

Unity and Coherence

From an Essay on Culture Shock

If you have studied in a foreign country, chances are you have experienced some form of **culture shock**. **This phenomenon** generally progresses through **several stages**. Becoming familiar with the stages can help you deal with each stage more easily. The first stage is the “honeymoon” stage. At this stage, everything about the foreign country is appealing. The differences between your country and the country you are visiting make the new country seem fresh and exciting. Second, however, is the rejection stage. During this period, what seemed charming only days or weeks before is now frustrating. You get tired of having to live your life the way people do in the new culture you are living in. You may think, “Why can’t they just act like people from my culture?” If you remain abroad, though, you will reach the third stage, adjustment. You will begin to adapt to the new culture and see that it is not all bad. Finally, you will reach the acceptance stage. At this point, you will realise that the foreign country is different from your home country, but those differences, instead of seeming alien and unacceptable, will seem interesting. You may even come to prefer some things about the foreign country you are visiting. In conclusion, if you are studying abroad, **culture shock** is unavoidable, but familiarising yourself with these stages can help you to adjust to your new home with less stress.

(Adapted from: The ESL Writer’s Handbook, 2nd Ed., 2018)

This paragraph has the qualities of unity and coherence. It has a clear main idea and all the development sentences provide information or opinions that are relevant to that main idea. The paragraph therefore has unity. In addition, each sentence is logically and clearly linked to the ideas expressed in the sentences that come before and after it, making the paragraph coherent.

Questions for thought

For these questions, you could use different colour highlighters.

1. What is the main idea? What words are used?
2. What are the words around the development sentences (or a sub-idea)? What are the words used for this sub-idea?
3. Part of the coherence is a sequence of development sentences. What are the sequencing words used?
4. What other linking or signposting language is used?
5. The conclusion is not just a summary. How would you describe what is in the conclusion?