Cohesion

A picture guide for Year 5. Cohesion and ambiguity are new Year 5 terms.

Cohesion is how writing sticks together.

Cohesive writing flows: each sentence links to the one before, so the reader can follow it.

The cohesion chain



Five links that hold writing together:

Pronouns	stop you repeating names	Tom → he → his
Linking adverbials	join sentences and paragraphs	First, Later, However, As a result
Conjunctions	join ideas inside a sentence	because, although, so
Synonyms	name the same thing in a new way	the dragon → the beast → the creature
Same tense	keep it in the past (or present) throughout	went... played... ate

Linking adverbials by job

Time / order	First, Next, Then, Later, Meanwhile, Finally
Adding	Also, In addition, Furthermore, What is more
Contrast	However, On the other hand, Nevertheless
Result	As a result, Therefore, Consequently, So

Cohesion: in action

The same story told two ways - and the trap of ambiguity.

Before and after

✘ Choppy

The dragon woke up. The dragon was hungry. The dragon flew to the village. The villagers hid. The dragon could not find food. The dragon went back to the cave.

✔ Cohesive

The dragon woke up. **It** was hungry, **so** **it** flew to the village. **Meanwhile**, the villagers had hidden. **The beast** could not find any food, **so** **eventually** **it** went back to **its** cave.

Colours: green = pronouns, orange = linking adverbials and conjunctions, teal = a synonym for "the dragon".

Watch out for ambiguity

Ambiguity (a Year 5 word) means a sentence could be read in two ways.

❓ Who was late?

Max told Dan that **he** was late.

"He" could be Max or Dan.

✔ Clear

Max said to Dan, "I was late."

Now we know it was Max.

Your turn: make these more cohesive

1. Lily loves dogs. Lily has two dogs.

2. It was raining. ___, we stayed inside.

3. First, mix the flour. ___, add the eggs.

For parents: cohesion is a big part of how Year 5 and 6 writing is assessed. Reading a paragraph aloud together and asking "does it flow?" really helps.

Answers: 1. "She has two dogs." 2. As a result / So 3. Next / Then