



METODICKÝ LIST K MZ Z ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA 4 Writing: Cohesion and coherence

An awareness of cohesion and coherence is a very important skill for students to develop. How is **cohesion** different from **coherence**?

A paragraph or section of text is **cohesive** if the sentences are well structured, well linked together and there is no unnecessary repetition. Cohesion can be thought of as all the grammatical and lexical links that connect one part of a text to another. This includes use of synonyms, lexical sets, pronouns, verb tenses, time references, grammatical reference, etc. (e.g. 'it', 'neither' and 'this' all refer to an idea previously mentioned. 'First of all', 'then' and 'after that' help to sequence a text.).

A piece of writing is **coherent** if it is clearly organised and has a logical sequence of ideas. In other words, a text is coherent when sentences, ideas, and details fit together smoothly and clearly and readers can follow along easily. To make a text/ essay coherent, it is necessary to know which methods/devices to use:

A Repetition of a key term or phrase helps to focus your ideas and to keep the reader on track. Repetition generally lends itself to a sense of coherence (or at least to the illusion of coherence).

Example: *You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.* (A. Lincoln)

B Synonyms are words that have essentially the same/similar meaning, and they provide some variety in your word choices, helping the reader to stay focused on the idea being discussed.

Example: *I turned to the ascent of the hill. The climb/task/thing/It is not difficult.*

C Pronouns quite naturally connect ideas because they almost always refer the reader to something earlier in the text. We cannot say "This is true because ..." without causing the reader to consider what "this" could mean. *This, that, these, those, he, she, it, they, and we* are useful pronouns for referring back to something previously mentioned.

Example: *When scientific experiments do not work out as expected, they are often considered failures until some other scientist tries them again. Those that work out better the second time around are the ones that promise the most rewards.*

D Transitional words/tags signal relationships between sentences. They join sentences together. Transitional words can be simple conjunctions (as *and, but, nor, for, yet, or*, and sometimes *so*) or more complex signals that ideas are somehow connected (the conjunctive adverbs and transitional expressions such as *however, therefore, moreover, nevertheless, in addition, also, on the other hand*).

Example: *I like autumn, and yet autumn is a sad time of the year, too. The leaves turn bright shades of red and the weather is mild, but I can't help thinking ahead to the winter and the ice storms that will surely blow through here. In addition, that will be the season of chapped faces, too many layers of clothes to put on, and days when I'll have to shovel heaps of snow from my driveway.*

E Sometimes, repeated or parallel sentence patterns can help the reader follow along and keep ideas tied together.

Example: *And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.* (from a speech by President John F. Kennedy)

Source: www.aber.ac.uk; <http://aaweb.gallaudet.edu>; www.missouri.edu; <http://leo.stcloudstate.edu> 11 2009

(1) Many young people choose to continue their education at colleges or universities in English-speaking countries such as Britain, Australia or America. Nevertheless, while studying overseas has clear advantages, it is not without its problems. In this essay, both points of view will be considered. (2) To begin with, studying overseas has significant academic benefits. In general, the standard of education is very high due to the up-to-date equipment and resources that are available in colleges and universities. As a rule, the quality of teaching is also high, as teachers and lecturers are well-qualified professionals who are aware of all the latest developments in their fields of interest. (2/3) In addition, the qualifications which a student obtains are usually valid anywhere in the world. As well as the obvious academic benefits, students also experience another culture, improve their language skills and meet many new people. As a result of living away from their families, they become more independent, tolerant and emotionally mature, all of which aids their personal development. (3/4) However, in some cases, studying abroad can have quite negative effects. For instance, if students are insufficiently prepared academically, they might have difficulties understanding lectures or writing assignments. Furthermore, young students may have problems adjusting to a different culture with its unfamiliar climate, food and lifestyle. Because of this, they may experience much loneliness and home sickness. A final problem could be that some students adapt so successfully to Western culture that they have problems readjusting when they finally return home. (4/5) In conclusion, although there can be problems studying abroad, most students, with appropriate preparation and support, should be able to overcome these obstacles. On the whole, the advantages of an overseas education far outweigh any of the disadvantages described above.

Solutions:

Revision: 1) Argumentative essay/For and against essay/Discussion; 2) (Discuss) the advantages and disadvantages of studying overseas/abroad etc.; 3) The essay can be divided into four or five paragraphs. The 2nd paragraph can be divided into two shorter paragraphs; 4) 1st paragraph – Introduction, 2nd (or 2nd and 3rd) paragraph(s) – Advantages, 3rd paragraph – Disadvantages, 4th paragraph – Conclusion.

Practice: Task 1: (see the essay above); Task 2: see grid below

Adding information	Contrasting information	Reason or result
in addition; as well as; furthermore	nevertheless; however	as a result of; because of; due to
Time or sequence	Giving examples	Making generalisations
in conclusion; to begin with	for instance	as a rule; on the whole; in general

Let's summarize and practice what you have learnt about different types of essays and their organization.

The absence of paragraphs can make a piece of writing difficult and confusing to read. In order to be coherent and easy to understand, an essay should be divided into clear paragraphs, each one containing a new idea or topic.

Read the essay below and answer questions 1–4.

- 1 **What type of an essay is it?** _____
- 2 **What would the best title for the essay be?** _____
- 3 **What is the most suitable number of paragraphs for this essay?** _____
- 4 **Can you label the function of each paragraph?** (Choose from the following functions: Conclusion, Advantages, Introduction, Disadvantages)

Many young people choose to continue their education at colleges or universities in English-speaking countries such as Britain, Australia or America. Nevertheless, while studying overseas has clear advantages, it is not without its problems. In this essay, both points of view will be considered. To begin with, studying overseas has significant academic benefits. In general, the standard of education is very high due to the up-to-date equipment and resources that are available in colleges and universities. As a rule, the quality of teaching is also high, as teachers and lecturers are well-qualified professionals who are aware of all the latest developments in their fields of interest. In addition, the qualifications which a student obtains are usually valid anywhere in the world. As well as the obvious academic benefits, students also experience another culture, improve their language skills and meet many new people. As a result of living away from their families, they become more independent, tolerant and emotionally mature, all of which aids their personal development. However, in some cases, studying abroad can have quite negative effects. For instance, if students are insufficiently prepared academically, they might have difficulties understanding lectures or writing assignments. Furthermore, young students may have problems adjusting to a different culture with its unfamiliar climate, food and lifestyle. Because of this, they may experience much loneliness and home sickness. A final problem could be that some students adapt so successfully to Western culture that they have problems readjusting when they finally return home. In conclusion, although there can be problems studying abroad, most students, with appropriate preparation and support, should be able to overcome these obstacles. On the whole, the advantages of an overseas education far outweigh any of the disadvantages described above.

Linking words and expressions are important because they connect ideas between sentences and parts of text. They help to make the writing more cohesive.

Task 1: Read the essay and underline the linking words you can find.

Task 2: Place each linking word from the essay into the appropriate column according to its function. As an example, one of the linking words has been placed correctly for you.

Adding information	Contrasting information	Reason/Result
furthermore		
Time/Sequence	Giving examples	Making generalisations