Year 6: Writing Mat

Cohesive devices

Use a range of devices to build cohesion within a paragraph and links across paragraphs. Try using adverbials of time, place or number. You could also use a variety of tense choices to move between paragraphs.

Devices such as: On the other hand, In conclusion,
Adverbials of time: Later that week, The following morning, After a while,
Adverbials of place: Far off, Nearby, Further along the road,
Adverbials of number: First of all, secondly
Varied tense choices eg Although he had seen her before,…

Subjunctive

The subjunctive mood is a formal way of writing used in the language of hopes and dreams or to express a degree of urgency or importance. Essentially, the verb form changes slightly. Here are some example phrases that you might use:

Hopes and desires:
If I were rich, I would buy a yacht. (rather than If I was rich).
If only the door were unlocked now and if only he were here.
I would stay at home, if I were you.

Importance and urgency (the infinitive form of verb used for everyone):
Lord Farnham request that Sir John attend the wedding of his daughter.
I insist that Sam report to my office immediately.
They demand that she leave now.
The judge recommended that they be sent to jail forever.

The Passive

The passive voice changes the presentation of information and is used when you want the focus of your sentence to be on the action (verb) or object of the sentence and not the subject (agent- person doing the action). It is really important in scientific writing where we don't need to know who the agent is, or in writing where the subject (agent) is unknown.

Eg. Passive: The cress was placed on the windowsill and measured each week. (by Jane)
(Active: Jane put the cress on the windowsill and she measured it each week.)
Passive: The old lady was robbed at knifepoint. (by someone)
(Active: Someone robbed the old lady at knifepoint.)
Passive: The Northern Lights can be seen for miles. (by people near and far)
(Active: People near and far can see the Northern Lights.)
Consider using the passive for dramatic effect:
Passive: The room was plunged into darkness and a strange noise could be heard…
(Active: Something plunged the room into darkness and they heard a strange noise…)

Relative Clauses

Use a variety of relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose, that, or an omitted relative pronoun.

Eg We spoke to the girl, who was clearly upset.
Luckily we caught the train, which was late.

Try embedding the relative clause eg
John, whose mother is ill, came to visit.

Or omitting the relative pronoun eg
Arthur, born in 1950, was a famous writer.

Degrees of possibility

Indicate degrees of possibility using a variety of **adverbials** such as **surely, perhaps, never, unlikely** or **modal verbs** such as **could, should, might, must.**

Eg We are *definitely* going home at 3:15

They *might* become extinct.

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Commas

Lists: Commas show a break between words in a list:
They bought eggs**,** milk**,** cheese**,** ham and bread.
Fronted adverbials: Include a comma after fronted adverbials:
Suddenly, the door slammed.
Between clauses: When you put a subordinate clause before a main clause.
Josh went to bed because he was tired. **Because he was tired,** Josh went to bed.
Around an embedded clause eg The teacher**,** named **Miss Smith,** was marking books.
In Direct Speech: Between speech and the reporting clause
eg "They were looking for you**,**" he remarked
To mark parenthesis eg This play is, without a shadow of a doubt, the worst I have ever seen.
For question tags: eg He is your friend**, isn't he?** We should go now**, shouldn't we?**

Ellipses

These show where something is missing or yet to come.
They can be used for dramatic effect in your writing:

Eg Sadly, they were never seen again…
Tune in next week for the next thrilling chapter of my story….
"Stop…can't…brea….," she spluttered.

Colons and semi-colons

Colons can be used to introduce information, such as items in a list.
Semi-colons can be used to separate items in a list where some might be longer phrases eg We serve**:** eggs and bacon**;** toast with a range of spreads**;** a variety of cereals**;** coffee and tea.
Semi-colons can also mark the boundary between independent, **but linked** clauses (ie instead of a full stop or a conjunction)
eg It was raining**;** I was fed up.
The door swung open; a masked figure strode in.
Use semi-colons sparingly.

Punctuation to avoid ambiguity

Include hyphens or commas to add clarity to your work:

I saw a man eating shark. / I saw a man-eating shark.

The police tried to recover the man. / The police tried to re-cover the man.

Let's eat, granny! / Let's eat granny!

Punctuation for parenthesis

Include brackets, hyphens or commas (parentheses) to add extra information eg The Lion (scientifically named Panthera leo) is commonly found in Africa. If you see one in the wild –and this is unlikely- do not approach it. Lions can be very dangerous, especially when hungry.

Punctuation of bullet points

A **bullet** (•) is a symbol used to introduce items in a list. For example:

- Item 1
- Item 2
- Item 3

Bulleted items – known as "bullet points" – may be short phrases, single sentences, or of paragraph length. Bulleted items are not usually terminated with a full stop but you can punctuate the last item with a full stop. It is correct to terminate a bullet point with a full stop if the text within that item consists of one 'full' sentence or more.

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