

The Writing Center @ KUMC

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C.U.E. Paragraph Development

Coherence, Unity, Emphasis

These three principles of writing are old yet very valuable. They will help you guide your reader, ensuring they follow your road map for your paper. They suggest that the cue or prompt for success in writing is a simple approach: a first or topic sentence followed by supporting sentences that illustrate, explain, or clarify the main point, and all of that ending with a final sentence as the springboard to the next paragraph. Here's a brief summary:



- ▶ **Coherence:** One thing should lead to the next, logically! Cohere means to stick or fit together, i.e., there's a consistent relationship between things. That's what justifies them being in your paragraph. Each sentence leads to the next and in the process builds a thesis/focus.
- ▶ **Unity:** Everything in a paragraph should be about one thing! This is *big coherence* or the relation of all the words, phrases, and sentences to the paragraph—i.e., the way these things are connected—and, by extension, the relation of all the parts to the whole paper. One subject!
- ▶ **Emphasis:** The main point of the para should be clear! Not everything in a paper is on the same level or carries the same weight. Some things need to make a greater impression than others. So where does something need to be placed, and how, in order to be most effective, most emphatic? That's the guiding question. If emphasis comes at the beginning, it should probably be tied to purpose. If emphasis comes at the end, it has to be something whose importance you have proven throughout the paper.