

Skills Pack

English Literacy & Language Development, Workshop Series 2010

English Language and Literacy Development: Skills Pack

# 1. Concord in Texts

Students often make subject-verb relation errors, or concord errors. Most sentences in English contain a subject and a verb. In order for you to understand concord, make sure you know the following:

* A **noun** is a **naming word**, such as chair (common noun), love (abstract noun), Bloemfontein (proper noun).
* A **verb** is a **doing word**, such as walk, eat, swim, etc.
* **Finite verbs** show a particular tense, person and number: for example, ‘am’, ‘is’, ‘are’, ‘was’ and ‘were’
* **Non-finite** verbs do not show a particular tense, person and number, such as ‘be’, ‘being’ and ‘been’.
* The **subject** is the one that **performs the action** of the verb. For example; the **boy played** in the sand pit**.** Ask yourself what the verb (doing word) is, which would be played. Then ask yourself who is performing the action (verb), which would be the boy. This **subject-verb relationship** is called **concord**.
* A **pronoun replaces a noun** in a sentence. So instead of “**John** loved **John’s** book”, we would replace the second John with **his**, which would be a **pronoun**. The sentence would then read, “**John** loved **his** book”. **That** and **what** are also pronouns.
* The **subject** in a sentence is usually a **noun** or a **pronoun**. When a noun is plural, the verb has to be plural as well. Look at the following example:

|  |
| --- |
| The **boys fetch** **their** bags from the classroom.  You see that the subject, boys, is a plural noun (many boys) and the verb (fetch) is also plural. The pronoun is also plural (their) because it replaces ‘boys’ in the sentence. |

For a clearer, deeper understanding of concord, look at the following:

**CONCORD IS THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN WORDS IN GENDER, NUMBER,   
CASE, OR PERSON.**

Gender: The **queen** has lost **her** crown.

Number: The **shoes are** too small.

Person: **I am** thankful.

Three principles govern the subject-verb concord: Grammatical concord, Notional concord and principle of proximity.

## Grammatical concord

* A singular subject requires a singular verb

Example: My **son *watches*** television after dinner.

* A plural subject requires a plural verb

Example: My **sons *watch*** television after dinner.

If the subject is **a noun phrase** (a phrase is a group of words forming an abstract unit, but not a sentence, i.e. there is no verb): the **number of the verb** depends on the **number (singular or plural) in the main phrase.**

***Example:*** The **change** in female attitudes ***is*** most obvious in industry.

The **changes** in female attitudes ***are*** most obvious in industry.

**A clause** (a clause is a distinct part of a sentence, including a subject and predicate) in the position of subject counts as **singular**:

***Example:*** **That she was angry** really ***bothers*** me.

**Smoking cigarettes *is*** dangerous to your health.

**To err *is*** human.

**For students to hand in papers *is*** always a good idea.

**That they should all hand in papers and that the papers should all be so   
 good *was*** a big surprise.

**What I like most about the house *is*** that it’s warm.

## Notional Concord

1. Agreement of verb with subject according to the idea/notion of number

***Example:***

**Collective nouns** (A collective noun is a noun indicating a group or collection of similar individuals considered as one complete whole. It is therefore naturally regarded as being singular and as such takes a singular verb):

The **committee *is*** having a meeting.

The **committee *consists*** of seven members.

The **audience *is*** enjoying the show.

The **public *has*** to be served.

1. But, when the parts or members that make up the thing indicated by the collective noun are thought of individually, a plural verb may be used:

The **committee *are*** finding it difficult to reach a decision.

Her **family *are*** coming to dinner.

The **public *are*** requested not to litter the streets.

When necessary, a collective word must be followed by ***which*** when it is ***singular***, but ***who*** when it is ***plural***: ‘the board ***which is*** meeting…’; ‘the orchestra ***who are*** having coffee.’

1. The nouns *people, police, clergy, cattle* are always used with a plural verb, for example:

The **people** of Norway ***are*** called Norwegians.

The **police** ***are*** making enquiries about the murder.

**Cattle *are*** found crossing the road.

1. *People* is often used as the plural of *person*; it also means *nation*, e.g. The French *people*, the *peoples* of Europe.

## Principle of Proximity

1. Agreement of the verb with the noun closest to the verb.

*Example:* No one except his own **supporters *agree*** with him.

One in **ten *take*** drugs.

One or two **reasons *were*** suggested.

More than one **person *has*** refused.

Nearly one out of **three twenty-year-olds *are*** without work.

Can you tell me whether the hat or **the gloves are** red?

***Is* the hat** or the gloves red?

Either John or the **girls *have*** to do it.

Either the girls or **John *has*** to do it.

1. **Measures and partial numbers (fractions, percentages, decimals, etc.)**

*Example:* **Three milligrams of calcium nitrate *was*** administered.

**A quarter of the vines *were*** destroyed in the fire.

**Twenty-five per cent of the crop *was*** lost.

Half of the sand ***was*** wet.

Half of the plates ***were*** wet.

1. **Either/ or** and **neither /nor**: principle of **proximity**

*Example:* Either the **students** or the **parents *are*** going on the trip.

Either the students or the **teacher *is*** going to be there.

Either the teacher or the **students *are*** going to be there.

Either John or **Mary** ***has*** to do it.

Either John or the **girls** ***have*** to do it.

Either the girls or **John *has*** to do it.

Neither John nor **Mary *has*** to do it.

Neither John nor the **girls *have*** to do it.

<http://www.fs.gov.za/Departments/SAC/Library/depart/language_articles.htm>

## Concord in two texts

It is important that you are able to identify the subject-verb relations in business texts, and of course, you have to be able use it correctly in your own writing. Before you hand in an essay, you have to check all subjects and their verbs in your essays, assignments or reports (including your informal memos and letters).

|  |
| --- |
| **Argentina formally defaults on debt**  Sapa-AFP In Business Day 06/01/2002  BUENOS AIRES - **Argentina** **has** formally **defaulted** on its $141-billion public debt by failing to make a $28-billion payment on a bond, a local **news agency** **reported** on Friday, citing finance ministry sources. **Argentina failed** on Thursday to make payments on a lira-denominated bond due in 2007, according to the report. The **event had been expected**: on December 23 interim president Adolfo Rodriguez **Saa announced** a halt on debt payments soon after **he took** office. His **successor**, Eduardo Duhalde, who **took** office on January 1, **said** **he would continue** the policy. The finance **ministry was** tight lipped about the event late on Thursday, declining comment. |

We may list the subjects and their corresponding verbs in the following table:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Subjects** | **Verbs** |
| Argentina | **has** defaulted |
| news agency | **reported** |
| Argentina | **failed** |
| event | **had been expected** |
| Saa | **announced** |
| He | **took** |
| Successor (who) | **took + said** |
| He | **would continue** |
| Ministry | **was** |

In the past tenses, the use of was and were with singular or plural subjects may create problems. Otherwise, past tense is relatively easy to manage. It is the past tense sequence that poses problems: Argentina is singular; therefore, the proper noun takes singular **has**. In the next text, consider the subject-verb relations and the tenses that are used. The head word and the verb (i.e. subject + verb) have been placed in bold. It is important to note that one has to be careful to check on all head words in complex noun phrases and how these are related to the verbs in the text. It is also important to state that subject-verb relations apply only in the case of subjects and their finite verbs. Non-finite verbs do not require you to apply the rules of concord.

It is therefore important that you know what a finite verb is. It was for this reason that the concepts finite verb and subject were considered at the very start of this section. If you are uncertain about the distinction, re-read the entire Appendix.

|  |
| --- |
| **Chinese economists send mixed signals**  *AFP* In Business Day 06/01/2002  BEIJING - Chinese state-employed **analysts disagree** on their forecasts for economic growth this year because of conflicting views on the impact of the slowing world economy, official **media said** Friday. Among the optimists **is Chen** Dongqi, **head** of research at the State Development Planning Commission, **who expects** 7.5% growth in 2002, the highest forecast by any government economist so far. "**I don't want** to play down China's economic growth potential in the years to come," **Chen said**, according to the China Daily. China's **economy expanded** by 7.3% last year, compared with 8% the year before. The **decline was** mainly due to a steep decline in export growth to about 5% from 27.8% in 2000.  Most Chinese **economists share** the view that foreign **trade will continue** to be hurt by the sluggish international economy but the **question is** how serious the **impact will be**. Explaining his 7.5% prediction, **Chen told** the China Daily that the negative **impact** of the September 11 attacks in the United States **would be** short-term. "Fortunately, the **interruption will not last** long," **he said**.  More serious **are the difficulties** that many foreign **economies are experiencing** due to the slump in the technology industry, but the good **news was** many **governments were looking** for ways to overcome the problems, **Chen said**. But even within the State Development Planning Commission, **there are dissenting voices**, with some adopting a gloomier view, the **paper said**.  "If the developed **economies are** still in recession, China's (economic) growth **rate will continue** to drop this year," **said Wang** Jian, a macroeconomic **expert** with the commission, **who was not quoted** as giving a growth forecast. "Last year's **decline** in export (growth) **was caused** by the worsening global economic situation. This year, world economic **expectations are** even lower and **that resulted** in my downbeat judgement," **Wang said**.  *AFP* |

**Task:** When you read texts, identify the subject-verb relations in them. Keep a list of interesting examples of subject-verb concord.

# 2. Journaling academic arguments – Developing your own voice

## Introduction

We recommend that you keep a journal and write at least three pages each day of the week. The purpose is to develop the habit of writing, and to become used to putting your thoughts down on paper. You may write about any topic you have come across in the course. Write three pages a day. You can also choose any argument you came across in any of your modules. In this case, we have included an outline of the **Read-Think-Write** pattern of text production.

### Learning outcomes

By the end of Part 2 of the module, students will have written at least 21 pages of spontaneous writing.

**Calculation this!** If you write three pages per day for 200 days of the year, how many pages will you have written? Easy sum, I would say: a whopping 600 pages will have come from your pen. To be able to reflect critically on your journaling abilities, we suggest that you read the following article (not compulsory):

[Advantages and disadvantages of Journaling](file:///C:\Documents%20and%20Settings\uvp\Desktop\2009\SFCW%202009\English%20module%20material\Revised%20Materials%20after%20workshop\skills%20pack%20parts\050908_Journal_Writing_in_Experiential_Education%20Possibilities,%20Problems,%20and%20Recommendations_%20ERIC%20Digest.htm).[..\..\Skills\_Pack\050908\_Journal\_Writing\_in\_Experiential\_Education Possibilities, Problems, and Recommendations\_ ER.htm](file:///C:\Documents%20and%20Settings\uvp\Desktop\2009\SFCW%202009\English%20module%20material\Skills_Pack\050908_Journal_Writing_in_Experiential_Education%20Possibilities,%20Problems,%20and%20Recommendations_%20ER.htm)

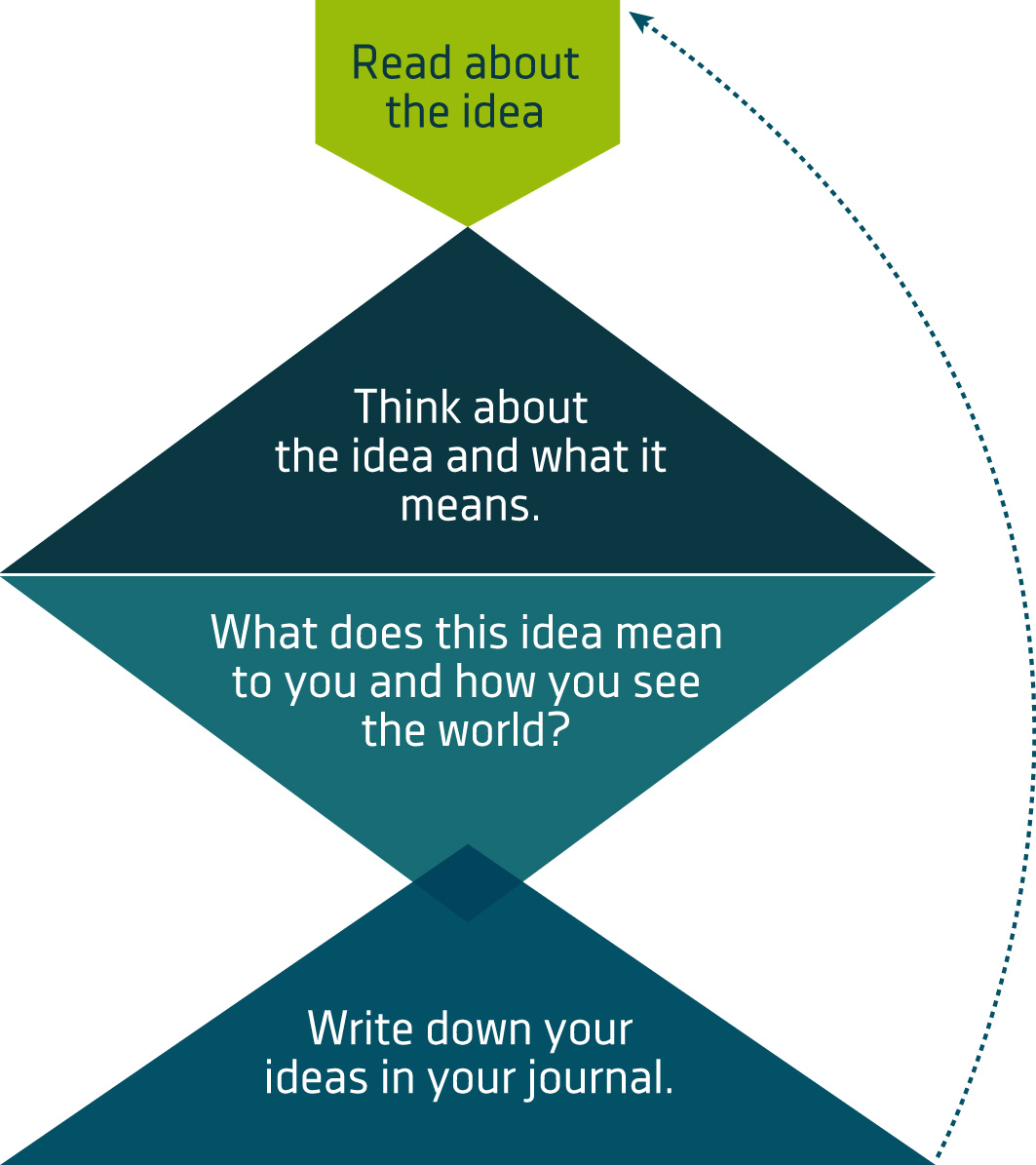
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **English icons_5.png** | **Do not use your journal as a private war zone where you attack others.** |

Look at the following structure; it can help you with your journal entries:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Icon_3.jpg | Start-up activity 2.1: |

From reading to thinking to writing

We recommend the following formula:



### An example:

Outline of the idea:

Okun (2002: 43) says that practitioners in the helping professions have to develop high levels of self-awareness. Once they have developed these levels of awareness, they are better at helping others because they are able to step away from their own needs, perceptions and feelings. They are then better able to deal with others’ thoughts and feelings.

What this means for me:

I also believe that we have to work on our self-awareness. If we don’t have self-awareness, those hidden parts of ourselves may lead to negative experiences, and then, we may not be able to understand why. There are many ways of raising our self-awareness. Firstly, we have to measure our strengths and weaknesses. Second, once we know what we like and what we can do, we will know what to do with our energies. We should not avoid our weaknesses; rather, we should also keep an eye on them, at try develop them too. Through self-awareness we will be able to plan our personal development more effectively.

For more information on critical-reflective, self-directed analysis, click on the following button:

[Self awareness and success](file:///C:\Documents%20and%20Settings\uvp\Desktop\2009\SFCW%202009\English%20module%20material\Skills_Pack\0509_Self_Awareness_How_to.pdf)

# 3. Cohesion in Texts

**Cohesion** refers to how **words** are **connected** in a text. This means that the words in a text are related in different ways. For example, look at how the word ‘however’ is used in the following sentence:

|  |
| --- |
| *He thought he had done well in the test. However, when he received his results, he realized that he had not known his work as well as he had thought.* |

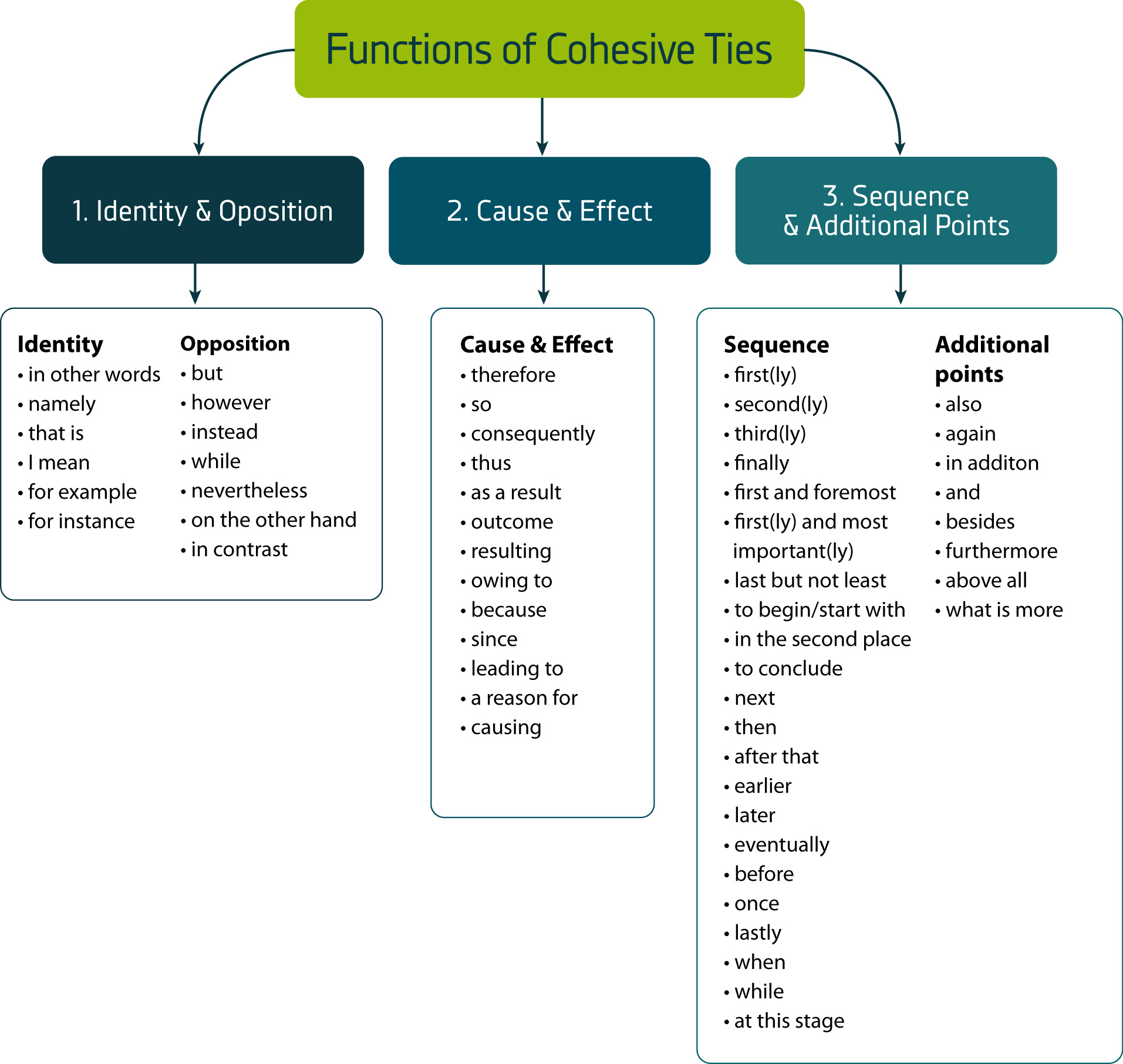
This particular discourse marker (also known as a connecting or linking word) warns you that you are about to read contradicting information.

Look at the following examples of **cohesive ties** (**connecting/linking words**).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cohesion ties | | | |
| **Conjuctions** | **Prepositions** | **Pronouns** | **Adverbs** |
| and | thought | he | nevertheless |
| but | via | she | nonetheless |
| while | over | it | however |
| because | by | they | by contrast |
| furthermore | with | their | on the contrary |
| in addition | above | we | still |
| moreover | below | us | on the other hand |
| firstly | close | ours |  |
| secondly | nearby | which |  |
| thirdly | on | this |  |
| either...or | of | that |  |
| neither...nor | to | these |  |
| before |  | those |  |
| while |  | herself |  |
| since |  | himself |  |
| after |  | themselves |  |
| until |  |  |  |

See if you can identify the cohesive ties in the following passage.

**(1)** People have argued hotly for centuries about the pros and cons of comics, the most popular and widely-read form of literature in the world. **(2)** The continuing popularity of comics is indicted, for example, by the fact that comic strips have been made and read since 3500 BC, and that in America today they are enjoyed by over 70, 000,000, both young and old. **(3)** There it is estimated that, every Sunday morning, some 41,000,000 children pore over comic sections of the newspaper, whereas very few read the Bible with much concentration. **(4)** Educators, gasping at the proportions of this addiction, say that story-strips provide entertainment only for moronic minds – that is, they suggest that comics lack mental substance, artistic form and educational value. **(5)** However, less conservative educators and some psychologists argue that because comics evoke an instant and universal emotional response, they can be utilized educationally in the teaching of literacy and morality. **(6)** Instead of throwing them out of the window, teachers in third world countries (such as Africa, Mexico and India) can use comics for mass literacy projects, since this material is both cheap to produce and visually stimulating. **(7)** Moral educators suggest that comics can also be used with children to cultivate, visually, a perception of what is right and wrong, good and evil. **(8)** “Superman”, for instance, can be used as an example to young boys of a person who works hard to right wrongs, to protect the weak, and to help humanity – in short, to see that good overcomes evil **[[1]](#footnote-0)** (Rodseth, V., Johanson, L. & Rodseth, W. (1992) Think Write. Southern Africa: Hodder & Stoughton Educational.)



[[2]](#footnote-1)

1. **Identity (sameness) and Opposition**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **in other words** | **that is** | **for example** |
| **namely** | **I mean** | **for instance** |

**Example:**

My grandfather is a difficult old man. It is not easy to get along with him.

*My grandfather is a difficult old man.* ***In other words*** *it is not easy to get along with him.*

Now, use the words in the box above to complete the following paragraph.

* 1. **Connectives expressing identity (sameness)**

There is a certain type of connective word which indicates that the statement following it is saying much the same as the statement preceding it. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(1)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the new statement is re-stating the first statement, \_\_\_\_(2)\_\_\_\_\_, saying it again, only in different words, or in different terms. \_\_\_(3)\_\_\_\_, the new statement might give an example demonstrating the same point as the first statement, \_(4)\_ present the point in more specific or concrete terms. **[[3]](#footnote-2)**

(Rodseth, V., Johanson, L. & Rodseth, W. (1992) Think Write. Southern Africa: Hodder & Stoughton Educational.)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **in contrast** | **instead** | **while** | **but** |
| **on the other hand** | **nevertheless** | **however** |  |

* 1. **Connectives expressing opposition**

\_\_\_(1)\_\_\_\_ some connective devices express identity, others express opposition. \_\_\_(2)\_\_\_\_\_ of presenting the same point in another way, they present a completely opposing point. “Identity” connectives sometimes introduce examples, \_\_(3)\_\_ “opposition” connectives never do. The statement introduced by the “opposition” connective looks at another side of the story from the point adjacent to it. \_\_\_(4)\_\_\_, it is still related to the main idea, which itself usually expresses an opposite or a contrast.[[4]](#footnote-3)

(Rodseth, V., Johanson, L. & Rodseth, W. (1992) Think Write. Southern Africa: Hodder & Stoughton Educational.)

1. **Cause and Effect**

Look at how the causes, connectors and effects of the following passage are tabulated below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **therefore** | **consequently** | **because** | **since** |  |
| **outcome** | **owing to** | **as a result** | **thus** | **causing** |
| **leading to** | **a reason for** | **resulting** | **so** |  |

1. My alarm did not go off this morning.
2. I got up late
3. I was late for work
4. I did not give my boss the report at 8:00.
5. He was very angry.
6. He had to cancel his appointment with the MD.

**Because** my alarm did not go off this morning, I got up late, **which resulted in** my being late for work. **Consequently**, my boss was very angry **because** I did not give him the report at 8:00. **As a result**, he had to cancel his appointment with the MD.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cause | Connector | Effect |
| my alarm did not go off | because | I got up late |
| my alarm did not go off | which resulted in | my being late for work |
| I did not give him the report at 8:00 | because | my boss was angry |
| I did not give him the report at 8:00 | as a result | he had to cancel his appointment with the MD |

1. **Sequencing and Additional Points**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **first(ly)** | **finally** | **next** | **before** | **while** |
| **second(ly)** | **to begin/start with** | **then** | **once** | **when** |
| **third(ly)** | **in the second place** | **after that** | **lastly** | **at this stage** |

Use the connectors in the box to connect the following sentences:

1. Make sure that the handbrake is on, and the car is in neutral.
2. Depress the clutch.
3. Turn the key and press the accelerator.
4. Put the car into first gear.
5. Release the clutch gradually and take off the hand-brake.
6. Press the accelerator gently.
7. Move forward.

(Rodseth, V., Johanson, L. & Rodseth, W. (1992) Think Write. Southern Africa: Hodder & Stoughton Educational.)

There are many ways in which these sentences can be connected; the following are two examples:

**To begin with**, make sure that the handbrake is on, and the car is in neutral. **Then** depress the clutch. **Next**, turn the key and press the accelerator. **After that**, put the car into first gear. **Once** the clutch is released, gradually take off the hand-brake. **Finally**, press the accelerator gently and move forward.

OR

**Firstly**, make sure that the handbrake is on, and the car is in neutral. **Secondly,** depress the clutch. **Thirdly**, turn the key and press the accelerator. **Then** put the car into first gear, release the clutch gradually and take off the hand-brake. **Finally**, press the accelerator gently and move forward.

# 4. Common Errors

## Mind-mapping, topic and supporting sentences

### Mind-mapping

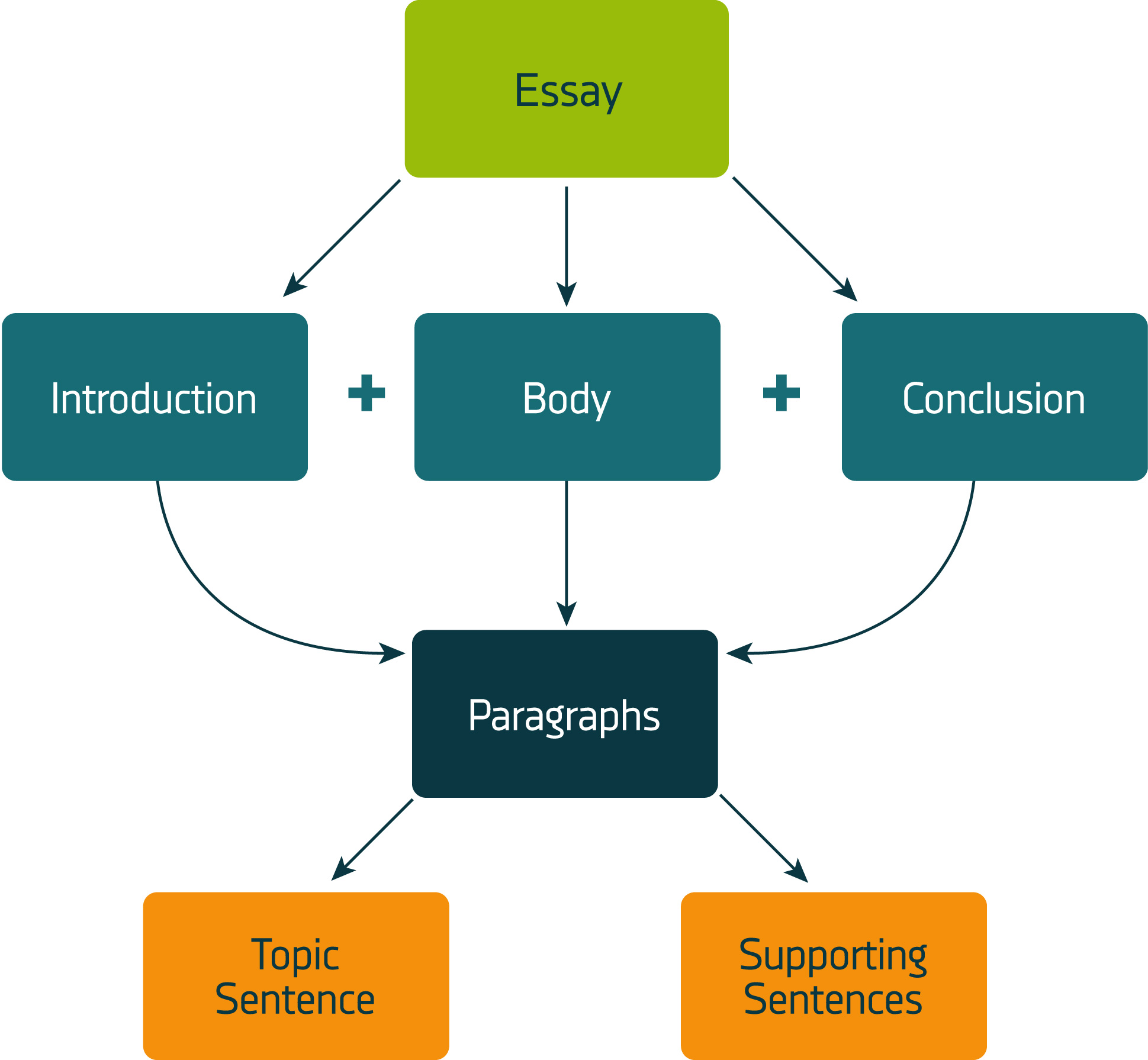
1. **How to create a mind-map:**

* *Use* ***single words or simple phrases for information****:* You can fill in the gaps later on, but a mind map consists of single, strong words/phrases that carry the most important information. Too many words will just clutter your mind map.
* ***Print words****:* Joined up or indistinct writing can be more difficult to read.
* ***Use colour*** *to* ***separate different ideas****:* This will help you to separate ideas where necessary. It also makes your mind map easier to remember. Colour also helps to show the organisation of the subject.
* ***Use symbols and images****:* Where a symbol or picture means something to you, use it. Pictures can help you to remember information more effectively than words.
* ***Using cross-linkages****:* Information in one part of the mind map may relate to another part. Here you can draw in lines to show the cross-linkages. This helps you to see how one part of the subject connects with another.

<http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS_01.htm>

An essay consists of an **introduction**, a **body** and a **conclusion**.

Each of these are made up of paragraphs, which in turn are made up of topic sentences and supporting sentences:



Look at the following paragraph:

|  |
| --- |
| *Birds of prey often circle in the sky as they search for their victims. Many bird watchers have described their delight in seeing an eagle soaring before it swoops down on a rabbit, or a hawk hovering high above the ground as it searches for a mouse.* |

The first sentence contains the **main idea** and is therefore the **topic sentence**, and the other sentences **give specific details** and are therefore **supporting sentences**.

The **topic sentence**:

* introduces the main idea to the reader
* is a general statement

The topic sentence in this paragraph introduces birds of prey and the fact that they hunt for their prey

The **supporting sentences**:

* give more information about the main idea,
* and are therefore more specific

The specific, supporting information about the birds of prey and how they hunt (the main idea) includes:

* the birds of prey we are dealing with are an eagle and a hawk
* an eagle soars and swoops and it hunts rabbits
* a hawk hovers in the sky and it hunts mice

Rodseth, R., Johanson, L., Rodseth, W. (1992) Think Write. Hodder and Stoughton Educational, Randburg.

Topic sentences are general statements and supporting sentences are more specific; now look at the following:

|  |
| --- |
| *Granny Smith green apples / fruit / apples / food green apples / the green Granny Smith apple in my lunch tin* |

These can be arranged from general to specific, as follows:

* food
* fruit
* apples
* green apples
* Granny Smith green apples
* the green Granny Smith apple in my lunch tin

Now, order the following items from general to specific:

pansies, plants, annual flowers, flowers, the African pansy

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6. the black-eyed African pansy

[[5]](#footnote-4) Rodseth, R., Johanson, L., Rodseth, W. (1992) Think Write. Hodder and Stoughton Educational, Randburg.

Look at this **opening sentence** for a paragraph, and at the **main idea** which it contains:

|  |
| --- |
| *“She was not very fond of university.”* |

Look at the following sentences and decide which are appropriate supporting sentences, and which are not:

|  |
| --- |
| 1. There were problems between the mother and father at home. 2. The classes were poorly organised, which resulted in many subjects clashes. 3. Her father always blamed her for the problems at home. 4. The lecturers were unfriendly, impatient and intolerant. 5. They were never willing to listen to students’ explanations for arriving late for class. 6. The problems at home were affecting her relationship with her boyfriend. |

Sentences **2, 4** and **5** would be appropriate **supporting sentences**, as they give reasons (specific information) for her not liking university (main idea).

Should you combine these to form a paragraph, it would read as follows:

She was not very fond of university. The classes were poorly organised, which resulted in many subject clashes. The lecturers were unfriendly, impatient and intolerant. They were never willing to listen to students’ explanations for arriving late for class.

|  |
| --- |
| **Remember:**   * Before writing a paragraph, you need to **brainstorm**, **mind-map**, **select** **and order** your ideas. * Good writers **draft and revise** their work before producing their final paragraph * A good paragraph has a **main idea**, usually expressed in the first sentence * This sentence is known as the **topic sentence.** * The topic sentence is not a heading, but a **full, declarative sentence**. * Connected **support sentences** develop the main idea, expressed in the topic sentence. * In good writing, every sentence **connects** with the previous sentence. * The main idea in the topic sentence is often a **generalisation**. * The support sentences give **specific** details illustrating the main idea.   Rodseth, R., Johanson, L., Rodseth, W. (1992) Think Write. Hodder and Stoughton Educational, Randburg. |

1. **Use discourse markers to show the reader where you are headed:**

Discourse markers are words that are used to connect ideas in writing.

**Examples of discourse markers:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * with regard to * regarding as regards * as far as………..is concerned * as for * on the other hand * while * firstly * secondly * next * whereas * however, nonetheless | * moreover * furthermore * although * when * in addition * therefore * as a result * consequently * so that * more specifically * nevertheless |

**Example:**

There are many reasons why I don’t like school. **Firstly**, I dislike getting up so early in the morning and putting on layers of uncomfortable clothes. **Secondly**, because I take so long to get dressed, my breakfast is always cold by the time I get to the table. **As a result**, I usually have a stomach ache when I get to school. **In addition**, we usually have Mathematics first and our teacher is very strict. **Finally,** there is this boy named Ted Wilkins who always bullies me during break time –this is by far the worst part of my school day.

1. **Hyphenation of compound adjectives**

An adjective is a describing word; they describe nouns.

For example: My dog, Spot, is an **enormous** *animal*.

The adjective “enormous” describes the noun “animal.

When two adjectives describe a noun, this is referred to as a compound adjective, and it needs to be hyphenated:

One usually gets paid very well for **high-risk** *work*.

The school seems to have many **ill-mannered** *children*.

1. **The use of articles (the, an and a)**

**‘The’** is used to indicate when you refer to a specific person or thing:

I am looking for **the** book with the red cover (refers to a particular book that has a red cover, not just any book with a red cover)

**‘A’** is use as a more general reference:

They are going to paint **a** house (there are many houses and they are going paint one of them).

**‘An’** is also more general, and is used **before** a word that starts with a **vowel**, or before a word that is pronounced in such a way that it sounds as though it starts with a vowel:

The principal had to deal with **an** **i**ncredibly difficult situation.

He is **an** **h**onest man. (The ‘**h**’ is **not pronounced**, so it sounds as though honest begins with ‘**o**’, which is why ‘**an**’ is used)

1. **Belief and believe**

Belief is a noun (a naming word): The belief that he is a hero is mistaken.

Believe is a verb (a doing word): I believe that you are a good student.

1. **The use of ‘a lot’**

Try to minimise the use of ‘a lot’;

Rather use ‘many’ in a sentence such as: A lot of cases (many cases)

Rather use ‘much’ in a sentence such as: A lot of work (much work = uncountable)

1. **The apostrophe (‘)**

The apostrophe is used in two ways:

* to show **possession** (the ownership of something), and
* to show **omission** (that something has been left out)

Look at the following examples:

1. All the princess**’s** dresses were pink
2. That is Sarah**’s** bag, not yours.
3. The child**’s** lunchbox went missing.
4. The children**’s** clothes were dirty after the soccer match.
5. The student**s’** marks were very good.
6. The princesse**s’** lost **their** books.
7. **\***The dog bit its tail.

|  |
| --- |
| **Rules for possession:**   * A **singular** noun **ending** in an **s** takes an **apostrophe s**, as in sentence **1**. * A **singular** noun that **does not** **end** in an **s** also takes an **apostrophe s**, as in sentences **2** and **3**. * A **plural** noun that **does not end** in an **s** takes an **apostrophe s**, as in sentence **4**. * A **plural** noun that **ends** in an **s** takes an **apostrophe** **after** the **s**, as in sentences **5** and **6**.   **\*** **NOTE** that in sentence 7, **NO** apostrophe is used! The only time ‘its’ has an apostrophe, is when it signals the **omission** of the ‘**i**’ in ‘**it is’**. |

1. I can**’t** understand why you don**’t** want to go with me.
2. Let**’s** see you try it.
3. You should**n’t** tease the dog; it**’s** going to bite you.

The **apostrophe** is used to show that a letter has been **left out.**

In sentence **1**, the apostrophe **replaces** the ‘**no**’ in ‘**cannot**’, and the ‘**o**’ in ‘**do not’**.

In sentence **2**, the apostrophe **replaces** the ‘**u**’ in ‘**let us’.**

In sentence **3**, the apostrophe **replaces** the ‘**o**’ in ‘**should not’,** and ‘**i**’ in ‘**it** **is**’.

1. **Pronouns**

A pronoun is used in the place of a noun in a sentence to avoid it sounding clumsy.

Look at the following example to see why pronouns are necessary:

Tony took **Tony’s cat** to the vet because **Tony’s cat** was ill.

The children hid **the children’s books** under **the children’s** seats.

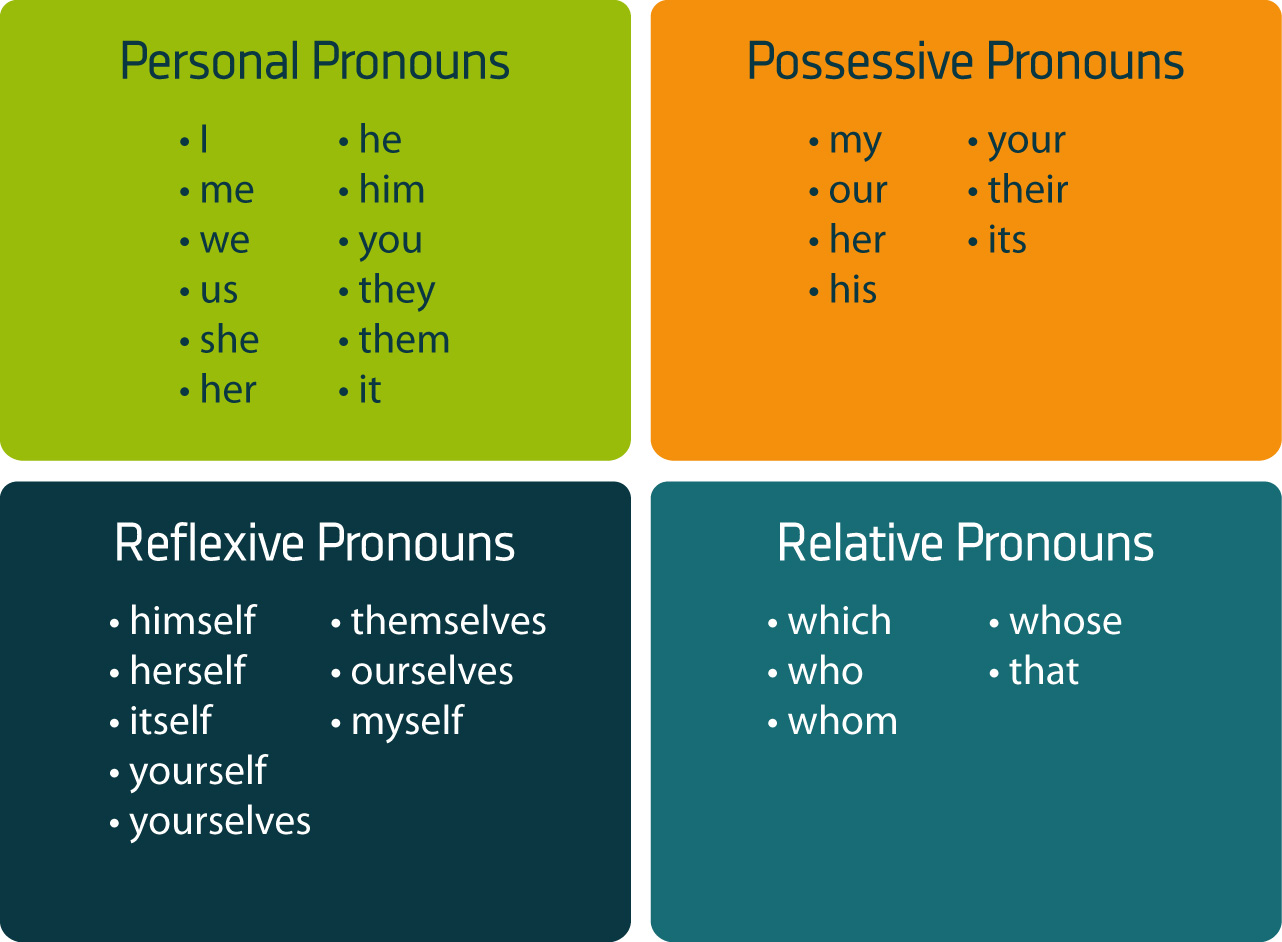
My mother couldn’t find the flour that **my mother** uses to make **my mother’s** famous cakes.

The sentences should rather read:

Tony took **his** cat to the vet because **it** was ill.

The children hid **their** books under **their** seats.

My mother couldn’t find the flour that **she** uses to make **her** famous cakes.



Now try complete the following sentences using the pronoun-type indicators above:

1. He told \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_ could win the race.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ had her hair cut on Monday, but \_\_\_\_\_ didn’t like the way the hairdresser had cut \_\_\_\_\_ hair.
3. They did not know what to tell \_\_\_\_\_\_ parents about \_\_\_\_\_\_ bad behaviour at school.
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_ had a wonderful party on Saturday; all \_\_\_\_\_ friends were there.
5. He is the man \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ stole the car.
6. She didn’t know \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ bag it was.

*Check below for answers.* **[[6]](#footnote-5)**

1. **Tenses**

Look at the following sentences and time lines to determine the tense of the sentences. The **auxiliary verbs** together with the **verbs** are what determine tense.

|  |
| --- |
| **Past tense**   1. She **was working** in the garden when it started raining. 2. I **had been** **waiting** for hours for my dad to come home. 3. They **had** done research on the property before they bought it. 4. My friend **moved** to New Zealand when she left school.   diagram_7.jpg |

|  |
| --- |
| **Present tense**   1. Mary often **arrives** early for class. 2. What **are** you **doing** with that bucket of water? 3. They **have** **not eaten** their food yet. 4. **We have been** swimming for the last 3 hours.   diagram_8.jpg |

|  |
| --- |
| **Future tense**   1. The train **will** arrive today. 2. What **will** you **be** doing on Monday? 3. **She'll have** gone by the time you get back. 4. Dave **will have been** my husband for 12 year this coming Saturday.   diagram_9.jpg |

1. **General errors**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The difference between loose and lose | My pants are too loose on me, they are about to fall off. |
| I put it in my bag because I was afraid I would **lose** it. |
| The difference between  off and of | Be careful that you do not fall **off** the wall. |
| I am sick **of** waiting in the bank for so long every time I need to draw money. |
| The difference between safe and save | I would love to **save** all the animals at the SPCA. |
| It is not **safe** to walk around alone at night. |
| The difference between were and where | They **were** on their way to the shop when they saw him. |
| **Where** did you put my pencil? |
| The difference between whether and weather | I cannot decide **whether** I prefer the green dress or the blue pants. |
| The **weather** was so bad yesterday that I had to stay indoors the entire day. |
| The difference between practice and practise | Practice is a **noun** and practise is a **verb** |
| I **practise** writing every day of my life.  The **practice** that doctors perform community is a solution to health-care system problems. |
| The difference between no, know and now | I **know** that you work very hard (**to have knowledge of**)  **Now** is the time to act (**the present moment**)  There is **no** more sugar in the house (**nothing**) |
| Slang | Avoid using slang in your writing, write out the whole word |
| gonna = going to  wanna = want to  cause = because |
| SMS language | Avoid using SMS language in your writing |
| gr8 = great  2nite = tonight  u = you |
| Contractions | Avoid using contractions; write out the whole word |
| can’t = cannot  won’t = will not  isn’t = is not  don’t = do not |

1. **Ambiguity**

If a sentence is ambiguous, then it can be understood in more than one way. In other words, it has more than one meaning. The double meaning can be quite funny and is often unintended.

For example, look at the following newspaper headings and see if you can identify the ambiguity in each of them:

1. KIDS MAKE NUTRITIOUS SNACKS
2. STOLEN PAINTING FOUND BY TREE
3. MINERS REFUSE TO WORK AFTER DEATH
4. MILK DRINKERS ARE TURNING TO POWDER
5. INCLUDE YOUR CHILDREN WHEN BAKING COOKIES
6. SQUAD HELPS DOG BITE VICTIM

<http://www.fun-with-words.com/ambiguous_headlines.html>, viewed on 11 June 2009

**Different meanings:**

1. The kids are the nutritious snacks, so it is healthy to eat kids **OR** nutritious snacks are made by kids.
2. The tree found the stolen painting **OR** the stolen painting was found in the vicinity of the tree.
3. The miners refused to work after one of the minders died **OR** the miners refused to work after they died.
4. People who drink milk are resorting to drinking powdered milk **OR** people who drink milk are themselves turning into powder.
5. You should allow your children to help you bake cookies **OR** when you bake cookies, you should bake your children as well.
6. The squad helped the dog bite the victim **OR** the squad helped the victim who was bitten by the dog.

The double meaning is usually a result of incorrect word order in a sentence. Once you have written something, read it again carefully to make sure there is no double meaning.

1. **Punctuation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A2.jpg | **Question mark:**  Used to indicate a question. It acts as a full stop at the end of the sentence. The sentence that follows starts with a capital letter.  • *Please would you help me carry this bag?* It is so heavy.  • *Don't you ever listen to anything I say?* |
| A4.jpg | **Exclamation mark:**  Used to indicate an exclamation. It acts as a full stop at the end of the sentence. The sentence that follows starts with a capital letter.  • *Go away! I never want to see you again!*  • *Don't put your dirty feet on the bed!* |
| A1.jpg | **Colon:**  Used to introduce a list, a summary, an explanation, or before reporting what somebody has said.  • *Remember the following important points : brush your teeth, eat your vegetables, and don't watch too much television.*  • *Paul: Larry is a terrific fellow, you should meet him.* |
| A6.jpg | **Brackets:**  Used to indicate parenthesis. This is additional information, without which the sentence will still make sense.  • *I had a dog (a black poodle) that got run over.*  • *The University of the Free State (UFS) is located in Bloemfontein.* |
| A7.jpg | **Apostrophe:**  Used to show possession or omission (refer to beginning of Common Errors for further information)  Omission:  • *I can't understand this question.*  • *Don't walk to school alone, it is dangerous.*  Possession:  • *That is Tony's hat.*  • *The learners' bags got wet when it rained.* |
| A10.jpg | **Full stop:**  used at the end of a sentence and in abreviations  • *So many children in South Africa are homeless.*  • *Dr. A.M. Goodie will be attending the seminar today.*  • *etc.* |
| A5.jpg | **Inverted commas or quotation marks** are used to indicate a direct quotation.  • *The boy said, "I have never been to Mexico."*  • *In yesterday's meeting, John spoke of "highly motivated staff" as the key to success in business.* |
| A8.jpg | **Hyphen:**  used between the parts of a compound word or name or between the syllables of a word when divided at the end of a line of text. Don't confuse the hyphen with the dash.  • *post-box*  or *happy-go-lucky* or *long-legged animal* |
| A8.jpg | **Dash:**  used to set off a word or phrase after an independent clause or to set off words, phrases, or clauses that interrupt a sentence. Don't confuse the dash with the hyphen.  • *"She was very angry and began screaming - at me, I mean."* |
| A9.jpg | **Semicolon**  (1)Used when two clauses are not joined by connecting words such as *but, and, yet, or, nor, for,* and *so*.  (2)Used to separate main clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb (such as *however, consequently, otherwise, moreover, nevertheless*)  • *Students with good reading proficiencies are given standard texts books; students with low reading proficiencies are given additional supporting materials.*  • *Many people are under the impression they are finished learning; however, they don't realise that learning is a life-long process.* |
| A11.jpg | **Comma:**  (1) Used to separate clauses in a sentence when they are joined by :*but, for, or, or, yet*  • *The show was finished, yet the audience remained in their seats.*  *• It was my birthday yesterday, so my mom took me out for supper.*  (2) Use a comma after introductory clauses that begin with: after, although, as, because, if, since, when and while.  *• While I was washing my hands, my dog ate the food on the table.*  *• As for the game, it did not go very well.*  (3) Use a comma after introductory words such as yes, however, well.  *• Well, then you should go on your own.*  *• Yes, I think those pants look nice.*  (4) Use two commas to set off clauses or phrases that are not essential to the meaning of the sentence.  *• Last week Wednesay, the day it rained so hard, I went to the supermarket to buy candles.*  *• My cousin, the boy wearing the blue jacket, is seven years old.*  (5) Use a comma to separate 3 or more words, phrases or clauses that are written in a series.  *• I went to the store to buy eggs, bread, milk and honey.*  *• The boy next door is unfriendly, he never plays with other children, he kicks his dog when he is angry and is generally a rather unpleasant fellow.*  (6) Use a comma to separate 2 or more adjectives used to describe a noun.  *• Betty has a large, hairy, long-legged dog.*  *• You are dealing with a difficult, stubborn old man.*  (7) Use a comma near the end of a sentence to separate contrasting elements or to show a pause or shift.  • *He was merely lazy, not stupid.*  *• You are one of Izabel's friends, aren't you?*  *• The main in the rain coat looked strange, even creepy.*  (8) Use a comma to set off phrases at the end of the sentence that refer back to the beginning or the middle of the sentence.  *• Lisa waved at Mark, who was leaving for Johannesburg.*  (9) Use a comma to separate geographical names, items in dates, addresses and titles in names.  *• She comes from Cape Town, South Africa.*  *• December 21, 2001, was the year my son was born.*  (10) Use a comma to indicate a quotation.  *• Ruth said, "I hope I see you again soon."*  *• "Don't you want to come with," said John.*  (11) Use a comma wherever necessary to prevent confusion or misreading.  *• To Helga, Michael was just a friend.* |

# 5. Self Awareness

## Why is this for me?

Self-awareness, or understanding more about ourselves, is at the centre of personal development and career development. This development process should run parallel to your academic studies, and the two processes should complement each other.

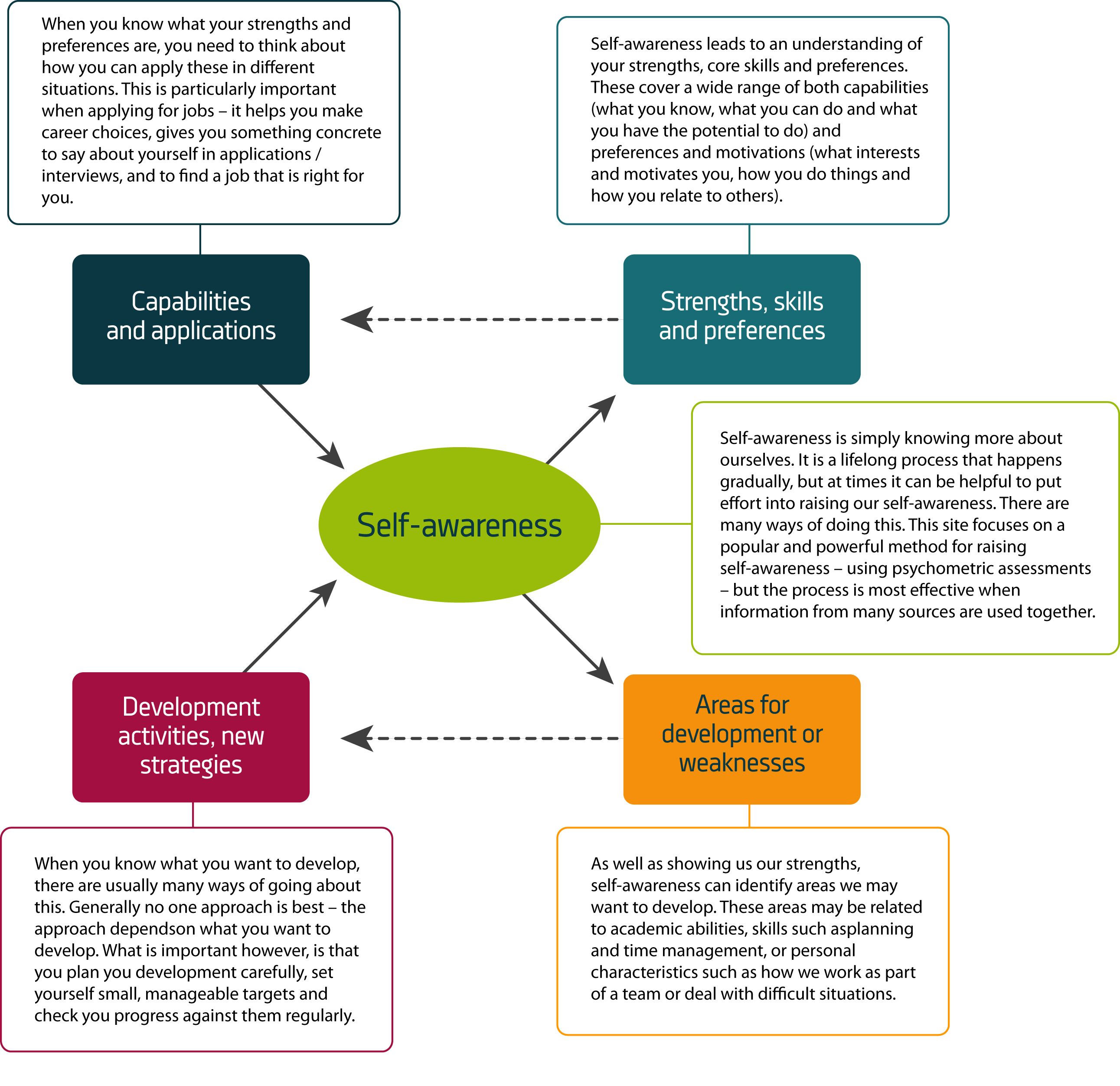
As you progress through your course, you should gain knowledge of your subject and yourself. Together, this knowledge helps you prepare for what you want to do next, by helping you to:

* make the right choices (e.g. whether to get a job or take a further course of study)
* make the most of your learning opportunities
* identify what are your key skills and where you can apply these most effectively
* describe fluently the ‘type’ of person you are
* identify things you might find difficult and develop strategies to deal with these
* understand how you relate to others in different situations (e.g. team work, leadership/management, socially).

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## Becoming self-aware

One way to think about self-awareness and how it relates to development activities is shown below.



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1. (2) for example; (3) whereas; (4) that is; (5) However; (6) Instead of (8) for instance; (8) in short [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Rodseth, V., Johanson, L. & Rodseth, W. 1992.

   *Think Write*. Southern Africa:

   Hodder & Stoughton Educational. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. (**1)** In other words (**or** that is / I mean); **(2)** that is (**or** in other words); **(3)** For instance (**or** for example); **(4)** or. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. **(1)** While (**or** Although); **(2)** Instead; **(3)** but; (4) Nevertheless (However) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. plants, flowers, annual flowers, pansies, the African pansy, the black-eyed African pansy [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. He told **himself** that **he** could win the race OR He told **her** that **she** could win the race etc. ² She/she/her; ³ their/their; ⁴ **They** had a wonderful party on Saturday, all **their** friends were there OR **She** had a wonderful party on Saturday, all **her** friends were there, etc. ⁵ who; ⁶ whose [↑](#footnote-ref-5)