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# Can your reader follow your story line?

*Triangle East Writers – Manuscript Workshop / Selma Civic Center – 03/11/2023*

# Preview:



How much do you want your reader to work?



Whether you're writing fiction, an opinion piece, an essay, or a scientific article, you have a story, that is, a message to convey. What will it take for your reader to track the story and get your message? You need to be strategic and make a number of intentional and conscious decisions as you write. Success is all about the C's.



This workshop will address the methods you will use in order to make your statement just the way you intend. You should address each of these areas with deliberation. How much does your grammar matter? This means you also get to decide to what extent you want to add 'Creativity' to the list.

# Preview:

*Each topic area will include introduction, explanation, exercises, and discussion:*

**Coherence** (Global-Macro-Strategy): ideas/flow – conceptual

**Cohesion** (Local-Micro-Tactics): words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs – mechanical

**Chronology:** Importance and Contrast / transition signals – or not / logical – or not

**Consistency:** Referent tracking / parallel structures

**Connectives:** Contrast / Cause and Effect

**Claims:** Topic sentences / subjects / sequence

**Context**

# Coherence

When we call a piece of writing “disjointed” or “incoherent,” we typically mean that the document has some of the following flaws:

- The writer jumps around among unrelated topics.
- The writer does not work within any discernible organizational framework.
- The writer sets certain ideas, sentences, or paragraphs alongside each other even though they are conceptually and verbally unrelated.
- The writer does not use roadmaps to tell the reader where he or she is being led, or the writer does not use signposts to locate the reader within the argument.

# Coherence

## Global – Macro – Strategy

What is your genre?

Is there a Style Guide?

How will you manage decisions about:

- 1) Voice
- 2) Register
- 3) Dialogue
- 4) Chronology

## Flow of Ideas

Identify / clarify your logic! Stick to it!

## Conceptual

What is your message?

# Coherence

Shy and timid

First day  
at a new  
summer  
camp

I hug my backpack close to my chest as I sit on the wooden bench in the camp's huge gathering area. There are swarms of kids my age hugging and laughing, sharing secret handshakes I assume they made up last year. My dad wants me to love this camp just as much as he did, but it's hard being the only new kid. Suddenly, a tall girl with dark hair plops down beside me, smiling warmly. I gulp, and manage a small smile back at her.

Outgoing and  
Confident

I take a deep breath of the fresh, summer air filled with possibility. All around me I feel the buzz of excitement as old camp friends hug and laugh and show off their elaborate secret handshakes. It's my first day here, and I can't wait to make new friends as we hike and swim and explore. My dad loved this place as a kid, so I know I will, too. Suddenly, a tall girl with dark hair walks up to me, smiling warmly. I flash her a big grin in return.

# Coherence

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Frantic and anxious

Authoritative and reliable

Shy and timid

Curious and open-minded

Outgoing and confident

Calm and easygoing

Passionate and knowledgeable

Skeptical or indifferent

# Coherence

Build a concept map to keep track of your ideas and assure they 'flow' the way you want them to.

Why:

- 1) Organize your thoughts
- 2) Understand relationships
- 3) Build a logical argument – present evidence in a chain that is easy to follow (or not)

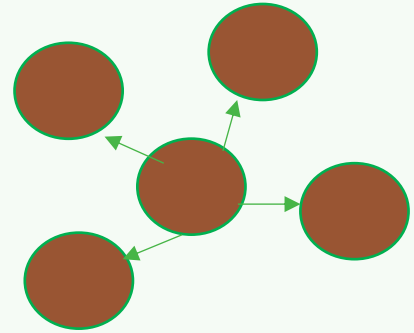


# Coherence

Build a concept map to keep track of your ideas and assure they 'flow' the way you want them to.

What kind:

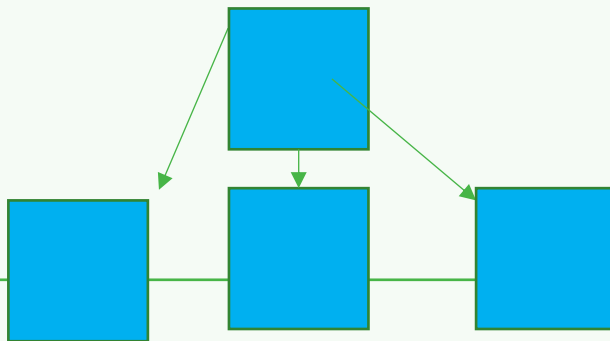
1) Spider map



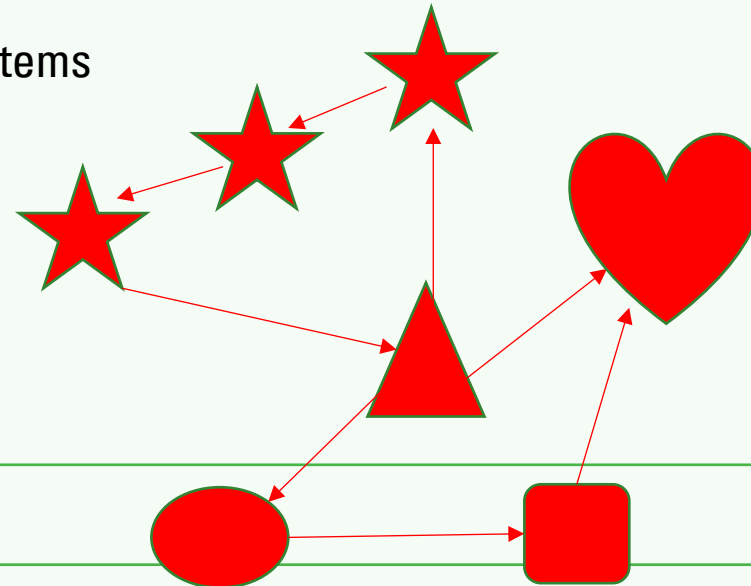
2) Flow Chart



3) Hierarchy (Outline?)



4) Process / Systems



# Cohesion

Local-Micro-Tactics: Building a mental representation – start by choosing the right word

Prescriptive vs. Descriptive grammar

words

- Misused words – be sure you know what your word means

*Cree Indians were a monotonous culture*

- Words with unwanted connotations or meanings – be sure that's what you want to say / mean

*I sprayed the ants in their private places*

- Pronoun referents – careful

*My cousin Jake hugged my brother Trey, even though he didn't like him very much*

# Cohesion

Local-Micro-Tactics: Building a mental representation – start by choosing the right word

Prescriptive vs. Descriptive grammar

words

- Jargon or technical terms / slang?

*The dialectical interface between neo-Platonists and anti-disestablishment Catholics offers an algorithm for deontological thought.*

- Loaded language

*Society teaches young girls that beauty is their most important quality. In order to prevent eating disorders and other health problems, we must change society*

# Cohesion

Local-Micro-Tactics: Building a mental representation – start by choosing the right word

1. Additive words - *also, and, as well as, at the same time as, besides, equally important, further, furthermore, in addition, likewise, moreover, too, not only... but also.*
2. Amplification words - *as, for example, for instance, in fact, specifically, such as, that is, to illustrate*
3. Repetitive words - *again, in other words, that is, to repeat*
4. Contrast words - *but, conversely, despite, even though, however, in contrast, notwithstanding, on the one hand / on the other hand, still, although, though, whereas, yet, nevertheless, on the contrary, in spite of this*
5. Cause and effect words - *accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this reason, since, as, so, then, therefore, thus*
6. Qualifying words - *although, if, even, therefore, unless*
7. Example - *for example, for instance*

# Cohesion

Local-Micro-Tactics: Building a mental representation – start by choosing the right word

8. Emphasizing words - above all, more/most importantly

9. Reason words - for this reason, owing to this, therefore

10. Order words - afterwards, at the same time, before, firstly/secondly, formerly, lastly, finally, later, meanwhile, next, now, presently, today/yesterday/last week/next year, subsequently, then, until, ultimately, while, historically, in the end, eventually

11. Explanation - in other words, that is to say

12. Attitude –naturally, of course, certainly, strangely enough, surprisingly, fortunately, unfortunately, admittedly, undoubtedly

13. Summary - finally, in conclusion, in short, to summarize

# Cohesion

Local-Micro-Tactics: Building a mental representation – start by choosing the right word

Prescriptive vs. Descriptive grammar

words – word classes – mental representations

Nouns – inherently bounded in time (nominalization)

Verbs – of variable duration

or not

# Cohesion

Local-Micro-Tactics: Building a mental representation – start by choosing the right word

words – special classes /modals

	<b>Most Frequent: Logical Possibility</b>	<b>Medium Frequency: Ability</b>	<b>Medium Frequency: Necessity</b>	<b>Least Frequent: Permission</b>
<b>Strongest</b>	will/would	could	should (as advice)	can
<b>Stronger</b>	should			
<b>Weaker</b>	may			
<b>Weakest</b>	can/could/might			

# Cohesion

Local-Micro-Tactics:

Prescriptive vs. Descriptive grammar

phrases

Nouns – *the gypsy with the gold earrings and the shabby jacket*

Verb – *had been wanting to eat the rest of the pizza*



# Cohesion

phrases

Verb – *had been wanting to eat the rest of the pizza*

**progressive:** form = The finite or inflected verb is always a form of to be. The main verb is always the present participle form in *-ing*.

**Progressive** (or ‘continuous’) focuses on the situation as being in progress at a particular time. In consequence, it may imply that the situation has limited duration and that it is not necessarily complete:

**PRES:** I am reading = I started before ‘now’. It is what I’m doing right now. I expect to continue in the future, but not indefinitely.

**PAST:** I was reading = I started in the past, it continued for a while, it ended in the past.

**FUTURE:** I will be reading = I expect it will start in the future and continue for a while.

# Cohesion

phrases

Verb – *had been wanting to eat the rest of the pizza*

**Perfect:** form = The finite or inflected verb is always a form of to have. The main verb is always the past participle form (often, but not always the same as the simple past)

**Perfect** helps to orient an event in time usually with respect to some other event.

PRES:            *He has read the book* = the act of reading was actually performed some time prior to now

PAST:            *He had read the book (when the library recalled it)* = the act of reading preceded some other event (also in the past) usually relayed in the same sentence or otherwise recoverable from the general context

FUTURE:        *He will have read the book (by the time the library recalls it)* = the act of reading will be completed (perhaps also begun) in the future before some other focal point, which is even further in the future.

# Cohesion

Local-Micro-Tactics:

Prescriptive vs. Descriptive grammar  
phrases

Verb – *had been wanting to eat the rest of the pizza*

**Perfect-progressive:** form

The finite or inflected verb is always a form of to have, marked for person and tense. This is followed by the invariant past participle, been. The main verb is always the present participle form in -ing.

When the **perfect** and **progressive** aspects are combined in the same verb phrase, the features of meaning associated with each aspect are also combined to refer to a temporary situation with some duration leading up to a focal point of reference.

# Cohesion

Local-Micro-Tactics:

Prescriptive vs. Descriptive grammar  
phrases

Verb – *had been wanting to eat the rest of the pizza*

PRES: *I have been cleaning the windows for four days* = right up to the present moment  
/now time prior to now

PAST: *I had been cleaning the windows (when he walked up)* = up to the time  
/ before of the focal point which is also now in the past.

FUTURE: *On Tuesday, I will have been cleaning the windows for four days straight.*  
/ after now = I may have actually started already, but at the point in the future which  
is relevant to this conversation, that is Tuesday, it will have been going on  
for 4 days.

# Cohesion

Local-Micro-Tactics:

Prescriptive vs. Descriptive grammar

phrases

Adjective – red, *the kind of red that you makes you think of Christmas and Santa Claus*

Adverb – *more slowly than a teenager heading to the principal's office after getting caught smoking on the front lawn of the school*

Prepositional – above *the top of the jungle canopy where only the most vigorous insects can venture*

# Cohesion

Local-Micro-Tactics:

Prescriptive vs. Descriptive grammar (active vs. passive)

Sentences (topic / comment : old / new)

- 1) *The boy kicked the ball*
- 2) *The team was playing with a soccer ball*
- 3) *The boy wanted to make his first goal with the new team*

*The boy who wanted to make his first goal with the new team kicked the soccer ball they were playing with.*

*Wanting to make his first goal with the new team, the boy kicked the soccer ball they were playing with.  
The soccer ball they were playing with was kicked by the boy who wanted to make his first goal with the new team.*

# Cohesion

Local-Micro-Tactics:

Prescriptive vs. Descriptive grammar

paragraphs (topic / comment?)

# Cohesion

Local-Micro-Tactics:

Prescriptive vs. Descriptive grammar

whole text (topic / comment)



# Chronology

## 1) Importance (connecting what is critical to what is less consequential)

chiefly	foundationally	of less importance
critically	most importantly	primarily

## 2) Contrast

after all	despite	on the contrary
although	however	on the other hand
and yet	in contrast	otherwise
at the same time	nevertheless	though
but	nonetheless	yet
	notwithstanding	

# Chronology

2) logical – or not

# Consistency

Referent tracking – pronouns, synonyms, repetition

Parallel structures – lexical, phrasal, sentential, grammatical

# Connectives

- **Cause / Effect:** because, since, so that, accordingly, as a result, and so, consequently, for that reason, hence, on account of, since, therefore, thus
- **Comparison / Contrast:** although, even though, though, whereas, while
- **Place & Manner:** how, however, where, wherever
- **Possibility / Conditions:** if, whether, unless
- **Relation:** that, which, who
- **Time:** after, as, before, since, when, whenever, while, until

# Claims

Topic sentences

Subjects

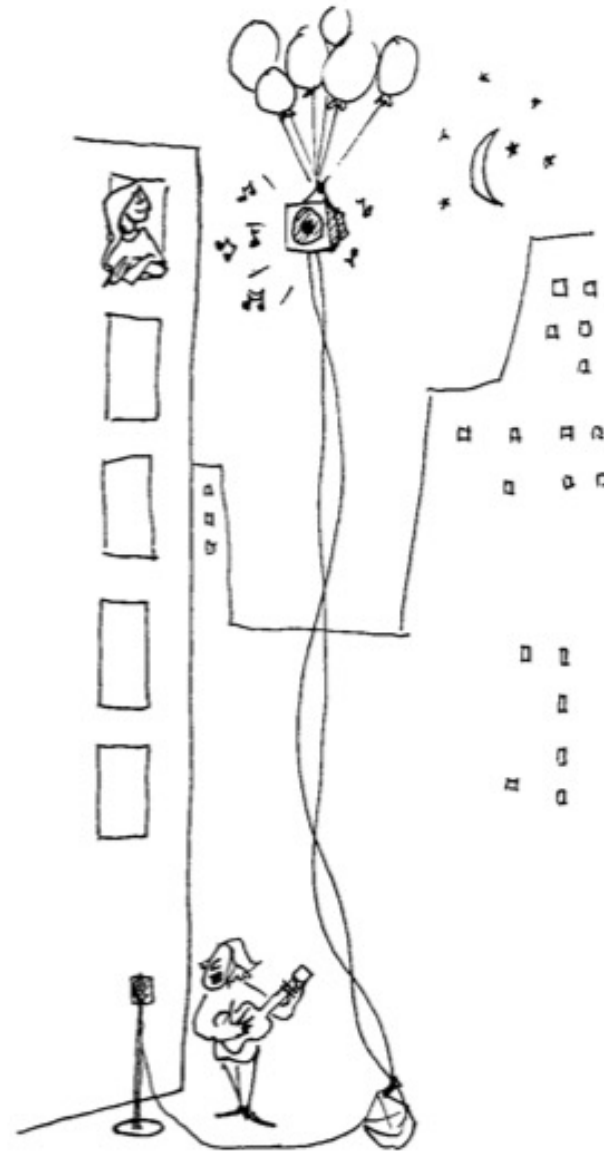
Sequence

# Context

If the balloons popped, the sound wouldn't be able to carry since everything would be too far away from the correct floor. A closed window would also prevent the sound from carrying, since most buildings tend to be well insulated. Since the whole operation depends on a steady flow of electricity, a break in the middle of the wire would also cause problems. Of course, the fellow could shout, but the human voice is not loud enough to carry that far. An additional problem is that a string could break on the instrument. Then there could be no accompaniment to the message. It is clear that the best situation would involve less distance. Then there would be fewer potential problems. With face to face contact, the least number of things could go wrong.

# Context

If the balloons popped, the sound wouldn't be able to carry since everything would be too far away from the correct floor. A closed window would also prevent the sound from carrying, since most buildings tend to be well insulated. Since the whole operation depends on a steady flow of electricity, a break in the middle of the wire would also cause problems. Of course, the fellow could shout, but the human voice is not loud enough to carry that far. An additional problem is that a string could break on the instrument. Then there could be no accompaniment to the message. It is clear that the best situation would involve less distance. Then there would be fewer potential problems. With face to face contact, the least number of things could go wrong.



# Context

The procedure is actually quite simple. First you arrange things into different groups. Of course, one pile may be sufficient depending on how much there is to do. If you have to go somewhere else due to lack of facilities that is the next step, otherwise you are pretty well set. It is important not to overdo things. That is, it is better to do too few things at once than too many. In the short run this may not seem important but complications can easily arise. A mistake can be expensive as well. At first the whole procedure will seem complicated. Soon, however, it will become just another facet of life. It is difficult to foresee any end to the necessity for this task in the immediate future, but then one never can tell. After the procedure is completed one arranges the materials into different groups again. Then they can be put into their appropriate places. Eventually they will be used once more and the whole cycle will then have to be repeated. However, that is part of life.





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# Questions?

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