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## Unity, Development, & Coherence

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### 1. definitions

### 2. methods of development

### 3. methods of coherence

One of the first concepts you need to understand is the idea that all formal writing has to have a **central idea**, or a **main point**. This is true if you are writing a single paragraph or an entire essay – in fact, a body paragraph should have a driving central idea just like an essay should.

*note: please write all definitions in your journals*

**Central idea:** the focal point to which all other ideas in a paragraph or essay point.

The central idea of a paragraph is called a **Topic Sentence**, and the central idea of an essay is called a **Thesis Statement**.

- Thesis Statement = main idea of an essay
- Topic Sentence = main idea of a paragraph

*note: in this class, for all your formal out-of-class essays, you will include a thesis statement in your introduction, and you will begin major body paragraphs with a topic sentence.*

### 1. definitions

Once you've understood these concepts, you can better understand the importance of ideas like **Unity**, **Development**, and **Coherence**. These three concepts are the cornerstones of academic writing and are defined below. All of the terms here apply both to the paragraph level and to the essay level.

Each of these three principles has its own important role in writing an essay, but before explaining further you should know what they are.

#### **Unity:**

An **essay** is unified when all of its paragraphs relate directly to its **thesis statement**. A **paragraph** is unified when all of its sentences relate directly to its **topic sentence**.

#### **Development:**

An **essay** is well-developed when the writer has given sufficient information to make the reader feel the **thesis** has been sufficiently discussed. A **paragraph** is well-developed when the writer has given sufficient information to make the reader feel the **topic sentence** has been sufficiently discussed.

#### **Coherence:**

An **essay** is coherent when all of its **paragraphs** are written clearly, logically, and in a manner that is easy to follow. A **paragraph** is coherent when all of its **sentences** are written clearly, logically, and in a manner that is easy to follow.

## 2. methods of development

*note: make sure that all methods directly support the subject and main point of your essay*

- **examples/illustrations:** develop an idea with specific and concrete examples
- **narration:** tell a relevant story or anecdote
- **description:** paint a picture for your reader using specific and concrete details
- **process:** describe how something works
- **compare and contrast:** point out similarities /differences
- **analogy:** compare a difficult idea/concept with something the reader will more easily understand
- **cause and effect:** show the result of an action, or an action that leads to a result
- **classification/division:** distinguish between types or classes
- **definition:** explain a difficult term or concept in your own words

*note: An important part of developing argumentative essays comes from your own background, ideology, life, etc. To that end, the following should also be incorporated to sufficiently develop your essays.*

- **personal insight/ analysis:** in your own words, show the relevance and/or rationale for information included, or even for your argument itself. If you include support, data, and/or examples from outside sources, explain why they are relevant to your claim. Don't assume that your readers can see their relevance, explain it to them. Everyone has different ideas for why things are -- it is your job as the writer to show your readers your ideas.

## 3. methods of incorporating coherence

### use transitional words or phrases

Many words can be used to help readers from one sentence to the next without being jarring. Think about the relationships between your sentences and insert words or phrases to help them move along.

### repeat key terms or phrases

If you are trying to convince your readers of something, the power of repetition can be a great tool. You don't want to over do it, but repeating certain key terms or phrases in the right places can greatly assist an essay's coherence. The parts to repeat can be in reference to the subject of the essay, or in reference to the main point of the essay too.

example: *Television* is drowning most of our society's ability to *think creatively*. Its too easy to go home after work or school and let the *TV* wash over us like some digital pacifier. Our *thoughts* are no longer *creative*, they are just passive. We don't have to *think* about which housewife to hate since we're pretty much told it by the *television* show's writers.

*note: to avoid sounding repetitive, try using synonyms as well. Synonyms are different words that mean the same thing. Using synonyms can help in repeating ideas without sounding annoying.*

example: *Movies* have gotten out of control. The whole *cinema* industry seems to be spiraling downwards. *Films* cost far too much to make and too much to see. As a student, I don't even the last time I could afford a night at the *silver screen* without sacrificing dinner out.

## use pronouns

Using words like *that, this, those, these, he, she, and it* is a very easy way to help readers along in an essay. Pronouns refer back to something previously mentioned, so they add to an essays coherence. Just make sure that people know what you are referring back to.

example: Is advertising a legitimate, harmless vehicle that stimulates commerce, or has *it* become a force out of control, inundating our lives and culture with ill intended messages? Does the problem possibly lie somewhere in between: Is *it* a legitimate tool that is sometimes taken advantage of? *These* are all questions we should be asking ourselves about the ads we see every day.