

In the following text – a short story written by a 12-year-old Australian boy and submitted to a national creative writing competition – the young writer creates confusion for the reader by the excessive use of presuming reference in the first paragraphs:

# FATAL ALASKA

I watched as my companion was attacked by the polar bear. Then he fell to the ground and didn't move. I knew he was dead. My other companion was still in the plane, looking like it was he who had been attacked. I tried to ignore the body but two hours later could stand it no longer. I made a hole in the ice and left it for whatever arctic creature was hungry.

My journey to Alaska consisted of two reasons, finding the two men who set off from Canada to study penguins and to give the two Canadian mounties some experience in Alaska.

My name is Samuel Jacobson, I am a 17 year old Canadian pilot who was assigned to this mission. At first I was proud to do it, then nervous and now I'm terrified. The snow storm last week is said to have covered their plane in ice and snow. I am told they were professionals.

- I watched as my companion was attacked by the polar bear.

(readers don't know who the "I" is, or which "polar bear" is)

- Then he fell to the ground and didn't move.

(the companion or the polar bear?

Readers make the conventional cultural assumption, but it's always possible to be wrong)

- I knew he was dead. My other companion was still in the plane, looking like it was he who had been attacked.

(readers infer that the “I” has two companions, but they don’t know who they are , nor how it is they are in a plane and why)

I tried to ignore the body but two hours later could stand it no longer. I made a hole in the ice and left it for whatever arctic creature was hungry.

*(the body* is likely to refer to the dead companion, although it is not so clearly stated. *The ice* establishes some links to *the polar bear* and *the arctic*. But why are they there and who are they?)



My journey to Alaska consisted of two reasons, finding the two men who set off from Canada to study penguins and to give the two Canadian mounties some experience in Alaska.



(Readers learn that the main character is in Alaska, which is not quite *the arctic*, but they are still confused because they don't know who *the two men* or *the two Canadian mounties* are. Could they be the two companions mentioned in the first paragraph? Perhaps, but they cannot be sure).

It's only in the third paragraph that the "I" discloses his identity, along with some very necessary information about *this mission*.  
Anyway, not all the ambiguities are cleared up.



The snow storm last week is said to have covered their plane in ice and snow. I am told they were professionals.

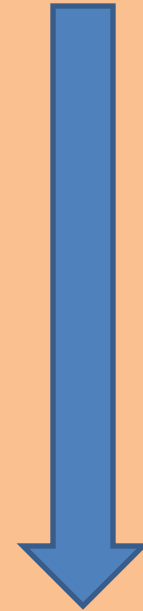
(But who are they exactly?)

# **SUBSTITUTION and ELLIPSIS**

This is another type of cohesive relation, which takes two different forms: substitution and ellipsis.



It is the replacement of one item by another



It is the omission of an item

Basically, the two are the same process, since ellipsis can be interpreted as a particular form of substitution in which the item is replaced by nothing.

The distinction between substitution and reference is that substitution is a relation in the wording rather than in the meaning.

This means that substitution is a relation between linguistic items, such as words or phrases; whereas reference is a relation between meanings.



So, reference is a relation on the semantic level, whereas substitution is a relation on the lexicogrammatical level (the level of grammar and vocabulary, the linguistic form).

Ellipsis is in this respect simply a kind of substitution: it can be defined as substitution by zero.

# So, to sum up:

## Type of cohesive relation:

- Reference
- Substitution  
(including ellipsis)

## Linguistic level:

- Semantic
- Grammatical

For example, the meaning of the reference item “he” is “some person (a male one), other than the speaker or addressee, who can be identified by recourse to the environment”.

In the case of endophoric references, the text itself is a special case of the environment; in the case of exophoric references, the meaning is retrieved from the environment itself.

Substitution, on the other hand, is a relation within the text, where a substitute is used in place of the repetition of a particular item.

For example:

- My axe is too blunt. I must get a sharper **one**.
- Do you think Jane already knows? I think everybody **does**.
- Has Barbara left? - Yes, I think **so**.

“One”, “does” and “so” are substitutes: “one” substitutes for “axe”, “does” for “knows”, “so” for “she has left”.

# Types of substitution

Since substitution is a grammatical relation (a relation in the wording rather than in the meaning), the different types of substitution are defined grammatically rather than semantically.



In English, the substitute item may function as a noun, as a verb or as a clause.

Hence we have three types of substitution:

- nominal
- verbal
- clausal

The following is a list of the items that occur as substitutes:

- Nominal: one / ones / same
- Verbal: do / does / did
- Clausal: so / not

## Other examples:

- I'll have two poached eggs on toast, please.
- I'll have ***the same***.

(nominal substitution)



- Does Susan sing?
- No, but her sister ***does***.

(verbal substitution)

- Has everyone gone home?
  - I hope *not*.

(clausal substitution)

Substitution and ellipsis are very similar to each other. As already said, ellipsis is simply “substitution by zero”.

Although substitution and ellipsis express the same fundamental relation between parts of a text (a relation between words or phrases, so distinct from reference which is a relation between meanings), they are two different kinds of structural mechanism.

The starting point of the discussion of ellipsis can be the familiar notion of “something left unsaid”. There is no implication here that what is unsaid is not understood; on the contrary, “unsaid” implies that “something is understood nevertheless”.



However, it is important to state that, in order to “supply” what is left unsaid, we need some forms of presupposition in the structure of the clause.

Let's compare the following examples:

1) Hardly anyone left the country before the war.

2) Margaret brought some carnations and Catherine some sweet peas.

In the first example, there is nothing in its structure to suggest that something has been left out. Even though readers may wish to know further details about the “hardly anyone”, the “country”, the “war”.

But when we talk of ellipsis, we are referring to clauses whose structure is such as to presuppose some preceding item, which is the source of the missing information.

**An elliptical item is one which leaves specific structural slots to be filled from elsewhere.**

While in substitution an explicit “counter” is used (one / do / so) as a place-marker for what is presupposed, in ellipsis nothing is inserted into the slot.

That is why we say that ellipsis can be regarded as substitution by zero.

So, in example n. 2, the clause can be interpreted only as “Margaret brought some carnations and Catherine brought some sweet peas”.

Let's consider the following  
example:

- Would you like to hear another  
verse? I know twelve more.

Here the second sentence contains a nominal phrase (twelve more), consisting of a Numerative only. So we have to supply a Head noun presupposed from the first sentence:

- Would you like to hear another verse? I know twelve more verses.



As a general rule, ellipsis occurs when something that is structurally necessary is left unsaid, so that there is a sense of incompleteness associated with it.

# CONJUNCTION

The cohesive pattern of conjunction (or conjunctive cohesion) refers to how the writer creates and expresses logical relationships between the parts of a text.

So, conjunctive cohesion adds to the texture of a text, helping to create that semantic unity which characterizes unproblematic texts.

It is possible to recognize three main types of conjunctive relations:

- elaboration
- extension
- enhancement

1) **ELABORATION** establishes a relationship of restatement or clarification, by which one sentence is presented as a form of re-saying or clarifying a previous sentence.



Common conjunctions used to express this relation are: in other words, that is (to say), I mean (to say), for example, for instance, thus, to illustrate, to be more precise, actually, as a matter of fact, in fact.

For example:

- Chopin's story is carefully created.  
**For example**, Chopin's opening sentence conveys an enormous amount of information about characters and events.



2) **EXTENSION** is a relationship of either addition (one sentence adds to the meanings made in another) or variation (one sentence changes the meanings of another, by contrast or by qualification).

Typical conjunctions are: and, also, moreover, in addition, now, but, yet, on the other hand, however, on the contrary, instead, apart from that, except for that, alternatively.

For example:

- A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination. **And yet** she had loved him – sometimes.

[it expresses both addition (and) as well as variation (yet)]

3) **ENHANCEMENT** refers to ways by which one sentence can develop on the meanings of another, in terms of dimensions such as time, comparison, cause, condition or concession.

Common **temporal conjunctions** include: then, next, afterwards, just then, at the same time, before that, soon, after a while, meanwhile, all that time, until then, up to that point, now.

**Comparative conjunctions include:**  
likewise, similarly, in a different  
way.

**Causal conjunctions** include: so, then, therefore, consequently, hence, because of that, for, in consequence, as a result, on account of this, for that reason, for that purpose, with this in view.

**Concessive conjunctions include:**  
but, yet, still, though, despite this,  
however, even so, all the same,  
nevertheless.