

AET-127 – Writing Skills and Vocabulary

Week 12: Advanced Paragraph Structures & Cohesion

1. Comparison & Contrast Paragraphs

In academic writing, we almost never describe ideas in isolation.

We define meaning through **relationships, differences, and evaluation**.

When comparing two items (e.g., online learning vs. face-to-face learning), you **must choose a structure** to avoid confused back-and-forth writing.

Method A: Block Structure (Subject-by-Subject)

How it works:

You describe **everything about Subject A first**, then **everything about Subject B**.

Structure:

- Introduction (Topic Sentence)
- Subject A → all features (cost, speed, quality, access)
- Subject B → all features (cost, speed, quality, access)
- Conclusion (Summary + Evaluation)

Use this when:

Each subject is **complex** and needs a **full, holistic description**.

Mini Example:

Online education offers flexibility, recorded lectures, and location independence. However, face-to-face education provides immediate feedback, social interaction, and controlled learning environments.

Method B: Point-by-Point Structure

How it works:

You compare **one feature at a time**, moving back and forth between the subjects.

Structure:

- Introduction
- Point 1: Feature A (A vs. B)
- Point 2: Feature B (A vs. B)
- Conclusion

Use this when:

You want to make **differences extremely clear and analytical**.

Example:

While online education is flexible in terms of time, face-to-face education offers stronger classroom discipline. Similarly, although online learning is cost-effective, traditional education provides richer social interaction.

2. Transitions for Cohesion – “The Glue of Logic”

Cohesion is **flow**.

Without transitions, a paragraph becomes a **list of disconnected sentences**, not a logical argument.

Core Transition Functions

Function	Transition Words	Example
Contrast	however, whereas, on the other hand	<i>The task was simple; however, the instructions were unclear.</i>
Comparison	similarly, likewise, in the same way	<i>Morning classes boost focus. Similarly, early study improves memory.</i>
Cause/Result	therefore, thus, consequently, as a result	<i>The deadline was missed; consequently, the project failed.</i>
Addition	moreover, furthermore, in addition, besides	<i>The plan was expensive. Moreover, it was unrealistic.</i>

Key Rule:

If your reader does not understand **why one sentence follows another**, cohesion has failed.

3. Cause–Effect Paragraphs

This pattern answers two core academic questions:

- **Why did this happen?** (Cause)
- **What happened as a result?** (Effect)

The “Fishbone” Logic (Conceptual Model)

- The **problem** is at the head
- The **reasons** are the bones feeding into it
- The **effect** is the visible outcome

Key Vocabulary

Verbs:

lead to, result in, trigger, stem from, bring about, cause

Nouns:

outcome, consequence, repercussion, factor, origin

Model Example (Real Academic Life)

The decrease in students’ reading habits stems from excessive social media use. As a result, vocabulary range becomes limited, and academic writing quality declines sharply.

4. Classification Paragraphs

Classification means **sorting items into groups based on ONE organizing principle**.

You **cannot mix principles**:

You cannot classify cars by **color** and **speed** at the same level—this breaks logic.

Structure of a Classification Paragraph

1. **Topic Sentence:**
States the topic and the **principle of classification**
2. **Category 1:** Description + Example
3. **Category 2:** Description + Example
4. **Category 3:** Description + Example
5. **Conclusion:**
Explains **why this classification matters**

Model Example (Non-Translation, Real Life)

University students can be classified into three main groups based on their learning behavior. The first group consists of highly disciplined students who plan and revise regularly. The second group includes flexible learners who work inconsistently but adapt quickly. The third group is made up of passive students who avoid responsibility. Among these groups, disciplined learners achieve the most sustainable success.

The Golden Rule of Classification

Your categories must be:

- **Mutually exclusive** → One item fits only ONE group
- **Exhaustive** → All possible items are covered