



Cohesion: Making sentences flow

Cohesive writing makes your essay easier to read and ensures your arguments are logically structured. Here are our top tips for making your writing 'flow':

Avoid run-on sentences (using a comma in place of a conjunction word or semi-colon):

We did not collect any precise information about infections, we found that having bronchitis before the age of two was a strong, independent risk factor for both wheeze and diagnosed asthma in Indigenous children, it is possible that Indigenous children who had bronchitis in early life were more likely to be diagnosed with asthma than non-Indigenous children who had bronchitis.

Use conjunctions to link clauses and other punctuation to separate sentences:

While we did not collect precise information about infections, we found that having bronchitis before the age of two was a strong, independent risk factor for both wheeze and diagnosed asthma in Indigenous children. **It** is possible, **however**, that Indigenous children who had bronchitis in early life were more likely to be diagnosed with asthma than non-Indigenous children who had bronchitis.¹

Avoid an overload of ideas in one sentence:

In 1973 Darboven began incorporating texts – transcribed directly because, she has claimed, they could not be bettered – from various writers, initially Heinrich Heine and Jean-Paul Sartre, whose works spoke to her recognition of the failure of the grand narratives of Enlightenment thought to provide convincing encompassing interpretations and, equally, to her fundamentally romantic existentialist position.

Give each sentence one clear focal point:

In 1973 Darboven began incorporating texts from various writers. She transcribed these texts directly because, she claimed, they could not be bettered. Initially, she used the writing of Heinrich Heine and Jean-Paul Sartre because their work spoke to both her fundamentally romantic position, and her recognition of the failure of the Enlightenment's grand narratives.²

Avoid too many verbs in one sentence:

Levels of calcium **rise**, causing levels of Ca²⁺/calmodulin to **rise** which **disrupts** autoinhibitory interactions which **are** essential for Ca²⁺/calmodulin binding, **permitting** access of substrates to the catalytic domain.

Reduce the number of verbs and clauses to get to the point:

Increased levels of calcium **disrupt** the autoinhibitory interactions essential for Ca²⁺/calmodulin binding and access of substrates to the catalytic domain.³

Avoid sudden changes in ideas:

We found that 43% of parents smoked. Children were at a higher risk of having respiratory problems if their parents smoked.

Keep ideas close together:

We found that 43% of **parents smoked**. Children of **parents who smoked** were at a higher risk of having respiratory problems.⁴

Sentence 'flow' in paragraphs

- Repeat key topic words throughout the paragraph
- Use Connective words and phrases (transitions)
- Use referential language: words or phrases that refer back to ideas already mentioned

A tailored patient-centred approach to **preparing and informing patients** about proposed radiation procedures is recommended [R]. A number of **evidence-based recommendations** [R] and guidelines [R] explain how healthcare providers can assist in adequately **preparing patients** for procedures such as radiation therapy. **However, the current recommendations are broad**, providing only basic suggestions on how to facilitate communication with **patients**. **As a result**, radiation oncology departments vary in how they **prepare patients** for procedures [R]. The **information** given to **patients** is often inconsistent, insufficient in detail, or too technical [R]. **This lack of clear treatment-related knowledge** and, in some cases, **misinformation**, has been reported as a cause of **patient** fear and anxiety about commencing radiation therapy [R]. **Poor quality information** can result in **patients** misinterpreting the significance of their side effects and may affect **patients'** treatment decisions [R]. Reports have revealed a need to improve **patient education** on and **preparation** for radiation therapy [R].⁵

NB: for ease of reading, actual references in the above example have been removed and denoted as [R].

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1 Peat, J. et al. (2002). Scientific Writing: Easy When You Know How. London: BMJ Books, p. 207.

2 Cooke, L., 1980-83, Hanne Darboven, Kulturgeschichte 1880-1983, Dia Center for the Arts

3 Student example, with permission

4 Peat et al. p. 20

5 Forshaw, K., et al. (2017). Patients' Experiences of Preparation for Radiation Therapy: A Qualitative Study. Oncology Nursing Forum 44(1), e1–e9. doi: 10.1188/17.ONF.E1-E9