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**Female Voice:** You are now listening to the IELTS Podcast. Learn from tutors and ex-examiners who are masters of IELTS preparation. Your host, Ben Worthington.

[Music]

**Student:** So, I think even if I write enough of what you said, I will get a 7, but I got 7.5 and I boast about it now.

**Ben:** Hello there, IELTS students. In this tutorial, we are looking at cohesion and coherence. We're going to have a look at different examples on how you can improve it. We're going to look at linking words, repetition, demonstratives and by the end of this tutorial, you'll have a clear idea on how to write strong coherent high-scoring sentences-- not sentences; paragraphs.



And again, it's a very practical tutorial and at the end of the tutorial if you're still a little bit confused, then just remember you can get in contact with us and we can help you. We can guide you through it and if you're in a rush and you need to pass fast and you want to get some feedback then you can also take advantage of the \$5 essay correction promotion that we've got running at the moment. Very popular. Lots of students getting in on that and it's a great way to get feedback and to quickly improve your IELTS writing.

And by the way, one very useful piece of advice would be to write down everything you learn in this tutorial, implement it into the next essay you write and then get feedback on that essay by taking advantage of the special offer we have at the top of our website at the moment.

Let's jump into this. As you know, my name is Ben Worthington. I'm from England. I used to and then I moved to Spain then I started teaching English and eventually, I specialized in IELTS because I like getting results for students. And how did I get better and better and better at teaching IELTS and making sure students pass?



Well, I interviewed some of the best linguistic experts, ex-IELTS examiners, professional tutors who've been in the game for like 20 years. I interview them and I test what they tell me. I test it out on my students and if it works, I implement it into the online course. And that's why we've been able to offer you the guarantee of jump to band 7 or it's free. So, check that out at [ieltpodcast.com](http://ieltpodcast.com).

Let's have a look at cohesion and coherence. Now, it's incredibly important this idea of cohesion not only for Academic Task 2 and General Task 2 but also for Academic Task 1. Now, with cohesion and coherence, in order to get a high score, you need to present your ideas in a clear and logical manner and make sure that they all link together.

So, as we said in a previous tutorial about the sole purpose of a sentence is to convey a thought or an idea, a piece of information then a paragraph is the collection of all these sentences, but we've got to make sure that they are all tied together, okay?



Now, basic or entry-level students if you're going for a band 5 or 6, some students believe that using transition devices such as linking words like firstly, second, nevertheless, however; all of these some students-- the lower level students tend to believe that this is the ticket for scoring high on cohesion and coherence.

Now, they are useful these devices, but the higher-level student will realize that it's not a case of just using these devices. You really do have to make sure that these devices are connecting different thoughts. Now, as I said, we can use linking words, but there's also two other techniques that I strongly recommend you use because as we know in the IELTS exam, we cannot just use one technique throughout the entire essay.

We have to use a variety of different techniques. It makes it easier to read. It makes it more interesting. You're going to pick up points for using more structures and you're going to increase your grammatical range and accuracy score and probably your lexical resource score as well especially if you use the second technique which I'll share with you in a minute.



So, we've got three basic techniques. Actually, just before I go into these three in detail, it's very important just to have an overview of paragraph construction. Now, what we teach we teach it in the course at a very granular level and we tell you exactly which sentence structures to use and it just makes it so much easier, but basically, the structure we're following and this is the case for pretty much almost all academic paragraphs is that we start with the general idea and then go down and work down to a specific idea.

So, we're going from general to specific and the cohesion is what we're going to use in order to make this trip down from general to specific. We're going to use cohesive devices in order to make this transition from general to specific. That's very important there. Write that down if you've got a pen and paper. We're going from general to specific.

So, for example, we might start off with global warming and then we'll slowly bring it down to be more specific by talking about the effects of global warming in Mexico, for example. And we've gone from a general concept to a very specific real world example.



How do we do that? Well, I will share with you three different ways of making the transition from general to specific. Now, the first one is we can use linking words. It's quite straightforward and it's easy for the examiner to follow the progression of your ideas. So, we can use firstly, secondly, and thirdly. These aren't too bad. It's better than nothing. I think these are okay, but you've still-- as I said before, don't rely on these for every single paragraph, okay? Use them in balance with the other techniques that I'm sharing.

So, I'll give you an example. Numerous scientists have proven that global warming is a dangerous phenomenon. Firstly, they believe it has accelerated and is becoming ever more unpredictable. Secondly, a global solution is needed, but unfortunately, the globe still consists of individual players i.e. nation states. Thirdly, evidence is mounting proving its severity yet scientists are painfully aware of the lack of action from governments. For example... and then we can go into the specific way.



So, we use firstly, secondly, and thirdly to really lay out our ideas-- our general ideas. Even with those, we're going from general to specific. The general idea is global warming is becoming dangerous and we got slightly more specific by saying it consists of individual players; the nation states. Secondly, it consists of individual players. Thirdly, we're saying scientists are painfully aware of the lack of action and then we could probably go into a real world example very specific one there, okay?

So, clear and simple and the firstly, secondly, and thirdly they are all linked and gradually getting slightly more specific. In this case, we didn't do the whole transition in the paragraph, but we did make some steps from general to specific.

Now, the second device that I'm going to tell you is very useful, but it's also very dangerous if it's used incorrectly. The technique is repetition, okay? By using repetition, you can improve your comprehension because you can keep the key points of your paragraph in the readers' minds and if you do it effectively, you're not going to lose points in lexical resource because if



you do it ineffectively, you're going to be using the same words again and again and again which will not help your lexical resource score.

So, how do we get around this problem? Well, for example, imagine I'm talking about lawyers. What could I use instead of repeating an argument from lawyers? Well, I could say the-- first obviously, I would be using lawyers. Then I could use legal experts and then I could even say law practitioners. So, I'll give you an example.

Numerous lawyers have proven that global warming is a dangerous phenomenon. Firstly, they believe it has accelerated and is becoming ever more unpredictable. These legal experts believe a global solution is needed, but unfortunately, the globe still consists of individual players i.e. nation states. Furthermore, evidence is mounting proving its severity yet the law practitioners are painfully aware of the lack of action from governments.



Can you see? I'm not having to repeat lawyers and lawyer and lawyer all the time. I am boosting my lexical resource score by using basically the same term and keeping it all on topic. Using the same term, the same idea, but expressing it in different ways. And this is how we can boost our vocabulary score. So, the next time you're writing an essay, just have a look and see if you're repeating certain words over and over again and then look for synonyms.

Obviously, this is difficult to do in the exam room, okay? So, this is why I strongly recommend when you're writing out your first essays and you're practicing at home, give yourself time just to-- okay, I'm going to spend an hour writing this essay and then I'm going to spend an hour afterwards of upgrading it; looking for synonyms, looking for opportunities to implement what I've learned from different tutorials. And then I'll have my finished essay.

And maybe it's taken me two hours. That's okay. First get the essay writing process. Get it down. Get it mastered. And then you can work on your time. Just give yourself-- you can work on your time management. Just give yourself-- be patient with yourself while you're in this process.



Nobody writes a perfect essay first time unless they've practiced and they've done this thousands and thousands of times, okay?

Even now I've written out hundreds and hundreds of essays-- hundreds of sample essays and still when I'm writing up my essay I will still plan it and even when I finish, I will still go back and make improvements and look for opportunities to improve it. And it's a skill. It's a skill that I've developed even though I'm using the same system from the jump to band 7 or it's free course that's become ingrained in me, I can't write an essay now without doing it that way.

Even though I'm still using that technique and that system for writing cohesive essays, I will still go back and I will still look for opportunities to improve, look for mistakes that have been made and double triple check task response and all of this. So, it's a process.

Now then, the third way to improve our cohesion is to look at demonstratives. Now again, this happens a lot with most of what we teach with regards to IELTS. You've got to use these



techniques in a balanced manner. You just cannot overly rely on one of the techniques. So, having a wide range of techniques to use and then using them in the most opportune moments is the way to score high points. The most natural way is the most valuable way and the more skills you have then the more chances you have of using them in the correct moment.

So, let's have a look. Demonstratives, okay? These show what we've referred to previously. Usually, they'll be something like these, those, that, and this. Try to avoid using these in your topic sentence. It's just probably the best way to increase reader strain if you're using a lot of these in your topic sentence.

So, the reason we can't use them in the topic sentence is because we've got no idea what they demonstrate, what they are referring to, okay? Let me give you a horrible, horrible sentence. Imagine this. Imagine if I start this off as my topic sentence. They have proven that it is a dangerous phenomenon. In fact, it has accelerated and is becoming ever more unpredictable. This is the view of most of the legal profession regarding global warming.



Can you see? There's like three or four demonstratives there and it's completely unclear until the final three words. It's completely unclear what this sentence is communicating until we get to the final three words: legal profession regarding global warming. And it's horrendous and this is why when we are reviewing our essays, we can go back and we can edit for these mistakes, for these blunders so to speak.

Now, how could we correct it? Well, we'll start off with the subject first. We could say lawyers have proven that global warming is a dangerous phenomenon. In fact, it has accelerated and is becoming ever more unpredictable. It's quite straight forward.

Now then, I'm going to share some phrases and transition words that show precise relationships between the ideas that we are presenting in our paragraph. Now, to show similarities, we can use similarly and likewise. To build an argument, we can say in addition to or moreover or besides, okay? So, maybe we're going to deliver two ideas that just build on each other. We can also use



firstly and secondly in that case and we're building like probably either the first part or the second part of our paragraph.

So, we could say something like for example, in Mexico, global warming has had a terrible impact on the nature reserves due to the fall of migratory birds. In addition, the local livelihoods around these coastal areas have experienced a negative downturn due to global warming. Something like that.

Now to give clear examples, we could use to illustrate this or for example as you've heard. To illustrate this, to demonstrate this. And again, we want to use a variety of phrases to help us with the lexical resource score.

Now, to emphasize certain points, we can say-- this is slightly higher level-- we'd say indeed, undoubtedly, and truly. I like undoubtedly because it sounds very academic. It sounds very sophisticated. Let me give you an example. We can say furthermore, evidence is undoubtedly



mounting proving its severity yet the law practitioners are painfully aware of the lack of action from governments. Undoubtedly I think makes your writing sound quite academic, quite sophisticated and it's relatively straightforward to use as well. So, experiment with that.

Now, some other phrases we can use to show difference could be in spite of, still, although. I like the conjunction as well although because it's quite straightforward, but use it with caution because as soon as you're saying although you're going to be contradicting what you've said before and an essay that kind of zigzags around can be difficult to follow. So, just use it with caution.

In our online course, we do have lots of examples of how to use it and how to just mention it slightly and pick up the points for using the conjunction, but still carry on with the main idea of our paragraph.



Another one we could use to indicate time, we could say soon, lately, formally. Again, make sure you're using these in an accurate fashion because it can get confusing if they are misused. Now, for cause and effect which I think is extremely important for our paragraphs is we could say therefore and accordingly. Now, these when used correctly will beautifully link your ideas and your sentences from one idea to the next. So, these are very, very useful to master.

And again, because they're not only my personal favorites because they're so effective this is why we use them in the online course and we tutor our students how to use a framework which has a rich variety of these because we don't want to just use these two and be limited. We want to use a variety of these powerful beautiful linking devices.

Okay then. Now, final one. If we want to summarize, we can say overall or on the whole or in short. This is especially useful for Academic Task 1 especially at the beginning when we give a summary. Overall, the bar chart shows how petrol prices increased to a maximum of €1.20 per liter and have remained around this level for the last 10 years.



Just remember that each sentence has a certain task to fulfill and that we're going to be generally moving from general to specific throughout the paragraph and it's just a case of linking and linking and linking and building your arguments, organizing your ideas into a strong coherent paragraph that makes sense and links idea from idea in a logical progressive way.

That's it from me today. I wish you the best of luck with your IELTS preparation. You can definitely do this. You've learnt your own language. If you just think about the achievements you've made in the last couple of years and you'll probably remember a few of those. It's so easy to forget them, okay? It's so easy to forget our achievements. So, maybe just spend-- if you are feeling a bit down with IELTS preparation, then maybe just spend a bit of time writing out some of your achievements. And remember you learned your own language. There's no reason why you cannot learn English to a high enough level to pass the IELTS exam. If you want some guidance, some support or if you just want to improve faster and as fast as possible-- as fast as



humanly possible then have a look at the online course we've got at [ieltspodcast.com](https://ieltspodcast.com). Wish you all the best. Good luck with the IELTS preparation and take care.

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