Transitions & Coherence

Coherence is often referred to as the “flow” of the paper. It has to do both with the organization of ideas, but also the connections between them. In this activity, you will be focusing on how to build connections between ideas, including how to make transitions.

1. Go to “Coherence: Transitions between Ideas” on Guide to Grammar and Writing: http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/transitions.htm. Read the explanations on that page and answer the following questions as you go:

2. You must never assume that your readers ________________ what you ________________... You might be able to leap from one side of the stream to the other; believe that your readers need some ________________

__________________________________________and be sure to place them in readily accessible and visible spots.

3. What are the four basic ways to provide transitions between ideas?
   a. using ____________________ expressions
   b. repeating key ____________________ and ____________________
   c. using ____________________ reference
   d. using ____________________ form

If you’re having trouble with linking ideas in your essay, there may be two larger issues:

1. **Organization**: Place closely related ideas next to each other and use some consistent principle (chronological, least to most important, or least to most surprising). Then transitions are a breeze!

2. **Focus**: Weed out ideas that don’t fit reasonably well with your other ideas and it won’t be so hard to make your ideas connect.

Continued...
4. Complete this chart by writing down at least two transitional devices for each of functions:

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Continued...
5. Copy down the example of effective repetition (i.e. Lincoln’s advice):
   a. You can __________________ some of the people all of the time, and all
      of the __________________ some of the time, but you cannot __________________ all of the
      __________________ all of the time.

6. The __________________ causes the reader to sum up, quickly and
   subconsciously, what was said __________________ (what this is)
   before going on to the because part of my reasoning.

7. Parallelism is the deliberate __________________ of __________________
   __________________ of phrases, even clauses and
   whole sentences.

*Now try it yourself!*

8. Go to “Coherence Strategies: Revising Paragraphs with Signal Words and
   Phrases” on About.com: http://grammar.about.com/od/developingparagraphs/a/coherevisepars1.htm. (You can also go to About.com and search for
   “Coherence Revising” to find the page.)

9. Do both Coherence Exercise A & B. You may either write your revised
   paragraphs by hand or you may copy into a document and type your
   revisions. Underline or bold your additions to the paragraphs.

STOP

10. Ask a WRC tutor or instructor to review you revised versions for coherence.
    Note down any suggested improvements on your paragraphs. Turn in your
    paragraphs with this worksheet. Attach a confirmation sheet or get a
    signature below:

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   Instructor/Tutor Signature   Date

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