

Chapter 8

Task 2: Coherence and Cohesion

In this unit, you will:

- develop a better understanding of the various requirements related to the domain “Coherence and Cohesion”,
- read and discuss writing exemplars using the assessment standards of “Coherence and Cohesion”,
- evaluate and improve writing exemplars following the assessment standards of “Coherence and Cohesion”.

NOTE: *Exemplars included in this chapter are written by university students and teachers. These exemplars are sometimes edited for the purpose of illustrating certain aspects of the IELTS writing assessment standards. Nevertheless, these exemplars are not edited to be error-free.*

Activity 1 Understanding the assessment standards of “Coherence and Cohesion”

Since the assessment standards of this domain in Task 2 are identical to those in Task 1, refer to Activity 1 in Chapter 4 for definitions of keywords of the assessment standards.

Activity 2 Achieving coherence through paragraphing

- Read the following question (T2-13) and Exemplars 8.1-8.3.
- Evaluate how well the exemplars are written by referring to the definitions of the terms “coherence” and “paragraphing”. If necessary, use these guiding questions to help your evaluation.
 - Did the students connect ideas by organizing information thoughtfully and logically within a paragraph?
 - Did the students connect ideas by organizing information thoughtfully and logically between paragraphs?

T2-13

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic:

In some countries, health care expenditure is covered by the government, while in other countries, the cost is undertaken by both the public and the government. Do

you think the advantages of ‘sharing the cost’ outweigh the disadvantages?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Exemplar 8.1

So important is social productivity that it is reflected in the gross domestic product (GDP) of a country. A sound health care system does not only improve the wellbeing of its citizens, but also boosts the country’s productivity, and, by the same token, its economy. Therefore, the government should not be penny-pinching on medical care from a bird’s eye view.

Furthermore, tackling inequality is one of the major goals for most of the governments in the globe. Having paid taxes, citizens are expected to receive basic public services - health care, to name but a few. From the perspective of citizenship rights, it is the government’s responsibility that no one should be turned a blind eye to by medical practitioners because of a lack of money.

Guiding question	Yes/No	Evidence
Did the students connect ideas by organizing information thoughtfully and logically within a paragraph?		
Did the students connect ideas by organizing information thoughtfully and logically between paragraphs?		

Exemplar 8.2

First and foremost, "sharing the cost" reduces financial burden of government. Even the government pay for the medical cost, it does not mean that there is nothing to do with citizens financially. There is no magic money tree. Looking at the UK, the financial issue of NHS has been discussed for decades. To cover the rising amount of health care expenditure, the so-called "solutions" carried out by government are either cut the budget of another area or increase tax rates, sometimes both. On façade, people do not need to pay a penny for the services they received. They may even pay more than they expected at the end of the day. "Sharing the cost" does not only reduce financial burden of government, but also lessen residents' to a certain extent.

As well as solving financial problems, the fact that the public share the medical cost can somehow increase the quality of health care services. "Sharing the cost" means that more money can be used in national health services and more money means a better quality of services. Take nurses as an example, the inadequate numbers of nurses worked in public hospitals is not a new topic to Hong Kongers.

Nurses have always suffered from heavy workload and stressful working environment. If more financial resources for professional employment is possible, public hospitals are able to employ more nurses to provide a better service for patients. Therefore, it is not difficult to find that public sharing of cost can contribute to higher services quality in return.

Guiding question	Yes/No	Evidence
Did the students connect ideas by organizing information thoughtfully and logically within a paragraph?		
Did the students connect ideas by organizing information thoughtfully and logically between paragraphs?		

Exemplar 8.3

To begin with, fresh graduates couldn't afford to pay the medical cost annually, not to mention that many are unemployed or are still repaying the student loan. If Hong Kong is planning to propose the 'sharing cost' plan, many students and fresh graduates, especially for those who suffer financially, will surely struggle to pay an extra cost for the society welfare. Being a year-three undergraduate, I have to work hard to repay my own school fee. After completing the four-year program, the government loan will start rolling like a snowball, with the interest rate gradually increasing over years; I am therefore determined to put an end to it as quickly as I can. However, once implementing the new medical policy, every loan student like me is given no choice but to delay the government loan repayment. This could be bad news for us all, not to mention that fresh graduates could hardly earn a promising income when they first embark on a new career. Hence, being a soon-to-be fresh graduate carrying heavy loans, I urge the authorities to consider whether "sharing the cost" is applicable to all of their people or not.

In addition, the "sharing cost" is mostly distributed to the elderly care or those with serious illness; healthy individuals are likely to be excluded from getting the welfare. Unlike medical insurance, the expenditure on health care protection mainly concerns those with very urgent medical needs, but do not necessarily guarantee every taxpayer could access to the service. Helping others in need should be a volunteer act out of sincerity, but not a kind of responsibility enforced by the authority. I wouldn't want to feel unwanted to help those in dire emergencies, but it could feel like a burden with big responsibility of "sharing the cost", or else you are not giving a helping hand to saving someone's life. Doing kind acts should be something worth praising of, but they are never from obeying the commands of absolute authority.

Guiding question	Yes/No	Evidence
Did the students connect ideas by organizing information thoughtfully		

and logically within a paragraph?		
Did the students connect ideas by organizing information thoughtfully and logically between paragraphs?		

Activity 3 Achieving cohesion through using cohesive devices

- Read the following question (T2-14) and Exemplars 8.4-8.6.
- Evaluate how well the exemplars are written by referring to the definitions of the terms “cohesion” and “cohesive devices”. If necessary, use these guiding questions to help your evaluation.
 - What cohesive devices did the students use in the paragraphs?
 - Were the cohesive devices used meaningfully and accurately?
 - Was there a variety of cohesive devices used?

T2-14

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic:

Despite the enhancement of medical care, modern people are still tortured by various physical and psychological problems. What are some of the causes of the above phenomena? What can be done to improve people’s health?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Exemplar 8.4

Secondly, lack of leisure time also affects the physical health and mental health of people. For the working population, most of them need to work more than ten hours a day because there is no law or regulation to regulate the working hour. The long working hours result in the lack of leisure time. People gain great pressure from their job but they do not have time to relax or do exercise. Thus, the physical and psychological problems exist. To solve the problem, the government need to have regulations on working hours. If people have more leisure time, they may have less pressure.

Guiding question	Yes/No	Response
What cohesive devices did the students use in the paragraphs?		

Were the cohesive devices used meaningfully and accurately?		
Was there a variety of cohesive devices used?		

Exemplar 8.5

First, citizens could not deal with the high medical expenses. Along with the improvement of medical care, the cost of existing medical technology may be reduced. However, the cost of new or more effective treatment would be increased in contrast. Although the government has set up some welfare policies, such as providing public medical service and medical subsidies to the elderly, the expenditure on medical treatment is still high. So, many patients, especially those who suffer from serious illness, such as cancer, are still tortured by the sickness.

Guiding question	Yes/No	Response
What cohesive devices did the students use in the paragraphs?		
Were the cohesive devices used meaningfully and accurately?		
Was there a variety of cohesive devices used?		

Exemplar 8.6

It is undoubtedly that more sports facilities would enhance the accessibility of doing exercises to public. Even more and more people like to do gym at the fitness club, it is still too expensive for the low income group people to afford this kind of sport facility. Therefore, if the government provides more open areas for recreation, it would definitely give the public a great chance to do exercises and keep healthy without spending too much money to join a fitness club. According to the news reports, a person could lose about 5 Kg in three weeks if he does exercise for 30 minutes a day regularly. Some diseases could be eased like high blood pressure. Also, doing exercises could make us happy and relaxed. We could keep away from depression.

Guiding question	Yes/No	Response
What cohesive devices did the students use in the paragraphs?		
Were the cohesive devices used meaningfully and accurately?		

Was there a variety of cohesive devices used?		
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Activity 4 Achieving cohesion through using pronouns

- Read the following question (T2-15) and Exemplar 8.7-8.8.
 - Evaluate how well the exemplars are written by referring to the definitions of the terms “cohesion” and “pronouns”. If necessary, use these guiding questions to help your evaluation.
- What pronouns did the students use in the paragraphs?
 - What did the pronouns refer to?
 - Were the pronouns used accurately?

T2-15

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic:

Investors are more important than teachers in that they usually make more money.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Exemplar 8.7

Though investors might make more money than teachers, there are many factors in determining the importance of the work, such as the contributions and impacts to the society. Teachers are important as they make tremendous contribution in the society - educating new generations continuously. Although knowledge is intangible, it is long-lasting. Comparatively, owning money is temporary, as we exchange money to the product or service we want. For the contributions of teachers made to the society, it could be seen that a lot of the successful people are well-educated, such as professors in the University. These people are continually nurturing the young generations before they enter in the society. People learn, use and teach. A healthy and progressive society requires these people. Hence, teachers are very important in the society.

Guiding question	Response
What pronouns did the students use in the paragraph?	
What did the pronouns refer to?	
Were the pronouns used accurately?	

Exemplar 8.8

While from the economic perspectives, investors improve our quality of life. Through different investment and technological advancement, it makes our life much easier and more convenient. As for the teachers, they may have indirect contribution to the economy. As mentioned, teachers help to build up the ability of investors in dealing with different problems including human management, technological innovation etc. The investors may not be successful without receiving education.

Guiding question	Response
What pronouns did the students use in the paragraph?	
What did the pronouns refer to?	
Were the pronouns used accurately?	

Activity 5 Achieving cohesion through using synonyms

- Read the following question (T2-17) and Exemplars 8.8-8.10.
- Evaluate how well the exemplars are written by referring to the definitions of the terms “cohesion” and “synonyms” and responding to the guiding questions under each exemplar.

T2-17

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic:

Some countries donate large sums of money to help other countries in need, while some citizens of these countries are still starving. Why would these countries take the above action? What can be done to help the starving people?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Exemplar 8.8

I think the main reason for some countries to donate money to other countries is that they want to get a bigger influence in the world. They give other countries resources to build the schools and the rails. And their names may be the name of the school or the station. This is one of the ways for them to be popular in the world. Their countries will be concerned by other countries, and their power in the world may be bigger, since they show that they have enough resources and they are willing to help others. It is a way for them to make friends with other countries and they may have a bigger influence in the world, and helping their local people may not get this effect. Therefore, they neglect their citizens' needs.

Guiding question	Response
Did the student use any synonyms?	
Which words could be replaced by synonyms?	
What synonyms do you suggest the students use?	

Exemplar 8.9

Unfortunately, the wealth gap is enlarging in lots of places in the world, including these countries. To help the starving people, there are mainly two approaches. In order to solve the problem from the root, the government should embrace equity in the society. For example, ensuring a better access to tertiary education. On the other hand, the government can provide subsidies or allowances to people living below the poverty line.

Guiding question	Response
Did the student use any synonyms?	
Which words could be replaced by synonyms?	
What synonyms do you suggest the students use?	

Exemplar 8.10

Some countries donate a large amount of money to help the suffering countries. The former shall be developed countries while the latter shall be less developed countries. Food products in poor countries are usually exported to other countries for profit, even if people in the poor country are in need of food. More developed countries benefit from the export of these food products, but the countries that produce the food may experience food scarcity and higher food prices with no proper interventions from the corrupted government usually. As a result, most developed countries, which put emphasize on human rights with morality, would help the poor countries.

Guiding question	Response
Did the student use any synonyms?	
Which words could be replaced by synonyms?	
What synonyms do you suggest the students use?	

Activity 6 Peer evaluation

Based on your understanding of the assessment standards of “Coherence and Cohesion”, complete the evaluation form for Exemplar 8.11.

In the evaluation, complete the “evaluate” section by assessing (1) whether the element concerned is present in the exemplar (the yes/no question) and (2) how well the element is presented in the exemplar. Complete the “suggest” section by writing an improved version of the element concerned. The “suggest” section can be left blank if the exemplar demonstrates a good quality in an aspect.

T2-18

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic:

It is important for travelers to develop an enough understanding of the culture of the destination country. What are some of the advantages of understanding the culture beforehand?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Exemplar 8.11

There are many different cultural differences that travelers can be aware of when traveling to different nations. Cultures can sometimes vary drastically from one's own so, it is advised that travelers research the local conventions and try to understand the culture of the area prior to the departure.

Having a basic idea of the region's culture can help travelers to form a deeper understanding of the local people and can also help prevent you from offending anyone. Sometimes traditions are deeply rooted within a culture. People take things very seriously that outsiders aren't typically aware of or understand. For example, in America, the 'OK' gesture is a kind of standard communication for daily use, however in Japan, it means 'money' and in Brazil, it's akin to extending the middle finger in the U.S. People in China may think that touching children's head would be normal behavior, which, in Myanmar, is regarded to be a very disrespectful behavior. Without knowing the actual meaning of such cross-cultural gestures in different countries, travelers will largely not only cause misunderstanding, but also, sometimes produce offensive movements. If travelers get well-prepared and search for the cultural differences beforehand, they will avoid causing faux-pas and being under such embarrassing situation to a great extent.

Another advantage for having some fundamental grasp of the local cultures is that it's a great way to open doors and gain access to experiences that other travelers may not get to enjoy. For instance, there are two travelers visiting the Arc de Triomphe now. One of them knows the history background and local people's view about it, the other does not. It is easy to foresee that the former one will have a better understanding of the architecture, immersing in the environment; the latter one will probably view it as a building and quickly take a photo just to tell others it has been seen by someone. Knowing the cultural and historical background of country and the architectures will give travelers more colorful and memorable experiences.

To conclude, developing the understanding of the culture of the traveling destination will bring benefits to traveler as they are able to avoid offence and gain more juicy experiences.

Assessment standard	Guiding question	Yes/No	Evaluate
Paragraphing	Did the students connect ideas by organizing information thoughtfully and logically within a paragraph?		
	Did the students connect ideas by organizing information thoughtfully and logically		

	between paragraphs?		
Cohesive devices	Were the cohesive devices used meaningfully and accurately?		
	Was there a variety of cohesive devices used?		
Pronouns	Did the student use any pronouns?		
	Were the pronouns used accurately?		
Synonyms	Did the student use any synonyms?		

Activity 6 Exercise

T2-23

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic:

Some people think that the development of science and technology has led to a decrease in privacy (e.g. being monitored of words and actions). However, others regard the development of science and technology as positive, for they feel more secure.

Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Based on your understanding of “coherence and cohesion”, try to use the underlined cohesive devices of T2-23 to finish writing two body paragraphs of T2-28.

Regarding the advantages, the development of science and technology enables us to feel more secure. The usage of iPhone is a brightness illustration to prove it. In the past, we may just use the 4-digits passcode to prevent others from the usage of our phone. Yet to be honest, it is easy to peep by other people, especially our friends. Due to the development of science and technology. Nowadays, we can use fingerprint as password instead of the 4-digits passcode. Since we all have our unique fingerprinting, it will be more difficult for others to get the important information from our phone. Hence, it is more secure to us.

In terms of disadvantages, it has led to a decrease in privacy. According to some news report, with the use of some soft-wares and technological skills, not only the words that we typed, but also the actions that we have done can be monitored by some professionals easily. To exemplify, when we look for some hotels' information on computers, some social media like Facebook can show as some recommendation information about the hotels, since that they can 'read' what we have read before. Therefore, it is true that our privacy becomes vulnerable with the scientific and technological development.

T2-28

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic:

Governments concern more about creating economic benefits for people while they overlook the actions they should take to control pollution emerged in the meantime of economic development.

Discuss the above view and give your opinion.

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.