Coherence is achieved when sentences and ideas are connected and flow together smoothly. An essay without coherence can inhibit a reader’s ability to understand the ideas and main points of the essay. Coherence allows the reader to move easily throughout the essay from one idea to the next, from one sentence to the next, and from one paragraph to the next. Following are several methods that can be used to achieve coherence in writing:

**Use Repetition to Link Ideas, Sentences, and Paragraphs**
Repeating key words or phrases helps connect and focus idea(s) throughout the essay. Repetition also helps the reader remain focused and headed in the right direction.

Example: Most students are intimidated by the works of William Shakespeare. They believe Shakespeare’s sonnets and plays are far too complicated to read and understand.

**Use Transitional Expressions to Link Ideas, Sentences, and Paragraphs**
Transitional expressions, such as however, because, therefore, and in addition, are used to establish relationships between ideas, sentences, and paragraphs. They serve as signals to let the reader know the previous idea, sentence, or paragraph is connected to what follows. For a list of the most commonly used transitional expressions, refer to the Southeastern Writing Center’s handout Useful Transitional Words and Phrases.

Example: Many students believe they cannot write a good essay because they are not writers. However, as they practice writing and work on developing their writing skills, most students are able to gain the needed confidence to start thinking of themselves writers.

**Use Pronouns to Link Sentences**
Pronouns are used to link or connect sentences by referring to preceding nouns and pronouns. Pronouns can also help create paragraphs that are easy to read by eliminating wordiness and unnecessary repetition.

Example: Mr. Thompson agreed to meet with members of the worker’s union before he signed the contract. He was interested in hearing their concerns about the new insurance plan.
Use Synonyms to Link Ideas and Create Variety
Synonyms are words that have the same or nearly the same meaning as another word. They provide alternative word choices that can add variety to an essay and can help eliminate unnecessary repetition.

Example: Teenagers face an enormous amount of peer pressure from friends and schoolmates. As a result, many young adults are exhibiting signs of severe stress or depression at an early age.

Use Parallel Structures to Link Ideas, Sentences, and Paragraphs
Parallelism is the use of matching words, phrases, clauses, or sentence structures to express similar ideas. Parallel structures allow the reader to flow smoothly from one idea, sentence, or paragraph to the next and to understand the relationships and connections between ideas.

Example: Usually, the children spend the summer weekends playing ball in park, swimming in the neighbor’s pool, eating ice cream under the tree, or camping in the backyard.

At the museum, the class attended a lecture where the speaker demonstrated how the Native Americans made bows and arrows. They also attended a lecture where a sword smith demonstrated how the Vikings crafted swords.