

On the Job **WRITING**



BASIC EDITION

Lesson 7

In this lesson, you will learn to:

- Check for logic
- Write for coherence

AIM FOR COHERENCE

As the office manager for a financial planner who consults with families on retirement planning, Erica Moore assists in writing instruction sheets on how to meet financial goals. The document currently taking her time is entitled *Financial Planning for Young Families*. She relates to this topic because, at 32, she has a young family.

In deciding what to write in her document, Erica thinks about her own background. She knows she is fortunate to be working for a financial expert who started her on the path to saving. When she took the job as administrative assistant in Marcie Thornbrook's consulting practice, the first words Marcie

uttered were, “Start saving now!”

Erica took the advice and pressured her new husband to do the same. While they are not rich, they have more money than they ever expected at this time of their lives.

Erica wants to motivate readers of *Financial Planning for Young Families* to start planning

for retirement right now. That's the main idea of her document and she plans to follow through with three or four paragraphs on saving for retirement.

For Erica, the most important thing is for her writing to make sense, to be logical, so young families will actually read it. She needs her paragraphs to flow naturally from one idea to the next and be easy to follow—to “hang together.”



DEFINE IT! Logic

A method of thought that requires thinking in a step-by-step manner about how a problem can be solved.

CHECK FOR LOGIC

To: danderson@gonto.com
 From: mnagel@dayteair.com
 Subject: Service date for air and heating
 Date: January 7, 20xx

Your air conditioning and heating maintenance is scheduled for February 16. Our technicians will give your system a full diagnosis. Is this date for the appointment all right with you? We will let you know if any updates need to be made on the system. You can purchase an air conditioning filter before the day we arrive, or we can use one you have on hand.

Please call (515) 555-2938 and confirm that the date is acceptable. Our appointments are scheduled for morning or afternoon. We can't tell you an exact time, but you are scheduled for the afternoon.

Your air conditioning and heating system is over 15 years old. It's time to think about buying a new one. The system you have is a Trane? Are you happy with it? Any system needs replacing as it gets older. Our technicians will text you 30 minutes before arriving to do your system maintenance.

Right now, you may be shaking your head and thinking, *"That doesn't make sense."*

The problem with the email is simple: It lacks coherence—that is, the arrangement of sentences and paragraphs is not logical. The writer jumped around from idea to idea.

The email to Dorothy Anderson is revised below. Do you see how placing the sentences and paragraphs in a different order would be more logical?

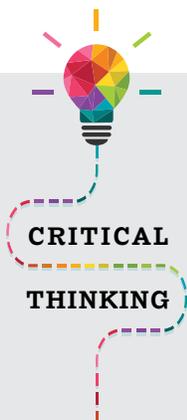
Your air conditioning and heating maintenance is scheduled for February 16 between 1:00 and 4:00. Our technicians will text you 30 minutes in advance to say they are on the way. Please call (515) 555-2938 to confirm that the date is acceptable.

The technicians will check your system fully and let you know if any updates need to be made. A new filter will be required for the air conditioning system. You may purchase the filter from us, or we can use a new filter you have.

DID YOU KNOW



Workplace writers often visually scan documents rather than read thoroughly because of their busy schedules. This pressures the writer to add enough specifics in the opening paragraph for the reader to get the idea of the message right away.



People sometimes jump around when talking, but can still carry on worthwhile conversation. However, jumping around is not acceptable in written documents. What is the difference?

WRITING FOR COHERENCE

When organizing the body sentences of a paragraph or putting paragraphs in order: (1) create a clear pattern with one main idea and (2) supporting paragraphs related to the main idea.

Imagine that you are an environmental scientist writing a report about your team’s inspection of land that is scheduled for redevelopment. Your team found problems that need to be fixed before new condominiums are built. Read the following three introductory paragraphs in the right column and decide why number three is the best for the report. The main idea is underlined in each paragraph. Note that the main idea comes at the end of the paragraph in these examples.



Example 1 On June 30, 20xx, EnvironSpecs, Ltd. inspected the parcel of land at 1211 Market Street, Exton, VA to determine its suitability for construction of a condominium complex. The team of three inspectors found that it would be dangerous to build condominiums on this site.

Example 2 On June 30, 20xx, EnvironSpecs, Ltd. inspected the parcel of land at 1211 Market Street, Exton, VA to determine its suitability for construction of a condominium complex. The team of three inspectors found that the site presents serious health and safety risks for the construction crews and for the future occupants of the condominiums.

Example 3 On June 30, 20xx, EnvironSpecs, Ltd. inspected the parcel of land at 1211 Market Street, Exton, VA to determine its suitability for construction of a condominium complex. The team of three inspectors found evidence of underground oil tanks dating from the site’s previous use as a gas station. Unless the remnants of these tanks are removed, they pose serious health and safety risks for the construction crews and future residents of the condominiums.

Example 3 is best because it states the environmental problem in the most specific way. It narrows the main idea to the risks of the old oil tanks, and it says how the problem can be solved.

LESSON 7 ACTIVITY

Your company will lease or purchase a car for your use as a computer service technician, and you are to investigate and report the different options for leasing or buying. Write the first paragraph of your report based on the information provided below.

Your notes are filled with jumbled information: The notes say leasing long-term may be more economical than short-term leasing. Buying a car may be better because you won’t have to pay extra at the end of the contract if you go over the mileage allowed in a lease. A lease has a lower monthly cost if only usage is considered. On the other hand, leasing has real drawbacks. Limited miles and higher insurance rates are two things. You can get a new car every two or three years if you lease.