

Writing Paragraphs → Unity and Coherence

Level: Middle School

*Part of what makes a paragraph good is **unity**: all sentences relate to the topic being discussed, without adding tangents or off-topic information. The paragraph should also be **coherent**: that is, the ideas flow and connect to each other logically. Good connecting words and parallel sentence structures help with this, and each new sentence should relate in some way to what came before, even as it introduces new information or a new perspective. **Unity** and **Coherence** make the paragraph clear and easy for the reader to follow.*

Read each paragraph. Choose from the provided transition words, and insert the best word or phrase into the blanks, to make the paragraph flow more coherently.

1. Transition words: but recently, initially, later, in the eighteenth century

People's idea of what popular music actually is has changed over the years since the term was first coined. _____, the phrase "popular music" simply meant music that had become more available to the public. _____, the appearance of inexpensive sheet music meant that amateur and family musicians could play at home or in local gatherings. But _____, with the advent of recording equipment and the gramophone player, these amateur musicians slowly become professionals in their own right. "Popular music" then referred only to music that become public through the growing recording industry, which had a monopoly on deciding whose music got heard. _____, with the introduction of digital do-it-yourself computer programs, popular music is once again returning to its original meaning: music made by the wider amateur public.

2. Transition words: but, for example, first, and finally, this, also

Though baseball players use less equipment than players in many other sports, they still need certain basics to play the game safely and well. _____, of course, each player needs a bat and glove. This personal equipment allows players to play positions in the diamond or out on the field, but also lets them come up to bat. _____ players may _____ need more specialized safety equipment, depending on their position. _____, when batting, they wear a helmet to protect against being hit with the ball, and may wear shin or arm guards as well. _____, catchers wear specialized masks, chest protectors, and shin guards. Using the right equipment is just as important in baseball as in any other sport.

Time4Writing provides these writing materials to teachers and parents at no cost. More presentations, handouts, interactive online exercises, and video lessons are freely available at Time4Writing.com. Consider linking to these resources from your school, teacher, or homeschool educational site. The rules: These materials must maintain the visibility of the Time4Writing trademark and copyright information. They can be copied and used for educational purposes. They are not for resale. Want to give us feedback? We'd like to hear your views: info@time4writing.com

3. Transition words: then, first, this calculation, finally, early

My family always throws the best New Year's Eve party, and people love coming to it each year. We start _____ with our plans, to be sure everything is ready on time. _____, we make a basic guest list, and then double that number of people because we always welcome extras. _____ helps us get an idea of how many supplies we'll need. _____ we start stocking up, at least two months ahead of time. We begin making goodies that can go in the freezer sometime late in November. _____, a few days before December 31, we start putting up decorations, adding chairs and small tables, and preparing last minute food. When party time arrives, we're just as free as our guests to have a great time and properly usher in the new year.