

THE WRITING PROCESS

Cohesion

Cohesion, literally “sticking together,” is essential to good, clear expository writing. It helps a reader follow your argument and see the relationships you want them to understand. Cohesion makes writing flow by creating and reinforcing connections on the sentence level and the paragraph level. Cohesion in writing is achieved in a variety of ways, mainly by using words, phrases, and ideas that act as connectors or point back to earlier words/phrases/ideas. The most basic cohesive devices are **reference words**, **transitions**, and **repetition**.

REFERENCE WORDS: point to a specific thing or to a location in space or time.

- **definite and indefinite articles:** the, a, an
- **personal pronouns:** we, us, you, he, she, it, him, her, his, they, them
- **demonstrative pronouns:** this, that, these, those, none, neither
- **place and time markers:** now, later, here, there, yesterday

TRANSITIONS: connect sentences, showing relationships between ideas or clarifying the progression of an argument. Transitional devices include comparison, contrast, emphasis, example/illustration, summary, and time sequence.

- **adverbs:** however, moreover, additionally, therefore, furthermore
- **phrases:** as a result, on the other hand, from my point of view
- **clauses:** since I was a child, when disaster strikes, if all this is true
- **logical markers:** first, second, next, finally
- **modifying phrases:** having given this some thought, taking everything into consideration

REPETITION: emphasizes and maintains prominence of key words, phrases, or ideas. Effective use of repetition incorporates:

- **variations of the word:** work, worker, working
- **nouns/pronouns:** position/it, students/they
- **synonyms:** inform, explain, clarify

In the passage below, the cohesive devices have been underlined and defined. Notice how much repetition and reference there is in even a relatively short piece of writing.

Early Political Parties

Many differences existed between the two earliest political parties in the United
States, the Federalist Party and the Republican Party. For one thing, the Federalists
favored a loose interpretation of the Constitution. Although the Constitution does not
specifically mention a bank, for instance, the Federalists argued that the power to
establish one is implied. The Republicans, on the other hand, believed in a strict
interpretation of the Constitution; they felt that only in extreme circumstances would it
be acceptable to assume the power for establishing a bank. A second, and perhaps more
significant, difference between the two parties involved their attitudes toward the
structure of the government itself. The Federalists believed in a strong central
government geared to serving the interests of the few. Conversely, the Republicans
supported the concept of a weak centralized government, with its powers distributed
among the many. This difference resulted from what was perhaps the most fundamental
dissimilarity between the parties. The “rich, wise and well-born” were basically
Federalists. They felt that the average citizen was incapable of governing intelligently.
The Republicans, for their part, were average citizens. Thus the difference in
background and philosophy of the members of the two parties underlay their different
attitudes toward specific activities of the government and toward the very nature of
government.