English: paragraph order, cohesion and introductions

Original skill preparation; versioned source scope

ACT English: Paragraph Order, Cohesion and Introductions

- Decide the best order of sentences and paragraphs.
- Choose the best **location** 位置 for a new sentence.
- Give every reference word a clear **antecedent** 先行词.
- Build **cohesion** 衔接 with a fitting **transition** 衔接词, and write effective introductions and conclusions.

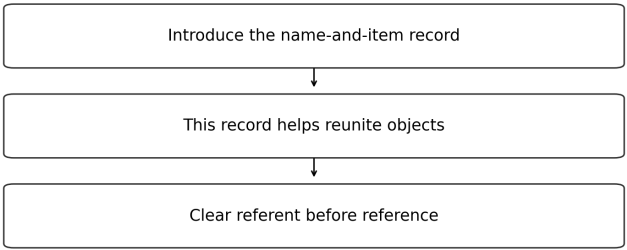
Order and placement

- Introduce a person, place or thing before referring to it.
- Follow time order: words like "soon", "later" and "then" assume something came before.
- Put a sentence beside the one it explains, gives an example of, or answers.

Reference words

- "This", "these", "it", "they" and "such" point back. The thing they point to must be clear and close.
- "This record" needs a record mentioned just before. If two things could be meant, name the right one.

Figure: Reference words



- Worked steps: Introduce the name-and-item record → This record helps reunite objects → Clear referent before reference
- Match each part of the diagram to the text.

Transitions between sentences and paragraphs

- Choose the **transition** by the relationship: addition, contrast, cause, example or time.
- A paragraph's first sentence often links back to the previous paragraph and forward to its own topic.

Introductions and conclusions

- An introduction sets up the topic and prepares for what follows.
- A conclusion returns to the main point and may look ahead, but does not add a new topic or a promise the passage cannot support.

Practice passage

- Original continuous editing passage — A place to mend

P1 On the first Saturday of each month, a group of volunteers opens a repair table in the public library. [S1] The project began when librarian Noor noticed a row of broken desk lamps outside a nearby building. [S2] Some needed specialist work, but others had loose switches or damaged cables. [S3] Noor did not want untrained visitors to try unsafe electrical repairs. [S4] She invited a qualified repairer to explain which items the group could inspect and which should go to a professional.

- The first session accepted only battery-powered objects, with damaged batteries excluded.
- Visitors registered their items and described the faults before any work began.

Worked example: could P3 come first?

- P3 refers to "the repair table" and to Noor as though the reader already knows them; P1 introduces both.
- P3 begins "Space soon became a problem": "soon" assumes the project has already started.
- So P3 cannot come before P1 without rewriting those introductions. The existing order is clearer.

Worked example: placing a sentence and linking two ideas

- After P2's first sentence, which describes the name-and-item record: "This record" then has a close **antecedent**.
- Before P1: no record has been mentioned. At the end of P5: the reference is far away and interrupts the conclusion.
- Linking "The meeting room reduced noise around the alcove" and "it held fewer visitors": the second limits the first, so use contrast: "…around the alcove. However, it held fewer visitors."
- A fitting closing sentence: "The next trial should judge access, waiting and safety as well as the number of repairs."

Common errors

- Placing a sentence before the thing it refers to.
- Leaving "this" or "it" with two possible antecedents.
- Choosing a **transition** without checking the relationship.

Common errors (2)

- Ending with a new topic or an unsupported guarantee.
- Moving a paragraph without checking its time words.

Key terms

- **location**: The place in a passage where a sentence fits best.
- **antecedent**: The word or phrase a reference word points back to.
- **cohesion**: The way sentences connect so that a text reads as one whole.
- **transition**: A word or phrase showing how two ideas relate.

Check yourself

- A sentence begins "These changes saved time." What must come before it?
- Which word in "Later, the group added signs" shows it cannot open the passage?
- Is "And so the library will never have problems again" a good conclusion?