Unit 1  Structure and Cohesion

This unit is concerned with the general organisation of a piece of academic writing (e.g., a report, an essay, an assignment, a project), its structure and particularly the way in which the different parts are linked together. The plan below of a piece of writing, in this case an essay, will help to explain the overall structure.

Stage 1  Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURE</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The subject or topic. A statement of the problem, etc. Comments on the way it is to be treated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paragraphs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation, analysis and discussion (including comments on 'advantages' and 'disadvantages').</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 main idea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+ examples, details)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 main idea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+ examples, details)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 CONCLUSION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perhaps a summary of the main points in 2. Own conclusions and decisions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most pieces of formal writing are organised in a similar way—introduction; development of main ideas or arguments; conclusions. Each part of the writing will consist of language functions: particular uses and structures of the language organised according to the specific purpose that the writer has in mind wishing to communicate ideas etc. to other people—describing, defining, exemplifying, classifying etc.

Each language function consists of sentences and/or paragraphs that are joined together or linked by connectives (words or phrases that indicate a logical relationship). These language functions will be examined in detail in the following units. In the rest of this unit we shall look at the linking of sentences by means of connectives.

A piece of writing or text will often have the following structure:

**Stage 2  Connectives**

- **BASIC CONNECTIVES**
  - A – and
  - B – or
  - C – but

A  The discussion, argument, or comment in the development of the topic may be very straightforward, in which case ideas will be added together one after the other. The basic connective and is used here. (A number of connectives have a similar or related meaning to and.)

B  Sometimes the comments may be expressed in another way, or an alternative proposal may be made. This is represented by the basic connective or. (A number of other connectives have a similar meaning.) After the alternative has been considered, the main argument will continue.

C  There are also occasions in arguments etc. when the opposite is considered or referred to. This is represented by the basic connective but. (There are also a number of other connectives with a similar meaning.) After the opposite or opposing view has been considered, the main argument is continued.

A list of the connectives divided into the main groups of and, or, but is contained in Appendix 2: Connectives.
1 ‘And’ type: Connectives of Result (Type A)

Look at the following example:

He passed his examinations; 

so, therefore, as a result, accordingly, consequently, thus, hence, he had some good news to tell his parents. 

Because he passed his examinations,

Note: The connectives in italic are join a cause (the pass of his examinations) with a result, effect or consequence (he had some good news to tell his parents).

Add a second sentence. Use a suitable connective from the list above, and a result, effect or consequence from the list below.

a Many students find it difficult to read newspapers in English . . . .

b Most students living abroad are interested in news of their own country . . . .

c When a student goes abroad to study he/she may have to complete about twelve different forms . . . .

Result, Effect or Consequence:

. . . British news is found to be of most interest. . . . they usually read the international news first in the newspapers.

. . . an average of five books per month are read.

. . . not many read one regularly.

. . . it is useful to be able to answer questions briefly.

Complete the following by adding a suitable ending of your own.

d The lecture was very difficult to understand. Consequently,

e Carlos was only able to read very slowly in English. Therefore,

2 ‘Or’ type: Connectives of Reformation (Type B)

Look at the following example:

He said that he had kept the library book for several years. 

In other words To put it more simply, It would be better to say he had stolen it.

Note: The connectives (in italic) introduce a reformulation of what has gone before. The reformulation appears in different words and is used to make the idea clearer or to explain or modify it.

Add a second sentence. Use a suitable connective from the list above, and an appropriate reformulation from the list below.

a Maria is rather slow at learning . . . .

b Helen finds languages quite easy . . . .

c Anna speaks English like a native-speaker . . . .

Reformulation:

. . . she speaks it exceptionally well.

. . . she speaks slowly.

. . . she is taking a long time to improve her English.

. . . she has little difficulty in learning English.

. . . she speaks it with great difficulty.

Complete the following by adding a suitable ending of your own.

d Margaret is bilingual. In other words,

e Some people say that if you are good at music you will also be good at learning languages. In other words,

3 ‘But’ type: Connectives of Concession (Type C)

Look at the following example:

The time available for discussion was very limited. 

However, Nevertheless, Nonetheless, Yet, In spite of that, All the same,

it was still possible to produce some interesting arguments.

Note: The connectives (in italic) indicate the surprising nature of what follows in view of what was said before; a kind of contrast is indicated.

Add a second sentence. Use a suitable connective from the list above, and a concession (or contrast) from the list below.

a Some of the examination questions were very difficult . . . .

b There was only limited money available for research . . . .

c The project was very complicated . . . .
It is essential to divide your writing into paragraphs. A paragraph normally contains several sentences but they are all concerned with the theme contained in the topic or key sentence (i.e. the main sentence). The key sentence is usually the first one, which contains the main idea or topic. The other sentences support it by adding further information or examples. A paragraph is self-contained but should link logically with the previous and following paragraphs so that the flow and cohesion of the writing is maintained.

1 Look at the paragraph at the end of Stage 1. Which is the key sentence?

2 The following sentences are in mixed order. To form a paragraph they need to be reorganised. Underline the key sentence and put the sentences in the correct order by numbering them 1–5.

a. It is mainly formal, impersonal and objective.
b. In most of these the writer is expected to include references to other writing or research.
c. Academic writing is a particular kind of writing that can be recognised by its style.
d. These include essays, research reports and articles, case studies, surveys, Dissertations, theses, and examination papers.
e. Other distinctive features will depend upon the specific types of academic writing.

Note: Paragraphs are either indented from the left margin (i.e. they start further in from the left or a line of space is left at the end of a paragraph and the next paragraph is started on the left margin). This makes it easier for the reader to read a text.

Stage 3 Advice

1 Read carefully the following description of the procedure for writing an essay. It gives advice in the form of what you should do. (Most of the verbs are modal passive forms, e.g. should + passive infinitive.) When you have finished reading do the exercise in 2.

The Stages of Writing an Essay

First, the topic, subject or question should be thought about carefully: what is required in the essay should be understood. Then a note should be made of ideas, perhaps from knowledge or experience. After this, any books, journals, etc.

1 should be noted that have been recommended, perhaps from a reading list or a bibliography. Then to the list should be added any other books, articles, etc. that are discovered while the recommended books are being read.

Now is the time for the books, chapters, articles, etc. to be read, with a purpose, by appropriate questions being asked that are related to the essay topic or title. Clear notes should be written from the reading. In addition, a record of the sources should be kept so that a bibliography or list of references can be compiled at the end of the essay. Any quotations should be accurately acknowledged: author’s surname and initial, year of publication, edition, publisher, place of publication and page numbers of quotations.

When the notes have been finished they should be looked through in order for an overview of the subject to be obtained.

Then the content of the essay should be decided on and how it is to be organised or planned. The material should be carefully selected: here may be too much and some may not be very relevant to the question. The material, or ideas, should be divided into three main sections for the essay: the introduction, the main body, and the conclusion. An outline of the essay should be written, with use being made of headings or subheadings, if they are appropriate.

The first draft should be written in a suitably formal or academic style. While doing this, the use of colloquial
expressions and personal references should be avoided. When it has been completed, the draft should be read critically, and in particular, the organisation, cohesion, and language should be checked. Several questions should be asked about it, for example: Is it clear? Is it concise? Is it comprehensive? Then the draft should be revised and the final draft written. It should be remembered that first impressions are important.

Finally, the bibliography should be compiled, using the conventional format: the references should be in strict alphabetical order. Then the bibliography should be added to the end of the essay.

2 All the sentences containing advice should be listed below. Spaces have been left for the verbs. In each space write the appropriate verb, but write it as a direct instruction (putting the verb in its imperative form) e.g. should be finished finish.

The Stages of Writing an Essay

a carefully about the topic, subject or question.
b what is required in the essay.
c a note of your ideas, perhaps from your knowledge or experience.
d any books, journals, etc. that have been recommended, perhaps from a reading list or a bibliography.
e to your list any other books, articles, etc. that you discover while finding the recommended books.
f the books, chapters, articles, etc. with a purpose, by asking yourself appropriate questions that are related to the essay topic or title.
g clear notes from your reading.
h a record of your sources so that you can compile your own bibliography or list of references at the end of your essay.
i accurately any quotations: author’s surname and initials, year of publication, edition, publisher, place of publication, and page numbers of quotations.
j through your notes when you have finished in order to obtain an overview of the subject.
k on the content of your essay and how you want to organise it. In other words, plan it.
l your material carefully: you may have too much and some may not be very relevant to the question.
m your material, or ideas, into three main sections for the essay: the introduction, the main body, and the conclusion.

Individual select the three most important pieces of advice, from the list below, that you think will help to improve a student’s academic writing. The order of the three choices is not important.

1 Write precisely: clearly, accurately and explicitly.
2 Use correct language: grammar, vocabulary, spelling etc.
3 Organise the writing carefully: introduction, main body, and conclusion.
4 Write legibly: handwriting should be easy to read.
5 Write in an academic style: impersonally, without using colloquial language.
6 Write concisely, and avoid very long sentences.
7 Adopt appropriate attitudes: be rational, critical, honest and objective.
8 Carefully paragraph the writing.
9 Include variety in the writing: avoid too much repetition.
10 Check details carefully, both of content and of language.
11 Ensure that the opening paragraph is not too long and that it creates a good impression.
12. Pay as much attention to the conclusion as to the introduction.
13. Avoid the use of clichés, jargon, propaganda, exaggeration, and emotive language.
14. Ensure that ideas and items are arranged in a logical sequence and are logically connected.
15. Always acknowledge the source of quotations and paraphrases.

Finally add some advice of your own that is not covered in the list above.

Note: Information about organizing a Pyramidal Discussion in the classroom is given in the Guide to Using the Book.

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### Structure and Vocabulary Aid

#### A Commonly used verb tenses, with examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Tense (Active)</th>
<th>Verb Tense (Passive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present Simple</td>
<td>Present Simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I run.</em></td>
<td><em>I am run.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>He runs.</em></td>
<td><em>He is run.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>We run.</em></td>
<td><em>We are run.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>You run.</em></td>
<td><em>You are run.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>They run.</em></td>
<td><em>They are run.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Tense (Active)</th>
<th>Verb Tense (Passive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past Simple</td>
<td>Past Simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I ran.</em></td>
<td><em>I was run.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>He ran.</em></td>
<td><em>He was run.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>We ran.</em></td>
<td><em>We were run.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>You ran.</em></td>
<td><em>You were run.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>They ran.</em></td>
<td><em>They were run.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Tense (Active)</th>
<th>Verb Tense (Passive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modal Pasture</td>
<td>Imperative/Instruct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I should give.</em></td>
<td><em>I should give.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>He should give.</em></td>
<td><em>He should give.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>We should give.</em></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B Relative pronouns and relative clauses

1. Who/whom refers to persons.
2. Which/that refer to things.
3. Whose refers to the possessive of persons.
4. Whom refers to persons and is often used with a preposition.

Examples:
1. My supervisor, who seems very young, has just been promoted to head of departament.
2. The article which (or that) I have just finished reading is very clearly written.
3. The research that (or which) I finished last year has just been published.
4. The lecturer whose name I always forget was as boring as usual this morning.
5. The student who (whom) I share a room with is very noisy. [intimal]
   The student I share a room with is very noisy. [adnominal].