8.6: Revise to Improve Cohesion

We have already explored transitions in previous chapters. Careful writers use transitions to clarify how the ideas in their sentences and paragraphs are related; these words and phrases help the writing flow smoothly. Adding transitions is not the only way to improve coherence, but they are often useful and give a mature feel to your writing. See Table 8.2.

Example of transition statements

- Given X, the implications for this topic include X.
- It is important to consider X as we move forward with these findings.
- X sheds light on the timeliness of this work because...

Table 8.2: Ways to revise to improve cohesion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revise to improve cohesion</th>
<th>Questions to ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As you revise to improve cohesion, analyze how the parts of your paper work together. Look for anything that seems awkward or out of place. Revision may involve deleting unnecessary material or rewriting parts of the paper so that the out-of-place material fits in smoothly.</td>
<td>Does the opening of your paper clearly connect to the broader topic and main idea/thesis? Make sure entertaining quotes or anecdotes serve a purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a research paper, problems with cohesion usually occur when you have trouble integrating source</td>
<td>Have you included support from research for each main point in the body of your paper?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have you included introductory material before any quotations? Quotations should never stand alone in a paragraph. Does paraphrased and quoted material clearly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
material. If facts or quotations have been awkwardly dropped into a paragraph, they will distract or confuse the reader instead of working to support your point. Overusing paraphrased and quoted material has the same effect.

serve to develop your own points? Are there any places where you have overused material from sources?

Do you need to add to or revise parts of the paper to help the reader understand how certain information from a source is relevant?

Does your conclusion make sense based on the rest of the paper? Make sure any new questions or suggestions in the conclusion are clearly linked to earlier material.

Here are some steps to revise your paper for cohesion:

• Print out a hard copy of your paper.
• Read the body paragraphs of your paper first. Each time you come to a place that cites information from sources, assess what purpose this information serves. Check that it helps to support a point and that it is clearly related to the other sentences in the paragraph. Identify unnecessary information from sources that you can delete.
• Identify places where you need to revise your writing so that readers understand the significance of the details cited from sources.
• Skim the body paragraphs of your paper again, looking for any paragraphs that seem packed with citations. Review these paragraphs carefully for cohesion.
• Review your introduction and conclusion. Make sure the information presented works with ideas in the body of your paper.
• Revise as needed to improve cohesion.

Creating unity

In general, following your outline closely should help you stay focused on your purpose and not drift away from the main idea/thesis. However, if you are rushed, tired, or can’t find the right words, sometimes your writing may not be as good as you want it to be. It may not be clear and concise, and it may include unnecessary information that is not needed to develop the main idea.

When a piece of writing has unity, all the ideas in each paragraph and in the entire paper clearly belong and are arranged in an order that makes logical sense. The ideas flow smoothly, and the wording clearly indicates how one idea leads to another within a paragraph and from paragraph to paragraph.

Student Tip

Read Your Paper Aloud

Reading your writing aloud will often help you find problems with cohesion and unity. Listen for the clarity and flow of your ideas. Identify confusing places and write down ideas for possible fixes.
Activity: Check Your Understanding

The original version of this chapter contained H5P content. You may want to remove or replace this element.

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