

## Coherence & Transitions

**Coherence:** In writing, this generally refers to the entire text’s ability to give the reader a sense of a smooth *flow* of information (sentences or ideas).

**Transitions:** This refers to words or phrases that help establish logical connections between sentences, paragraphs, and sections of your texts.

*Why do we need them?* Particularly in academic writing, the reader expects the text to build on a central idea that show consistent relationships between ideas. As a writer, then, you’ll need to make sure that the reader understands why every piece of information you’ve given them is relevant to your point.

### Three Key Strategies to Create Coherence

1. Repeat key words and forms of words.

Example: Research has shown that **caffeine** reduces **sleepiness** and can lead to better academic performance. Despite its effectiveness in counteracting **sleepiness**, **caffeine** can have a negative impact on subsequent **sleep**, which for many students may already be compromised. Specifically, **caffeinated** beverages consumed near bedtime ... can prolong **sleep** onset and reduce **sleep** efficiency and depth, thus affecting both **sleep** quality and duration. Most of the research on how **caffeine** affects **sleepiness** and alertness has focused on coffee or no-dose pills. However, a new kind of **caffeinated** drink has become increasingly popular, namely functional energy drinks.

*Student Example:* In order to better create and implement a successful marketing plan for the restaurant industry, researchers have also examined the increasing impact of **social network sites** on **consumer behavior** (Miles 2014; Richards & Tiwari, 2014). In recent years, the use of online media, particularly **social networking sites**, has produced significant changes in **consumer behavior**, and restaurateurs have increasingly turned to **social media** for their marketing strategy (Gunden, 2017). These **online platforms** such as Yelp, Facebook, and Instagram—whether connecting with peers or unknown users—provide customers with tools that allow them to share their dining experiences, and in turn, have revolutionized the restaurant industry (Richards & Tiwari, 2014; Hosie, 2017). For example, before customers select a place to dine out, they check not only a restaurant’s web page, but also its Instagram, both to ascertain what a certain dish looks like and to ensure that it is aesthetic and “Instagrammable” (Hosie, 2017). \*Courtesy of a CMGT graduate student

2. **Use the old-to-new information flow or pattern.** *This method involves placing old information (information that the reader already has some familiarity with) at the beginning of the sentence (before the verb) and placing new information after the verb.*

Example: A nuclear power plant (**OLD**) contains a nuclear reactor that uses controlled nuclear fission to produce electricity (**NEW**). The reactor (**OLD**) consists of fuel rods alternating with control rods inside a large container called a reactor core (**NEW**). The fuel rods (**OLD**) contain radioactive fuel (**NEW**) and the control rods (**OLD**) contain neutron-absorbing substances (**NEW**)

*Student Example:* Online platforms (**OLD**) are growing in popularity in the corporate communication sector due to the rising demand for companies to engage their stakeholders

(NEW). European regulators are pushing for more active shareholder engagement (OLD) to improve corporate governance (Hoffmann & Aeschlimann, 2017) (NEW). As a consequence of this push (OLD), online platforms in IR are gaining momentum in the European market (NEW). Unlike social media, these platforms (OLD) are proprietary, closed and solely for the interaction between a corporation and its shareholders (NEW). Through the platform (OLD), shareholders can access data, information, converse with the corporation, post in forums, and vote online (NEW). \*Courtesy of a CMGT graduate student

3. **Use signal words and transitions strategically.** *Transitions establish continuity in writing.*

Ex. **In order to** better create and implement a successful marketing plan for the restaurant industry, researchers have **also** examined the increasing impact of social network sites on consumer behavior (Miles 2014; Richards & Tiwari, 2014). **In recent years**, the use of online media, particularly social networking sites, has produced significant changes in consumer behavior, and restaurateurs have increasingly turned to social media for their marketing strategy (Gunden, 2017). **These online platforms such as** Yelp, Facebook, and Instagram—whether connecting with peers or unknown users—provide customers with tools that allow them to share their dining experiences, **and in turn**, have revolutionized the restaurant industry (Richards & Tiwari, 2014; Hosie, 2017). **For example**, before customers select a place to dine out, they check not only a restaurant’s web page, but also its Instagram, both to ascertain what a certain dish looks like and to ensure that it is aesthetic and “Instagrammable” (Hosie, 2017). \*Courtesy of a CMGT graduate student

*Combine Signal Words with the Old-to-New Pattern:* Start a new sentence with “this” or “these” plus a noun that describes the idea expressed in the previous sentence. This phrase should come before the second sentence’s main verb.

- Ex. Sykes and Wilson (2012) **found** that short bursts of intense exercise showed more benefits than longer but less intense workouts. **This finding** is consistent with those of others researchers ...

**Additional Strategies**

- **Use pronouns to link sentences.** Link or connect sentences by referring to preceding nouns and pronouns. They also help eliminate wordiness and repetition.
- **Use synonyms to link ideas and create variety.**\* Provide alternative word choices, but *always check the definitions of your synonyms to avoid misusing them.*
- **Use Parallel Structure.** Parallelism refers to the use of matching words, phrases, clauses, or sentence structures to express similar ideas.
  - Ex. Usually, the children spend the summer weekends **playing** ball in the park, **swimming** in the neighbor’s pool, **eating** ice cream under the tree, or **camping in the backyard.**
  - Ex. At the museum, the class **attended a lecture where the speaker demonstrated** how the Native Americans made bows and arrows. They also **attended a workshop where a sword smith demonstrated** how the Vikings crafted swords.

Sources:

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