



## Four *Flowing* Ideas: Paragraph Cohesion

### Idea #1: Consider the Known-New Contract

It's often easier to follow a string of sentences if the information we already know in a given sentence comes *before* the new information in the sentence.

### Idea #2: Repetition Isn't Always Bad

You can keep reminding your reader what your paragraph is focusing on by using pronouns (like *he, she, we, it, him, her, this, that, these, those*) to refer back to people, things, or ideas in the preceding sentence OR by purposefully repeating words or phrases from previous sentences.

### Idea #3: Meta-Words Carry Readers Along

It can be useful to include words that signal how you are developing your paragraph. Metadiscourse or transition words can signal the relationship of ideas or your attitude towards those ideas: *It seems that..., As you can see..., However..., Thus..., For example... etc.*

### Idea #4: Use a Topic String

Sometimes you'll be faced with a paragraph that uses techniques of cohesion, but still doesn't seem to come to a point. One way to address this may be to consider what *topic* is in the *subject position* of each sentence. When the topics in the subject positions of consecutive sentences are directly related to each other (often developing from less specific to more), the paragraph will feel more coherent.

*Ideas from Style by Joseph M. Williams*

## Problem Paragraphs

1. Public and private literacy programs combined have helped only about four million American adults. The special problems literacy programs have to overcome are linked to these results. Irregular class attendance is one such problem. If an adult has small children or must hold down two jobs, class attendance becomes difficult. On the large scale, though, a problem of policy focus exists. Should the suggested source of illiteracy—elementary and secondary education—be the focus of public policy? Or should teaching the present illiterate population to become literate be what public policy gears itself toward?
2. The Hart Queen is one of the best skis for beginning and intermediate skiers. A thin layer of tempered ash from the hardwood forests of Kentucky makes up its inner core. Two innovations for strength and flexibility are built into its outer construction. Two sheets of ten-gauge steel reinforce a layer of ash for increased strength. A wrapping of fiberglass surrounds two steel sheets for increased flexibility. Most conventional bindings can be used with the Queen. The Salomon Double is the best binding, however.

## Transitions

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Choose one of the transition words from the following list to complete each sentence below. Be certain that the word you choose makes sense in the context of the sentence.

Do not use the same word more than twice, and do not change the punctuation.

Consequently	therefore	furthermore	since
in fact	however	eventually	though
nevertheless	above all	for example	finally

**Example:** Since the snake was creeping towards us, we grabbed a pointed stick.

1. Sleep is necessary to good mental health; \_\_\_\_\_, too much sleep can sometimes lead to depression.
2. Someone who plays the piano, \_\_\_\_\_, can add a lot to a party.
3. If you're planning to become a social worker, \_\_\_\_\_, it's very important to get a master's degree.
4. \_\_\_\_\_, jasmine oil can also be used as an aid for relaxation.
5. I threatened to call the police. \_\_\_\_\_, the man gave me back my wallet.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ do not fail to sign your tax return or it will be promptly returned to you.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ UPS will not deliver to a post office box, I will mail the package parcel post.
8. Mrs. Lacy avoids the sun completely; \_\_\_\_\_, she carries a parasol whenever she goes out.
9. \_\_\_\_\_, France raised \$400,000 in order to build the Statue of Liberty as a gift to America.
10. Hard work usually pays off. \_\_\_\_\_, Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak created the Apple computer in their garage.