

Boost Free Lessons - Year 10 English

Lesson 7: Lexical Cohesion

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Worked Example 1

How does the writer hold the paragraph together?

The reef is dying. Coral bleaches when the water stays too warm, and bleached colonies rarely recover. Without those colonies, the fish that shelter in them disperse, and the reef becomes a structure rather than a habitat.

1. **Lexical cohesion** is the way word choice links sentences into a single idea.
2. **Repetition:** *reef* opens and closes the paragraph, framing it.
3. **Word chains:** coral, bleaches, bleached, colonies, those colonies. Each sentence picks up a word from the last.
4. **Contrast pairs:** *structure* against *habitat* closes the paragraph on a distinction that carries the meaning.

Through repetition of *reef*, a chain linking coral to bleaching to colonies, and a final contrast between *structure* and *habitat*.

Worked Example 2

Why is the paragraph below poorly connected?

The reef is dying. Tourism generates significant revenue. Water temperatures have risen. Many species live in the area.

1. Every sentence is true and all concern the reef, yet the paragraph does not hold together.
2. No sentence picks up a word or idea from the one before it.
3. There is no chain, no repetition, and no signalled relationship.
4. Cohesion is not about the topic being the same. It is about each sentence connecting to the last.

Each sentence starts a new idea without picking up anything from the previous one, so the paragraph reads as a list rather than an argument.

Remember: **Lexical cohesion** is built from repeated words, synonyms, pronouns, word chains and contrast pairs. Each sentence should pick up something from the one before it.



Question 1: Give an example of each cohesive device.

1. Repetition of a key word

2. A synonym replacing an earlier word

3. A pronoun referring back

4. A word chain across sentences

5. A contrast pair

6. A general word summarising what came before

7. A linking word signalling a result

8. A linking word signalling a contrast



Question 2: Read the passage below, then answer the questions.

The letter arrived on a Tuesday. It sat on the hall table for four days. The silence in the house was not accidental; nobody in that family had ever said the quiet part aloud. It rained heavily that week. By Saturday the letter had disappeared.

1. Find one word chain running through the passage.

2. Find one pronoun and name what it refers back to.

3. Find one contrast pair.

4. Which sentence is least well connected? Explain.

5. Rewrite that sentence so it connects to the one before it.



Question 3: Answer the following questions.

1. Write three sentences linked by a word chain.

2. Explain the difference between cohesion and simply staying on topic.

3. Why can overusing pronouns damage cohesion?





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Answers and Model Responses: Lexical Cohesion**Question 1**

1. Model: *evidence ... evidence ... this evidence*
2. Model: replacing *students* with *they* or *the cohort*
3. Model: *The policy failed. It had never been funded.*
4. Model: fire, burning, burn, burnt country
5. Model: *structure* against *habitat*; *practice* against *theory*
6. Model: *These changes*, summarising several points already made
7. Model: therefore, as a result, consequently
8. Model: however, whereas, by contrast

Question 2

1. Model: silence, quiet, unspoken, said nothing.
2. Model: *it* in the second sentence refers back to the letter.
3. Model: *arrived* against *disappeared*.
4. Model: the sentence about the weather, because it introduces something no other sentence picks up.
5. Model: The rain that week kept everyone indoors, which meant the letter was passed several times a day.

Question 3

1. Model response: The trial began in March. By June the trial had doubled in size. That growth was what eventually forced the funding decision.
2. Cohesion means each sentence picks up a word or idea from the one before. A paragraph can stay on topic while every sentence begins a new idea, which reads as a list rather than an argument.
3. Too many pronouns make it unclear which noun each one refers to, so the reader has to reconstruct the links instead of following them.

