


EXTREME

extreme
grammar

making grammar
accessible to everyone
by explaining a few
simple rules



Learning
grammar is a bit
like cycling:
sometimes you have
to find the right
balance.

COHERENCE

Coherence (n): systematic connectedness & interrelatedness, especially as controlled or organized by logical constructions.

Coherence means to be connected, related. Items that are in coherence seem to belong together, like peanut butter and jelly, popcorn and movies.

Coherence in writing means that the concepts presented in a paragraph or essay flow well, one to the next, as if they are each required constituents of the whole. Coherence helps readers to understand the arguments presented in an essay, because of the gestalt of the essay is obvious from the pattern created by the related arguments.

Coherence may be created by complementary arguments and by connectors (relationship and transition words).

Here is an example of connectors in a paragraph that describes a typical day on campus.

When on campus, a student must follow a closely-scripted schedule. **First**, he or she must arise and head off to breakfast. **After breakfast**, the student must walk to his or first class. The first class is usually **followed** by two or three more classes, then a lunch break. Only underclassmen schedule classes in the afternoon; upperclassmen have learned to leave their afternoons free to study and **prepare** for evening social activities. **After** the requisite study time--often five or six hours worth--a student will gather in the student union to **plan** the evening's activities. Close to midnight, the student is ready to settle into the dormitory for the evening. **Before** turning out the lights for the night, one last study session will help the student to **prepare** for the following day's classes.

Notice that in this paragraph, the sentences are related by a sense of chronological importance: first, after, followed, prepare, and plan. Each of these signal words conveys a sense of time or preparation. The paragraph is coherent, as it follows a related theme, chronology in this case.

