

# **COHESION AND COHERENCE**

**ORDER AND SENSE-WHAT YOU NEED TO USE  
IN YOUR ESSAYS!**

# COHESION

The techniques and devices used to connect different parts of a text. They help the sentences of a text hang together so that the reader is able to 'track' the meaning.

It is possible to invent a sequence of sentences that are highly cohesive but incoherent.

EG 'A week has seven *days*. Every *day* I feed my *cat*. *Cats* have four legs. The cat is on the *mat*. *Mat* has three letters.

# **GRAMMATICAL COHESION**

**Reference (anaphoric and cataphoric)**

**Deictics (deixis)**

**Ellipsis**

**Conjunction**

**Information flow (clefting, front focus and end focus)**

# REFERENCE

**Anaphoric-**when a word refers back to something that has already been mentioned, this is an *anaphoric reference*.

**EG** 'My great-grandfather was an Irishman. *He* (pron.) was born in Dublin in 1875.'

**Cataphoric-** when a word refers to something that hasn't been mentioned yet.

**EG** 'He gave the *following* reasons for his decision'

# DEICTICS

**Deixis/deictic expressions- terms which refer to the personal, temporal or locational characteristics of a situation, and whose meaning only makes sense in that context or situation.**

**EG 'here' and 'there' and 'this' and 'that' only make sense when taken in context.**

**Language is used to 'point' to the aspects of an event.**

# DEICTICS

**‘When language is spoken, it occurs in a specific location, at a specific time, is produced by a specific person and is (usually) addressed to some specific other person or persons. Only written language can ever be free of this kind of anchoring in the extra linguistic situation. A sequence on a slip of paper can move through space and time, ‘speaker’-less, and address-less. All natural, spoken language have devices that link the utterance with its spatio-temporal and personal context. This link is called ‘deixis’.**

**Christine Tanz**

# ELLIPSIS

**Ellipsis occurs when elements are omitted from a sentence. This becomes a cohesive device if an earlier part of the text enables us to supply the missing elements.**

**EG      ‘Beer cans littered the floor, the television had been kicked in and graffiti covered the walls. A bit of a mess.’**

**‘Where did you see the car. In the street.’**

**These words are also called connectives. They link together parts of a text and indicate relationship between them. For example if a sentence begins with 'But', what follows will in some way contrast with, or qualify, what has gone before.**

**EG      The Prime Minister promised that the economy would soon recover. *But* it has not done so.**

# **CONJUNCTIONS AND ADVERBIALS**



# **INFORMATION FLOW**

**Clefting**

**Front focus**

**End focus**

# FRONT FOCUS

**Front focus-** bringing information which would normally appear later to the front position in a sentence, to give it extra prominence.

**EG** Always in motion, the future is.

Happiness was what she sought.

When we get home, let's watch a video.

**What effect does this have when we read the sentence below:**

***On September 2, the 35th anniversary of the beginning of his police career, Commissioner Keelty will leave his post, with two years still to run on his contract.***

# END FOCUS

**End Focus-prominence to the final part of the sentence and can enable suspense to build. Not as much prominence as in front focus, but more than if the information was embedded in the middle of a sentence.**

**EG      A very short run I can handle.**

**I believe he lost respect from his peers following his dissent of Gillard.**

**Think of this as given and new information-audience will focus on the this new information if this is situated at the end of the sentence.**

# **FRONT OR END FOCUS?**

- 1) Everybody in this room speaks two languages.  
Two languages are spoken by everybody in this room.**
- 2) John gave the books to my brother.  
John gave my brother the books.**
- 3) John smeared paint on the wall.  
John smeared the wall with paint.**

# CLEFTING

**Clefting means to cleave or to divide. It divides a single clause into two clauses, each with its own verb.**

**It is used as a way to shift the focus of interest, and of getting our attention by delaying mention of what is of special interest.**

**EG      ‘Jenny ate the ice-cream’ becomes ‘It was Jenny who ate the ice-cream.’**

**How do we change the sentence below?**

**‘Uncle Vernon had answered the call’**

# CLEFTING

How do we 'deleave' these sentences?

'It is Ann that owns the cottage'

'My father was born in India'

How do we cleft these sentences?

'I enjoyed the last dance.'

'The traffic is noisiest in London.'

**Repetition**

**Collocation**

**Synonymy**

**Antonymy**

**Hyponymy**

**Substitution**

**LEXICAL/SEMANTIC COHESION**

# REPETITION AND SYNONYMS

This involves the repetition of a single word. This has a cohesive effect because it forms a link between different sentences.

Example- 'I have no great *news* to announce. I know it is *news* you have all been longing to hear.

Sometimes the word itself is not repeated. Instead a synonym is used. Example- 'He *rapidly* gathered up the pieces of the vase and hid them under the sofa. He acted *quickly* because he did not want to be caught. The choice of synonym used might depend on the level of formality.



# COLLOCATION

This refers to the tendency for certain words to occur together. It can be short expressions or longer stretches of text. Collocation is cohesive because it involves the use of words that, because of their meaning, are already linked in the reader's mind.

EG 'tropical paradise', 'heavy rain', 'keep a promise'

Exercise: How many collocations can you think of for the word 'line' and 'long' (these two words have a large unlimited range of collocations. Some words are restricted 'spick' as in 'spick and span')

# ANTONYMY

**Antonyms are words whose meanings are in some way opposite to each other. Many antonyms are adjectives (e.g. hot/cold, wet/dry) They may also belong to other word classes (e.g. verbs start/finish), adverbs (always/never), nouns (boy/girl).**

A hyponym is a word that is linked in meaning to, but more specific than, another word, known as a hypernym.

EG The hypernym is flower. Words referring to different kinds of flowers?

Exercise. These words are hypernyms: furniture, stationery, clothing. List four hyponyms for each word.

# **HYPONYMS AND HYPERNYMS**

# **SUBSTITUTION**

**One word is substituted for another.**

**EG      ‘I’ve got a pencil. Do you have one?’**

**Avoids repetition**

**EG      I bet you get married before I get married.**

**I bet you get married before I do.**

**Time flies. You can't though, but yes, it flies too quickly.**

**IDENTIFYING COHESIVE DEVICES**