

Writing coherent paragraphs involves linking sentences within paragraphs and making links between paragraphs. Coherence develops through two systems of language: Theme and Reference. In English, the starting point of a clause and therefore a sentence is called the **Theme**. The Theme gives a focus or establishes an orientation for the reader.

The oil industry affects our everyday life in many ways.

When the price of oil rises, after a short delay the price of petrol rises too.

Types of Themes

1. Noun group

Fossil fuels are the basis of the petrochemical industries.

The Chernobyl disaster occurred in 1986.

2. Prepositional phrase or adverbial group – may give background information

In the late 1930s and the 1940s the octane rating of fuel became important as the military sought higher output for aircraft engines.

Currently, many countries set limits on gasoline aromatics in general, benzene in particular, and olefin (alkene) content.

In Brazil, the Brazilian National Agency of Petroleum, Natural Gas and Biofuels (ANP) requires gasoline for automobile use to have from 18 to 25% of ethanol added to its composition
Verb in commands

3. Verbs in commands

Select the Print Monitor icon in the system folder.

Choose an alternative method.

4. Multiples themes
 - a. With conjunctions – to link clauses

Subsequently, the next strategy is to regulate the industry.

However, this would involve a great deal of government finance.

When the price of oil rises, after a short delay the price of petrol rises too.

- b. With attitudinal adjuncts

Clearly, the solution is not straightforward.

Unfortunately, no funds are yet available.

Everything else in the clause that is not Theme is called the Rheme. The Rheme introduces information that is **NEW** to the reader or develops the Theme. The selection of Theme contributes to the development of ideas within a paragraph.

| Theme | Rheme |
|---|--|
| In North America <i>while</i> petrol | the term gasoline is often shortened in colloquial usage to gas, is the common name in the UK, Republic of Ireland, Australia and in most of the other Commonwealth countries. |
| Under normal conditions | its physical state is a liquid, unlike liquified petroleum gas or natural gas. |

Patterns of thematic development

1. Constant or parallel Theme pattern

| Theme | Rheme |
|--------------------|--|
| Gasoline or petrol | is a transparent, petroleum-derived oil that is used primarily as a fuel in internal combustion engines. |
| It | consists mostly of organic compounds obtained by the fractional distillation of petroleum, enhanced with a variety of additives. |
| Some gasolines | also contain ethanol as an alternative fuel.. |

2. Zig-zag pattern

| Theme | Rheme |
|--------------------------|---|
| Gasoline, | as delivered at the pump, also contains additives to reduce internal engine carbon buildups, improve combustion, and to allow easier starting in cold climates. |
| High levels of detergent | can be found in Top Tier Detergent Gasolines. |
| These gasolines | exceed the U.S. EPA's minimum requirement for detergent content. |

3. Sub-point or fan pattern

| Theme | Rheme |
|--|--|
| Octane rating in gasoline | is measured relative to a mixture of 2,2,4-trimethylpentane (an isomer of octane) and n-heptane. |
| There so a fuel | are different conventions for expressing octane ratings, may have several different octane ratings based on the measure used. |
| Research octane number (RON) for commercially-available gasoline | varies by country . |
| In Finland, Sweden and Norway, | 95 RON is the standard for regular unleaded gasoline and 98 RON is also available as a more expensive option. |
| In the UK, | ordinary regular unleaded gasoline is 91 RON (not commonly available), premium unleaded gasoline is always 95 RON, and super unleaded is usually 97-98 RON. |
| <i>However</i> , both Shell and BP | produce fuel at 102 RON for cars with high-performance engines, |
| <i>and</i> the supermarket chain Tesco | began in 2006 to sell super unleaded gasoline rated at 99 RON. |
| In the US, | octane ratings in unleaded fuels can vary between 86 and 87 AKI (91-92 RON) for regular, through 89-90 AKI (94-95 RON) for mid-grade (European premium), up to 90-94 AKI (95-99 RON) for premium (European super). |

In any paragraph you may find one or more patterns. Note how in the example for the fan pattern, deviations from the pattern are marked by a multiple theme with the conjunctions *However* and *and*.