reinforced the suggestion that humans evolved from lower beings. Prior to this it was believed in the western world, based on biblical works, that humans were created superior to other beings.

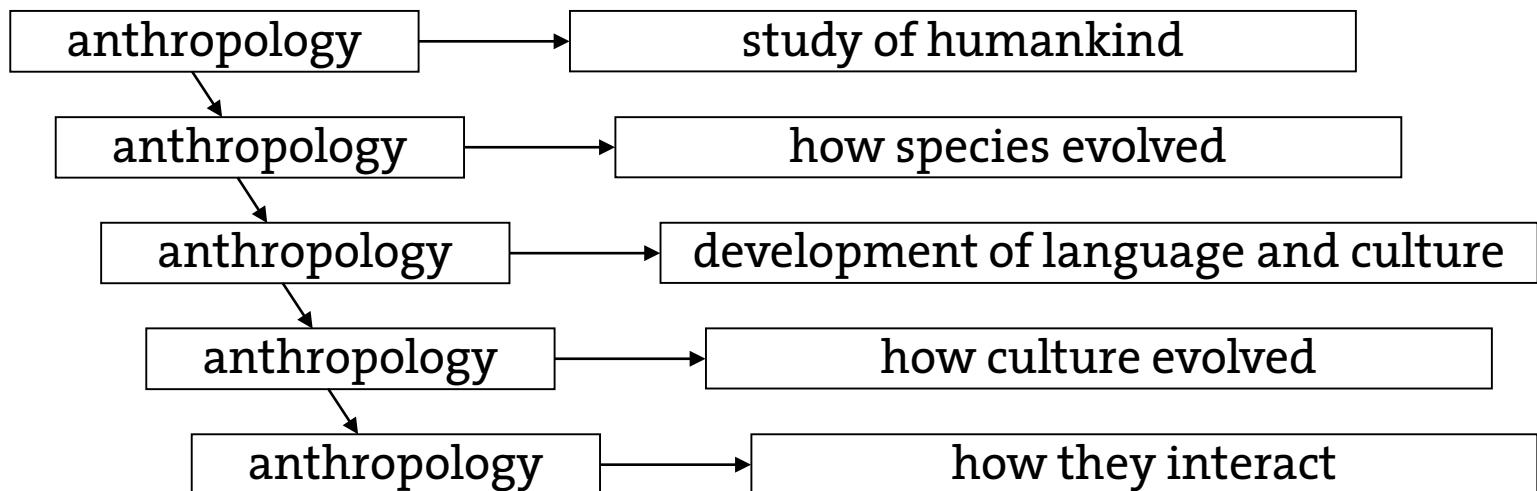
Theme and Rheme > 1

- The complete electrical behaviour of any valve or transistor can be described by stating the interrelation of the currents and the voltages between all the electrodes. These relationships can conveniently be displayed graphically, and the various curves are known as the 'characteristics' of the device. In principle, all the characteristics should be available to the designer proposing to use the device in a circuit.



Theme and Rheme > 2

- › **Anthropology** is the study of humankind, especially of *Homo sapiens*, the biological species to which we human beings belong. **It** is the study of how our species evolved from more primitive organisms; **it** is also the study of how our species developed a mode of communication known as language and a mode of social life known as culture. **It** is the study of how culture evolved and diversified. And finally, **it** is the study of how culture, people, and nature interact wherever human beings are found.



Exercise No. 4a

Coherence › Theme & Rheme

Coherence > Theme and Rheme

- Every substance contains a certain amount of heat, even a relatively cold substance such as ice. The substance's molecules are in continual motion and, by this motion, possess kinetic energy which produces heat. The average kinetic energy of the molecules are measured by temperature. Cooling to the point at which molecular movement ceases completely should thus be possible. Scientists are very interested in this point, absolute zero, but it is in practice unattainable. At temperatures close to absolute zero some materials exhibit remarkable properties, such as superconductivity and superfluidity.

Coherence > Theme and Rheme

- Every substance contains a certain amount of heat, even a relatively cold substance such as ice.
- The substance's molecules are in continual motion and, by this motion, possess kinetic energy which produces heat.
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- Cooling to the point at which molecular movement ceases completely should thus be possible.
- Scientists are very interested in this point, absolute zero, but it is in practice unattainable.
- At temperatures close to absolute zero some materials exhibit remarkable properties, such as superconductivity and superfluidity.

Coherence > Theme and Rheme

- Every substance contains a certain amount of heat, even a relatively cold substance such as ice.
- The heat is the result of the continual motion of the substance's molecules which, by that motion, possess kinetic energy.
- Temperature is a measurement of the average kinetic energy of the molecules.
- The cooler a substance becomes the less its molecules move.
- Thus it should be possible to continue cooling to the point at which molecular movement ceases completely.
- This point, absolute zero, is of great interest to scientists but in practice is unattainable.
- At temperatures close to absolute zero some materials exhibit remarkable properties, such as superconductivity and superfluidity.

Coherence › Theme and Rheme

- › Every substance contains a certain amount of heat, even a relatively cold substance such as ice. The heat is the result of the continual motion of the substance's molecules which, by that motion, possess kinetic energy. Temperature is a measurement of the average kinetic energy of the molecules. The cooler a substance becomes the less its molecules move. Thus it should be possible to continue cooling to the point at which molecular movement ceases completely. This point, absolute zero, is of great interest to scientists but in practice is unattainable. **At temperatures close to absolute zero some materials exhibit remarkable properties, such as superconductivity and superfluidity.**

Coherence › Theme and Rheme

- › The most striking example of value rigidity I can think of is the old south Indian Monkey Trap, which depends on value rigidity for its effectiveness. A hollowed-out coconut chained to a stake makes the trap. A monkey can put its hand through a small hole in the coconut and grab some rice inside. The monkey can put its hand into the hole but cannot take its fist out with rice in it. The monkey's value rigidity traps it when it reaches in. The rice cannot be revalued. He cannot see that freedom without rice is more valuable than capture with it.
- › Robert Pirsig: *Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance*

Coherence > Theme and Rheme

- The most striking example of value rigidity I can think of is the old south Indian Monkey Trap, which depends on value rigidity for its effectiveness.
 1. A hollowed-out coconut chained to a stake makes the trap.
 2. A monkey can put its hand through a small hole in the coconut and grab some rice inside.
 3. The monkey can put its hand into the hole but cannot take its fist out with rice in it.
 4. The monkey's value rigidity traps it when it reaches in.
 5. The rice cannot be revalued.
- He cannot see that freedom without rice is more valuable than capture with it.

Coherence > Theme and Rheme

- The most striking example of value rigidity I can think of is the old south Indian Monkey Trap, which depends on value rigidity for its effectiveness.
 1. A hollowed-out coconut chained to a stake makes the trap. ➤ The trap consists of a hollowed-out coconut chained to a stake.
 2. A monkey can put its hand through a small hole in the coconut and grab some rice inside. ➤ The coconut has some rice inside which can be grabbed through a small hole.
 3. The monkey can put its hand into the hole but cannot take its fist out with rice in it. ➤ The hole is big enough so that the monkey's hand can go in, but too small for his fist with rice in it to come out.
 4. The monkey's value rigidity traps it when it reaches in. ➤ The monkey reaches in and is suddenly trapped - by nothing more than his own value rigidity.
 5. The rice cannot be revalued. ➤ He can't revalue the rice.
- He cannot see that freedom without rice is more valuable than capture with it.

Coherence > Theme and Rheme

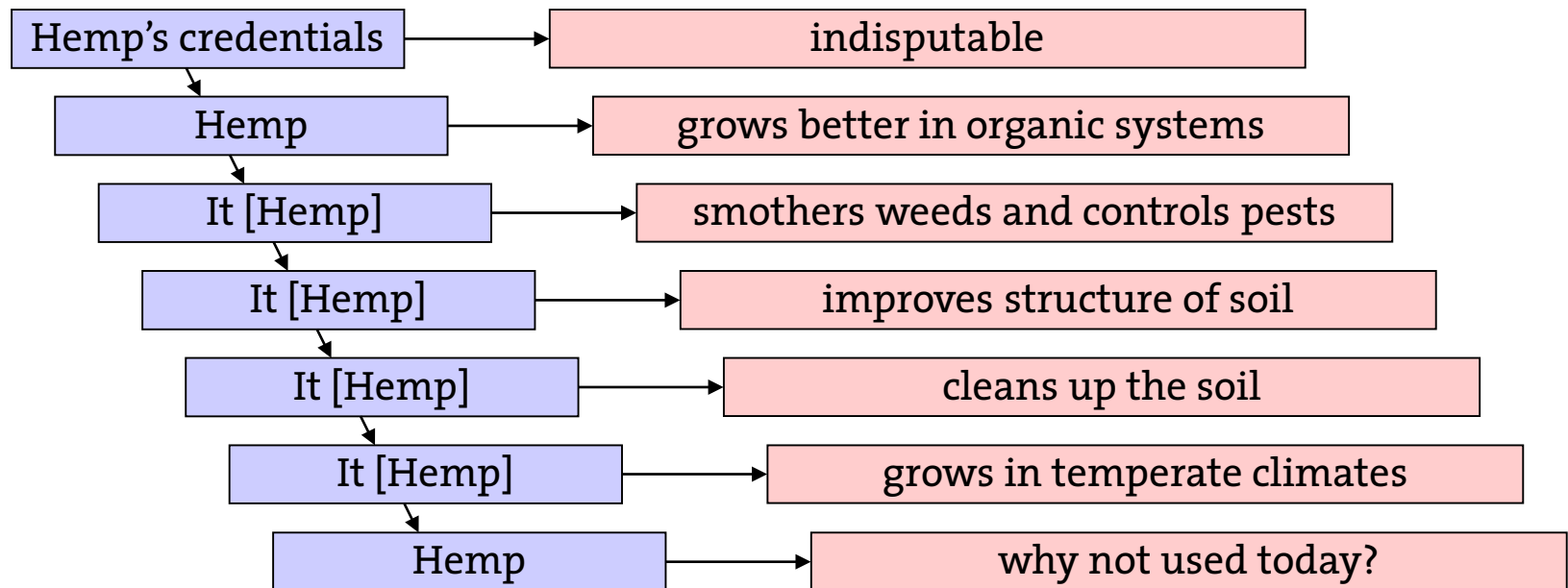
- ▶ The most striking example of value rigidity I can think of is the old south Indian Monkey Trap, which depends on value rigidity for its effectiveness.
 1. The trap consists of a hollowed-out coconut chained to a stake.
 2. The coconut has some rice inside which can be grabbed through a small hole.
 3. The hole is big enough so that the monkey's hand can go in, but too small for his fist with rice in it to come out.
 4. The monkey reaches in and is suddenly trapped - by nothing more than his own value rigidity.
 5. He can't revalue the rice.
- ▶ He cannot see that freedom without rice is more valuable than capture with it.
- ▶ (Robert Pirsig: *Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance*)

Exercise No. 4b

Coherence › Theme & Rheme

Coherence > Theme and Rheme

- Hemp's environmental credentials are indisputable. Hemp grows better in organic systems than in conventional ones. It smothers weeds and controls pests, clearing the land for other crops. It improves the structure of the soil, with strong roots to prevent erosion. If processed in the field, it returns nutrients to the land and purports to 'clean up' soil contaminated with heavy metals. In fact, it is one of a minority of textile-fibre crops that can be grown in temperate climates. So why, given its potential, is so little hemp used today?



Coherence > Theme and Rheme

- The inventor of the diode valve was Fleming. He made use of the fact, first noticed by Edison, that an electric current could be made to flow across the empty space between the hot filament of an electric lamp and another metal electrode placed inside the evacuated bulb. This effect depends upon the thermionic emission of electrons from the heated metal filament.

