How to Write a Unified, Coherent Essay

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**Michael Bluing:** We're going to go ahead and jump right into it. My name is Michael.

**Sonoma Koontz:** I'm Sonoma.

**Michael:** And we're going to be talking to you today about unity and coherence. So has anyone heard of these two concepts, unity and coherence, in terms of writing?
Michael: No? Okay, can you guys tell me a little bit about something that you do know about writing and what not? Excuse me?

Audience Member: It has to flow.

Michael: It has to flow, okay. What else do you guys know about writing? We're going to go ahead and ask that you guys put away all cell phones. No talking during the sessions. We would appreciate it, so I'm not going to call anyone out in particular, but I will if I have to, okay? So what else do you guys know about writing? So when you guys approach essays, your teacher gives you a prompt, how do you kind of like go about it? What does that look like for you?

Sonoma: And there's no right or wrong answers. Just like how you approach papers. So like how you, if you were talking to someone who's never written anything before in their life, what would be something that you would maybe tell them?

Audience Member: To write an outline.

Sonoma: Outlines.

Michael: Cool, what else?
**Audience Member:** Read over the prompts a couple times before you start [inaudible].

**Michael:** Okay, okay, good. Good, good, good.
Michael: So what are some issues that you guys and you ladies have when it comes to writing? And I will start calling people out just to let you know. I'm the mean one. She's the nice one. We play bad cop, good cop, so I usually do it by like the color of your clothes, the color of your hair, whether you got glasses on, or things of that nature, so just to let you know. Yes.

[inaudible]

Michael: I'm sorry, say that again.

Audience Member: Starting it off with a conclusion.

Michael: Okay, alright, yes?

Audience Member: And efficiency and sometimes vocab choice.

Michael: Vocab choice, so knowing when to use what words and what not to best convey your ideas, okay, good. Anybody on this side of the room have issues with writing? Want to share?
**Audience Member:** I have issues with the first sentence.

**Michael:** The very first sentence? Okay, all right, that's legitimate. Anybody else? Miss white shirt and blonde hair?

**Audience Member:** Well I have some issues starting off the conclusion.

**Michael:** OK. So when you say starting off, are you referring to introductions or just?

**Audience Member:** Well, like the first sentence, the topic and the conclusion.

**Michael:** Okay, all right, cool. All right, and then for those of you who have yet to share, what does your writing process look like? So when you first jump into writing do you do outlines? Do you just jump into introductions? Do you develop a thesis statement and then jump into your body paragraphs? All right, what does that look like? Yes.

**Audience Member:** The intro, and then the thesis, and then the body paragraph, and then conclusion.

**Michael:** Okay, perfect. Is there anyone that doesn't start with the introduction?
**Audience Member:** I do my body paragraphs first, so that it would be easier to figure your intro, so that you can write your thesis after you put it down, because if you write your thesis first sometimes you can go away from that.

**Michael:** Yes, that's interesting because I do the same thing. I actually start with my thesis statement, and then I move into my body paragraphs, and then I go back to my introduction, and then I do my conclusion. So that's kind of how I work, so I'm assuming in high school they pretty much tell you, you do your intro, your body paragraphs, and conclusion. Well, you all are in college now, so feel free to kind of do whatever works best for you. Don’t feel like you have to place yourself in that strict framework, okay?
Michael: So today what we're going to do is we're going to try to kind of give you guys some tools that you can apply to your writing when you're actually developing your body paragraphs, and this relates back to the concept of unity and coherence. So this is assuming that you've already done the brainstorming and all of that. We're not really going to talk about introductions or conclusions. We're just going to speak strictly about your body paragraphs. If you do have any questions about intros, conclusions, brainstorming, anything like that, after the workshop feel free to let us know because we will have a period where we'll be accepting questions and providing answers and what not, okay? Sound good?

Okay, and we're going to start getting you guys a little loose and what not because we're the ones standing up here, so we should feel nervous, all right?
Michael: All right, so what is unity? When we are looking at essays, when we’re looking at our writing as a whole, when we’re talking about unity we want to know, does it make sense, okay? So unity in writing means that one paragraph is only about one thing, all right? So the last thing that you want is to have one paragraph talking about multiple ideas. Why is that a bad thing? [inaudible] Exactly, and what is your purpose as the author of that piece of writing? Like what do you want to try to do? [inaudible] To make sense and try to keep your reader on the right track, right? And you want to make that easy for them by making sure that each paragraph is focusing on one idea, all right? All sentences within a paragraph, and we’re going to get into all of these different types of sentences, topic sentences, supporting details, specific details and, sometimes, concluding sentence are telling your reader about ONE main topic. And just to reiterate what we just talked about, each paragraph should only be about that one thing, which means that all the sentences in that paragraph should be what? About that one thing, all right? All right.

Sonoma: So like if you’ve got your paragraph and you wanted to talk about cats, and you’re talking about cats the rest of the time, and then you’re like, “Oh, and dogs are nice, too, but cats are the best.” The dog part might be something that doesn't really fit in with only talking about cats. So, like, a really basic example.
Michael: Yes, good. And then going off of that, if a paragraph contains a sentence or multiple sentences that are not related to the main topic, we call that a paragraph that lacks unity. So, again, if we're talking about cats, and all of a sudden we find ourselves talking about dogs, then that particular paragraph would lack unity because there's information in there that should not be in there. That's what we call irrelevant information, okay? We all good with that? Cool, so, in short, having unity means that your paper is coherent, easy to follow, and each paragraph relates to the main thesis, okay? Cool.
Michael: So this is a unity checklist that you can kind of go through while you’re looking at your paragraphs just to make sure that your paragraphs do have unity, and these are questions that you could ask yourself. So does every detail I have selected support the main idea? Have I organized the supporting details in the most logical way? Have I included any sentences that are unnecessary because they simply restate the main point without adding any new information or meaning? And have I made the relationship between my ideas clear? So you can either do this while you’re writing or after you’ve already written your paragraphs just to make sure that you’re, like we said, pushing your reader in the direction that you want them to go without veering off to any side ideas, okay? Cool.
Michael: So components of unity, like we talked about earlier, I briefly mentioned them, you have your thesis statement. Can someone tell me what a thesis statement is? Want to tell me what a thesis statement is? [inaudible] Okay, you guys are smart. All right, let's try it again.
Michael: Can you tell me what a thesis statement is? [inaudible] Yeah, it's not that easy when you're not reading it off the screen, huh? Yeah, anybody else want to tell me what a thesis statement is? Yes.

Audience Member: It basically lets the reader know what you’ll be talking about throughout your whole essay.

Michael: Perfect. Did everyone hear her? So a thesis statement is pretty much a statement that tells your reader what that entire essay is going to be about, all right? Okay, we’re going to get into that in a little bit more detail in a minute.
Michael: So a topic sentence, can somebody tell me what a topic sentence is? Yes.
Audience Member: Like, you write it in the body paragraph so it includes what you’re going to write about for each paper.

Michael: Okay, so, did everyone hear him? Yeah? Okay, so a topic sentence is pretty much a sentence that tells your reader what that particular paragraph is going to be about. So what is a thesis statement again?

Audience Member: What your essay’s going to be about.

Michael: What your essay's going to be about. So you can kind of think about your topic sentences as a mini thesis, right? So your thesis statement tells the reader what your entire essay is going to be about. Each topic sentence in a paragraph tells your reader what that particular paragraph is going to be about. You see how those are kind of connected? Okay, cool. And then supporting information, do we know what that means? When we have supporting information, and then we have specific information? Can we differentiate between the two? No? Okay, that stuff is a little confusing, so I'll go ahead and just jump into that stuff.
Michael: So supporting information is information that supports one aspect of the main idea highlighted in the topic sentence of a paragraph, okay? So if we're talking about Michael Jackson, and I'm talking about his musical abilities in one paragraph, one aspect of his musical abilities might be his singing abilities. Maybe another aspect of his musical abilities will be his dancing abilities, okay? So you see how those are two separate concepts, but they both fall into musical abilities, right? So then specific details are concrete information that reinforces the supporting details and further reinforces the main idea, the paragraph. So if we have musical abilities, we have his dancing, his singing, and we want to introduce specific information that reinforces those two separate ideas, I could talk about a specific song that he sang and maybe his vocal range when he was singing that song under the singing component of his musical abilities. When we're talking about his dancing abilities, we could probably talk about the moon walk, which he invented in like 1980 something. You see how those two things are separate? Yes? Yes? Okay. All right, well, you all are going to be doing this stuff in a minute, so hopefully you do have a clear understanding of these concepts because it will show, okay.
Michael: So briefly we're going to go into how to craft a thesis statement and the concept of a thesis statement, and then what we're going to do is we're going to have an activity where you actually develop a thesis statement. And then Sonoma's going to actually jump in and explain that activity to you, okay?

So, briefly, a thesis statement is often found in introduction and focuses your idea into one or two sentences, okay? It should present the topic of your paper and also make a comment about your position in relation to a topic, okay? And then your thesis statement should serve as a sort of road map for your readers. It should help guide your writing and keep your argument focused. So when we ask and when we're discussing thesis statements, there's three components to a thesis statement. So this is how you can identify whether or not you have a coherent thesis statement. So those three components are subject, opinion, and three main points, okay? So, “I'm the coolest person on Chico State's campus because I got a good dress sense, I'm funny, and I got cool hair.” Bam, I just made a thesis statement about myself with those three components included. I had the subject, me, my opinion, coolest person on Chico State's campus, and I provided my three reasons why. You see how that's a thesis statement? All right? Okay, cool.
Michael: So when I say subject I'm talking about the "who" or "what." When I'm talking about the opinion, I'm talking about how you feel or how I feel about that subject or that "who" or "what." And then when we're talking about three main points, we're talking about why you feel the way that you feel about that subject, which is the "who" or "what." Does that make sense? A couple more head nods. Does that make sense? Yeah, okay, cool. So an example would be, an additional example, would be, "The educational budget cuts have had a negative impact on class sizes, teacher quality, and students' level of learning." So can someone tell me what the subject is in this thesis statement? Yes.

Audience Member: Educational budget cuts.

Michael: Beautiful, can you tell me what the opinion is?

Audience Member: The negative impact.

Michael: Perfect, and then can you tell me what the three main points are?

Audience Member: Class sizes, teacher quality, and students' level of learning.

Michael: Perfect, so we all know now what the essay's going to be about, right? So do we know what those three main points eventually become?
Audience Member: Body paragraphs.

Michael: Body paragraphs, right? So one paragraph is going to be devoted to discussing impact on class sizes. Another paragraph is going to be devoted to talking about teacher's quality, and then another paragraph is going to be devoted to talking about students' level of learning. You see that? Okay, so do you kind of understand why your thesis statements serves as a sort of blueprint, a sort of road map for your paper? I should be able to look at your thesis statement and have a very clear idea of where you're going in your writing, all right? Okay, y'all ready? About to do some thesis statements, whoot, whoot, okay.
Sonoma: So for the activity you guys are going to be crafting your own thesis statements, so, oh.
Activity
Subject + Opinion + 3 main points = Thesis
Michael: Sorry about that.
Sonoma: That's okay. So for this one we have like a bunch of pictures of, like, famous people. You guys should probably recognize some of these people at least. So what you're going to do is you're going to pick one of them as your subject, form an opinion, and then add three main points as to why you feel that way about the subject that you picked using what Mike just went over with, like, the three points. Yeah, you could write, are we doing white boards, or are they just going to write it?

Michael: We don't have enough whiteboards. So go ahead and pull out some paper. Is there anyone that didn't bring paper and pen? No? Okay, so everyone should have some paper here. There's markers right on the tables if you need those, and like I said, if you need paper let me know. Is there anyone that needs paper? No? Okay, so go ahead and on your piece of paper go ahead and write out. You can just jump into your thesis statement. If you want an easier way to do that would be to actually list your subject, your opinion, and your three main points, right, in list format, and then using that information then construct your thesis statement. Does that make sense? Okay. Does that make sense?

Audience Member: Yes.

Michael: Thank you. I appreciate it. I'm going to look to you for confirmation now, so. And we'll give you about 2 to 3 minutes to do that, and then we're going to call on some people to share unless people volunteer, so.
Audience Member: [inaudible]. I don’t know any of those people.

Michael: You don’t know any of these people? What? You don’t know Clinton?

Audience Member: I don’t know that much about them. I don’t even know how they look, so how am I supposed to [inaudible]?

Michael: Okay, so if you don’t know any of these people feel free to choose anyone that you like, okay? It doesn't have to be someone from this board. We just figured we would give you some faces. If you don't like any of these faces, that's fine.

Audience Member: So does a thesis statement have a "because" in it?

Michael: It can.

[ Silence ]
Michael: Okay, so can I get some people to volunteer? We're running a little bit low on time, so if I, okay. So you two, and then we'll move on to the next concept.

Audience Member: I put, “Ellen is an inspiration to young girls, the LGBT community, and older women.”
Michael: Good, good, very nice. And then, young sir with the glasses.

Audience Member: “Albert Einstein is one of the most intelligent beings to walk the earth because of his IQ scores, his formulas that he invented, and he assisted in the Manhattan Project.”

Michael: Beautiful. So can we all agree that those are pretty good thesis statements? Can we see that the subject, the opinion, and three main points? Yes? So do you see how that formula is kind of the easy way of understanding thesis statements? You have your subject, opinion, three main points, yeah? Okay, good. Good, good, good. [inaudible]
Michael: Okay, so we talked about thesis statements. Now what we're going to do is we're going to move into topic sentences. So like we discussed briefly earlier, when you have your three main points in a thesis statement, those eventually become your topic sentences, right? Which eventually become your body paragraphs, okay? So a topic sentence is essentially a mini thesis for a given paragraph, which we've already discussed. Like a thesis statement which tells your reader what the essay's going to be about, the topic sentence for each paragraph tells your reader what that particular paragraph is going to be about, okay? And the topic sentence for each paragraph serves as a transition sentence between paragraphs. It should connect the previous main point with the next main point.

So how many people try to transition from one paragraph to the next in the last sentence of their paragraphs? Yeah? Is there anyone that tries to do that at the beginning, in the first sentence of their new paragraph? Yeah? How do you do that? What does that look like for you?

Audience Member: Well I just go, like, “First of all,” and then, “blah blah blah.”

Michael: Okay, all right. So, to give you an example, if I’m talking about my favorite animals and in one paragraph I’m talking about dogs and then in my next paragraph I want to talk about birds, how can I transition from paragraph one to paragraph two?
Audience Member: Reviewing clues that you talked about, and [inaudible].

Michael: Exactly, so, in addition to liking dogs, I also like cats or birds, okay? So does that make sense? It can be a very simple transition, so we have now indicated to the reader that the first paragraph was about dogs, and now we're talking about birds or cats, okay? Does that make sense? Okay.
Michael: And then supporting information, once again, the purpose of that is to provide additional information about the main idea of a given paragraph, and you do that by focusing on two different aspects or multiple aspects of that specific idea. Does that make sense? Okay, and then for each piece of supporting information at least one specific detail should be given. And then specific details are meant to reinforce supporting information, and they're often presented in the form of examples or statistics. So anytime you find yourself writing and you implement, for example, or a statistic to back up whatever it is that you're presenting, that is a specific detail. Any information that comes before that that's introducing this example or this statistic, that's what we call a supporting detail or supporting information or supporting idea, okay? Anything with support in it, okay?
Michael: All right, so using your thesis statement and looking at the three main points, I want you to develop three topic sentences, one that correlates with each of your body paragraphs, okay? So just to give you an example of what that might look like, we’re not going to be writing out full-on paragraphs, so don’t worry about that. We’re just developing the topic sentences just so that you know what that looks like, okay? So if my thesis statement is, "The educational budget cuts have had a negative impact on class sizes, teacher quality, and students’ level of learning," my topic sentence for paragraph one might be something to the effect of, "One negative impact budget cuts have had on education is the enlarged class sizes." So when talking about topic sentences we’re talking about transitioning from the first idea or the previous idea to the next idea, right? How do you do that in paragraph number one, body paragraph number one? You won’t have a previous main point to go back to, right? So what do you link that first main point to?

Audience Member: Can you say that again?
Michael: Okay, so in your topic sentences you're trying to create a transition between previous main point and the next main point, but in paragraph number one, topic sentence number one, how do you do that if you don't have a previous main point to go back to? [inaudible audience member] Yes, you reference your thesis statement, all right? So if we look at this thesis statement, "The educational budget cuts have had negative impact for X, Y, and Z," right? "One negative impact budget cuts have had"—that's relating back to our thesis statement, correct? And now we're introducing the first main point. "One negative impact budget cuts have had on education is the enlarged class sizes," and then we move on to topic sentence number two. And now we want to link the first main idea with the second main idea. So, "Because of large class sizes, the quality of teaching has also been negatively affected." Do you see how we're connecting those ideas? Yes? So now for the third paragraph topic sentence we're going to connect main idea two with main idea three, okay? So, "Due to the negative effects that the educational budget cuts have had on quality of teaching, students' level of learning has also been negatively impacted." So do you see how those bridges are being connected between ideas? Yes.

Audience Member: Does it always have to be in the order that you write your thesis statement?

Michael: It should be. It should be, and you should organize those by least important to most important. Do you know why?
Audience Member: So you finish strong.

Michael: So that you finish strong—perfect. You don't want to start off with your best argument and then, like, end off with your weakest argument because then what happens is the peak of your essay is at the beginning, and then everything starts to slowly slow down as you progress forward, okay? It's like a movie. You don't want the climax of the movie to happen within the first 20 minutes of the movie, right? You want to kind of build up to the climax and then end off on a strong note, okay?
Michael: So what that all looks like, before we actually jump into an activity--I didn't put the little activity on there, so. So what that would all look like once you include your supporting information and specific information is something like this, which would serve as a general outline for your paper. So you pretty much already have your topic sentences, so the first sentence for each paragraph already figured out. Now all you have to do is insert your supporting information and your specific information, so this will essentially be, like I said, the blueprint for your three body paragraphs. You get that? Yes? Okay, so activity?

[ Background conversation ]
Sonoma: Okay, so we’re going to start with just doing the topic sentences. Like we said, you guys have your three main points, you know, talking about the person that you chose, so for the first one you’re going to introduce, like this one refers back to the thesis. “The impact that budget cuts have had on education is the enlarged class sizes.” So that was the first main point. So this is what your first topic sentence is going to be, and then, again, the top second one pulled from the first one, large class sizes, and so, “Quality of teaching has also been negatively affected,” and so on, so...

Michael: So can someone give me their thesis statement again? One that already presented. I can’t remember. Was it you? Okay, can you give me your thesis statement again?

Audience Member: “Ellen is an inspiration to young girls, the LGBT community, and older women.”

Michael: Okay, so how can you start that off if you wanted to? So what would be the topic sentence for paragraph one?

Audience Member: “Young girls look up to Ellen because she speaks their language.”

Michael: Okay, that’s a good effort, good effort. Who else had a thesis statement? What was yours again? [
Audience Member: “Albert Einstein is one of the most intelligent beings to walk the earth because of his IQ scores, his formulas that he invented, and he assisted in the Manhattan Project.”

Michael: Okay, so if we wanted to, for topic sentence number one, if we were going off of that example, what we could say is, "One of the reasons why Einstein is one of the smartest men to walk the earth because of his IQ score."— what was the first idea?

Audience Member: His IQ scores.

Michael: --“is because of his IQ score.” So do we see how we linked thesis statement with the first main idea, right? Now what was the second point?

Audience Member: Like the formulas that he created.

Michael: Okay, so now what we do is we want to link the first main idea with the second main idea, so remind me again what the first main idea was. His IQ scores? Okay, so, "In addition to having high IQ scores, Einstein also created a number of formulas that are still used today." You see how we linked those two ideas together? And then what was the third idea?

Audience Member: The Manhattan Project.
**Michael:** Okay, do we know if he used any of those formulas in the Manhattan Project?

**Audience Member:** I'm assuming.

**Michael:** Okay, so maybe we can link that somehow in an interesting way by talking about, "Many of the formulas that he actually produced throughout his lifetime he actually used in the Manhattan Project." You see how we linked those ideas together? Yeah? Okay, so now what we want you to do, reiterating what Sonoma has already said, using the three main ideas that you created in your thesis statement, we want you to produce three topic sentences, one that coincides with each paragraph, okay? Yes.

**Audience Member:** Does your last topic sentence have to include your previous two main points?

**Michael:** No, so you're just linking previous main point with the next main point. So if we're working with the third body paragraph and we're looking at the topic sentence for that paragraph, we don't have to link the first main point and the second main point with the third, just the second with the third.

**Sonoma:** Just this one with the third. [ Cut ]
Michael: Okay, it’s 3:40, so can I have my man with the white shirt looking at me, can I have you present? [inaudible] Okay, can I have that one? [inaudible] Okay, what are some of the other ideas that you were going to expand on? [inaudible] Okay, and what was your first topic sentence again? [inaudible] In her personal life, okay, cool, and then you were going to talk about her career, and then you were going to talk about? [inaudible] Perfect. That's good. Good job.

And then can I get the young lady in the maroon shirt? [chuckles] She looked at her shirt. [inaudible] Do you have your three topic sentences? Okay, so just go ahead and read those for me. [inaudible] Okay, so just reading, just listening to her three topic sentences, we can get a pretty clear idea about what her thesis statement is, right? So if you spend enough time developing your topic sentences, I should be able to read each of your topic sentences and have a very clear understanding of where you're going in your paper without even reading your introduction or even having seen your thesis statement, okay? And then can I get one other person to volunteer to share? Or I will call on you. Okay. You want to share your ideas, please?

Audience Member: Sure. Just the topic sentences?

Michael: Just the topic sentences, yes.
Audience Member: “One reason Albert Einstein is considered the most intelligent man of his time is because of his ability to experiment new things.”

Michael: Good.

Audience Member: “As a result of his experiments, Einstein was able to create unique inventions.”

Michael: Perfect.

Audience Member: “In addition to his inventions, Einstein has created theories that are still in use today.”

Michael: Pretty good, yes? Do we all have a clear understanding of what her thesis is on? Yes? Okay, good job. Good job. Good job. Okay, so now we're going to go ahead and move on to the second part of our presentation, which is going to be on coherence. This one's going to have less activities because we are running low on time. So just to kind of jump right into it, when we're talking about coherence, we're talking about whether or not there's flow, and when we're talking about flow, we're talking about between paragraphs, okay? So maintaining coherence in a paragraph not only requires unity but also logical, smooth, and natural flow from one idea to another.
Michael: When this occurs, coherence has been established, okay? So when we're looking at coherence, there's a number of things that we're looking at. We're looking at transitional words, repeated words, pointing words, no irrelevant sentences, and no redundant sentences. So can someone tell me what a transitional word or phrase is? Yes. "Furthermore," okay. “Also,” “in addition to,” “moreover,” all right? Have you all heard these terms before? Okay, and can you tell me the significance of a transitional word?

Audience Member: [silence] No...

Michael: [chuckles] Yes?

Audience Member: It's just telling the audience that you're done with the last subject, and you're going to a new subject.

Michael: Yes, it also kind of indicates to your reader that you're going to either provide more information or you're going to provide like an opposing viewpoint. So each transition word or phrase serves a particular purpose. So if I'm saying, "Yada, yada, yada. Additionally, yada, yada, yada," what does “additionally” indicate to your reader?

Audience Member: You're adding more information.
**Michael:** You’re adding more information, right? Now if I’m saying, “Yada, yada, yada. However, yada, yada, yada,” what does that indicate to the reader? Or just providing a different viewpoint, right? You see how those kind of serve a specific purpose? Yeah? Okay, good. Can someone tell me what a repeated word is and the purpose of that? No? Okay, so if I’m talking about Ellen in my paper, I probably want to use Ellen a few times throughout my paragraphs, throughout my paper, just to make sure that the reader is aware that we’re still talking about the main subject who is Ellen, right? So when you start using words too frequently then it becomes a little repetitive. What’s a way that you can kind of resolve that issue? I’m using the same words too many times. How can I resolve that issue? Yes.

**Audience Member:** Replace them with synonyms.

**Michael:** Synonyms, perfect, and can you tell me what a synonym is?

**Audience Member:** I don't know how to describe it or like explain it.
Michael: So maybe a different word with the same meaning, right? So if I'm talking about "jump," what's another way that I can describe "jump?" "Leap, hop," right? "Bounce," maybe, all right. Okay, "running." What's another way of, "sprint, dash, walk really, really fast," all right? Okay, so do we all understand what a synonym is? All right? Okay, perfect. Now can someone tell me what a pointing word is? Okay, so if I say, "Bob went to the store. After Bob went to the store, Bob went home and ate a Hot Pocket. After he ate a Hot Pocket then Bob went to sleep." Is it necessary for me to continuously say, "Bob, Bob, Bob"? No? Why? [inaudible] "He." So "he" would be a pointing word. What would "he" point to? To Bob, all right? Okay, so we've already established in the first sentence that the subject is Bob. Now, it's not necessary for us to say, "Bob this, Bob that." Now we can just say, "He did this after he went to the store," right? Now maybe a few sentences in we just want to remind the readers, or maybe we introduce another character. Maybe we introduce Billy. Well, we want to make sure that the reader knows that we're talking about Bob and not Billy, so then we would introduce his name again. You see how we would do that? Okay, cool, and then do we know what is meant by relevant information or irrelevant sentences?

Audience Member: Useless, like what you were saying about [inaudible].

Michael: Perfect, good job. And then redundant, can you tell me what that is? Yes, I wasn't, but we can, we can talk to you.
**Audience Member:** I don't. I actually don't know.

**Michael:** Okay, does anyone know what, yes?

**Audience Member:** It's kind of like restating the same sentence over and over.

**Michael:** Yes, it's essentially restating the same idea without introducing anything new, okay? So we're going to go ahead and try to apply some of these different concepts together. We have a paragraph that we have already kind of put together, so,
and we kind of already discussed this information, right? So there's no need to go into that. So does someone want to read the entire paragraph for me? I know it's pretty long. Yes, look at you. You have candy?

**Sonoma:** Oh, it's in the SI cabinet. I can get it.

**Michael:** Yes?

**Sonoma:** Yes.

**Michael:** Okay, we're going to play a little game, so if you participate you can get some candy, okay? No.

**Sonoma:** The door's locked.

**Michael:** Is it?

**Sonoma:** Yeah, I don't know how to get out.

**Michael:** Okay, you can go ahead and start now.
Audience Member: “My hometown is famous for several amazing natural features. First, it is noted for the Wheaton River, which is very wide and beautiful. On either side of this river, which is 175 feet wide, are many willow trees which have long branches that can move gracefully in the wind. In autumn the leaves of these trees fall and cover the riverbanks like golden snow. Second, on the other side of the town is Wheaton Hill, which is unusual because it is very steep. Even though it is steep, climbing this hill is not dangerous, because there are some firm rocks along the sides that can be used as stairs. There are no trees around this hill, so it stands clearly against the sky and can be seen from many miles away. The third amazing feature is the Big Old Tree. This tree stands two hundred feet tall and is probably about six hundred years old. These three landmarks are truly amazing and make my hometown a famous place.”

Michael: Okay, so can we all agree that that’s a pretty well-developed paragraph? All right, clear ideas, good transition, and all that? Okay, so I don’t know if I stated this earlier, but I want to go ahead and just state that now if not. When we’re talking about transitional words and phrases, repeated words, pointing words, we’re talking about within a paragraph between sentences, okay? And I'll show you what I mean by that. So what we’re going to do is we’re going to go through, and we’re going to look at the sentences in pairs. Do you want to kind of head this up, or do you want me to head this up?
Sonoma: We can tag team it.

Michael: You want to tag team?

Sonoma: Yeah.


>> So, for instance, we'll do the first one together. We're going to do all of them together, but I will go ahead and head up the first one. So, "My home town is famous for several amazing, natural features. First, it is noted for the Wheaton River, which is very wide and beautiful."

Now, are there any transitional words and phrases, repeated words, or pointing words between those two sentences? No? No transitional words? "First," exactly, and we have a little, okay, don't cheat, especially you, Steven, yes. Yes, I know your name. So we have a little key.
Michael: We're going to jump to that real quick, perfect. So, yes, "first" would be a transitional word, okay? But there's no repeated words between sentence one and sentence two, right? And there's no pointing words, not yet, okay? Want to take two and three?

Sonoma: Sure. And then like what Mike said about doing them between sentences, so we did the first two. So then we're, again, we're going to take the sentence here, we're going to take, "First, it is noted for the Wheaton River, which is very wide and beautiful. On either side of this river, which is 175 feet wide, are many willow trees which have long branches that can move gracefully in the wind." So those are the two sentences we're looking at.

Michael: So, are there any transitional words between those two?

Sonoma: Yes. [inaudible] Oh, no.

Michael: No, that would not be considered a transitional word or phrase. Are there any repeated words?

Audience Member: River?

Michael: Okay, "river," where? Who said that?
Michael: Who said "river"?

Audience Member: Wheaton River?

Michael: Okay, okay. [inaudible] Yes? Cool. And are there any pointing words? So we say, "First, it is noted for the Wheaton River." "First, it." What is "it" referring to? [inaudible] Hometown. I'll get you some candy, too, okay? There you go. I don't want to hit someone in the head. There you go, all right. Are there any other pointing words?
**Michael:** So we say, "Wheaton River, which is very wide and beautiful. On either side of this river." What is "this" referring to?

**Audience Member:** The river?

**Michael:** To Wheaton River, right? So that would also be a pointing word, okay? "Which is 175 feet wide, are many willow trees which have long branches that can move gracefully in the wind. In autumn the leaves of these trees. Second, on the other side of the town is Wheaton Hill, which is unusual because it is very steep. Even though it is steep, climbing this hill is not dangerous, because there are some firm rocks along the sides that can be used as stairs. There are no trees around Wheaton Hill, so it stands clearly against the sky and can be seen from many miles away. Lastly, amazing feature is the Big Old Tree. This tree stands two hundred feet tall and is probably about six hundred years old. These three landmarks are truly amazing and make my hometown a famous place.

**Audience Member:** We have class.

**Michael:** Okay, how many people have class right now? Oh, nice. Okay, so we don't have time to get through all of this because we want to make sure that you guys all have questions answered and what not. Do we all understand this concept? Do we all understand how you can apply these different ideas? Yes? Okay, are there any questions before we release everybody? Yes. [inaudible]
Sonoma: Like, "Noted for the Wheaton River, which is."

Michael: It's transitioning from one idea to the next, but it's not considered a transition word or phrase, so stop in through the writing center, and we'll explain it to you a little bit clearer, okay? Take care. Alright.
Transition Words/Phrases:
Words at the beginning of a new sentence that help connect to the previous sentence.
Example: However, in contrast, On the other hand, Furthermore, Moreover, In addition, For instance, etc.

Repeated Words:
Words that are repeated or a phrase that becomes more specific in the next sentence.
Example: A stereotype is something that people believe isn’t true. There are many different kinds of stereotypes that are circulated throughout the world.

Pointing Words (Pronouns):
Words that refer to a person, place, or idea explained in the previous sentence.
Example: Stereotypes can often be mistaken for cultural traits. This confusion can make people from certain cultures frustrated and angry.

Irrelevant Sentences:
When sentences within the paragraph do not support the topic sentence, then they are irrelevant and should be eliminated.

Redundant Sentences:
Redundant sentences are sentences that repeat previously stated information without contributing anything new.