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# English Language Center

## **Supplement to *The Lies that Bind***

**created by**

**The Vanderbilt University English Language Center**

[vanderbilt.edu/elc/](http://vanderbilt.edu/elc/)

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## What is our Supplement to *The Lies that Bind*?

This guide was created for first year Vanderbilt University students who have a first language other than English. Our Supplement to *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity* by Kwame Anthony Appiah<sup>1</sup> has two goals:

- to help you read texts about unfamiliar topics
- to help you internalize relevant themes from *The Lies that Bind*




First, we include several tools to equip you for a more complete understanding of the text:

- **reading strategies:** develops skills such as building background knowledge, previewing, skimming, and scanning
- **recognizing organizational elements:** explores skills for reading accuracy and comprehension, including sections about argumentative structure and identifying Appiah's arguments
- **Appiah's writing style:** identifies informal stylistic elements, cohesive devices, and author voice and tone
- **discovering a range of opinions:** guides reflection on your views of Appiah's argument

The second goal, internalizing relevant themes from *The Lies that Bind*, is more difficult to achieve. We focus the supplement on recognizing and interpreting organizational elements of *The Lies that Bind*, and we hope this helps you read more quickly and accurately. In turn, this may help clarify complex issues raised in your classes and [Vanderbilt Visions group](#), and even improve your persuasive and analytical writing during your first year at Vanderbilt.

**Find this supplement online at:** <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/elc/resources/supplement-to-the-lies-that-bind/>

Use the tools pictured below to help you as you read:

 <b>Want to Know More?</b>	Expand your knowledge with links to online resources in these boxes.
 <b>Focus on...<sup>2</sup></b>	Complete activities to further your understanding by following the directions in these boxes.
 <b>Notice...</b>	Consider details not immediately apparent from examples or explanations.

## Reading Strategies

### Building Background Knowledge

Before you read *The Lies that Bind*, consider what you know about the book's major topic, identity, and its themes of social classifications, fixed beliefs, common assumptions, and historically shifting traditions. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Have you studied these topics previously?
- What can you remember about these topics?
- What is your understanding of these topics?

<sup>1</sup> *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity* by Kwame Anthony Appiah, 2018, Liveright Publishing Corporation.


<sup>2</sup> Target Icon adapted from: <http://webiconspng.com/icon/78516>

## Current Conversations about Identity in the United States

As Appiah explains in the introduction (p. xii-xiii), his family background and personal experiences inspired him to explore identities (creed, country, color, class, and culture) and the assumptions we make about them. Appiah's hope is that through his work, we can reflect upon and modernize our understanding of the identities he discusses to reduce hostility and foster unity.

The *Lies that Bind* is part of a larger conversation about identity that is currently taking place in the United States. As a result of the political and cultural shifts in government administration, the United States has reached a historical crossroads, prompting nationwide conversations about the direction of both domestic policy and foreign affairs. Appiah's book has emerged as part of this larger dialogue.

Much of the content of this book was first delivered in a [series of lectures](#) aired on BBC Radio that shaped the [writing style](#) and [structure](#) of the book. Listening to these lectures will give you a condensed version of the book with many of the same examples and arguments. The book is an expanded version in which Appiah adds more explanations and examples as well as a chapter about class.

 <p>Focus on Appiah's Lectures</p>	<p><b>Lecture Links:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Creed</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Country</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Color</a></li> <li>4. <a href="#">Culture</a></li> </ol>	<p><b>Corresponding Transcript Links:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Creed</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Country</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Color</a></li> <li>4. <a href="#">Culture</a></li> </ol>
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## Thinking before You Read: Previewing the Text

Before reading *The Lies that Bind*, first browse through the book. Ask yourself:

- How many pages do I need to read?
- How long will it take to read?

Knowing the approximate length of the chapters will help you be realistic about the time you will need to read them.<sup>3</sup> Also, because this text is structured as a persuasive argument, knowing whether you are at the beginning, middle, or end of the chapters will help you know where you are in the argument (see [Argumentative Structure](#) for more details).

## Skimming and Scanning

Before reading *The Lies that Bind*, it is helpful to glance through the pages and focus on the important parts to better understand what the text is about.<sup>4</sup> This practice is called **skimming**.

Ask yourself:

- What do the chapter titles mean?
- What are the keywords in each title?
- What will each chapter's content be?
- How will each chapter support the book's overall argument?

You can better understand the organization of the story by **skimming** the material for important elements, which may also help you predict what comes next.

*For example, by looking at the front cover, back cover, and chapter titles, you can predict that *The Lies that Bind* examines different types of identity. Furthermore, you can see the book reviews on the back and consider that this book is part of a larger community's conversation about identity.*

<sup>3</sup> *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 2-3.

**For example**, in several chapters, Appiah uses section **headers** to clearly outline his perspective on how identities are classified in society. By paying attention to the headers, you can preview what each section will be about and break down the main points of Appiah's argument: headers show each step of logic that Appiah examines to argue that although classifications can be harmful, society ultimately needs them.

A similar skill is **scanning**. Scanning is to quickly look over a text without reading every single word. By looking over the text for keywords, definitions, and the central themes—not reading for complete understanding—you may quickly understand the important elements of what a specific passage mentions and how it fits into the larger argument.<sup>5</sup>

In *The Lies that Bind*, Appiah examines five types of identity (creed, country, color, class, and culture) to argue that modernizing our understanding of these identities will help unite people in large and small groups around the world. As you read, you will notice that some passages are descriptions of historical events, fictional stories, or even anecdotes from Appiah's life. These paragraphs

are not always essential to the main argument, and it might benefit you to skim and scan these parts to look for the main idea they are communicating. See the section on [Roadmaps, Topic Sentences, and Thesis Statements](#) for more help finding places to skim and scan.



**Focus on  
Reading  
Skills**

Consult these reading textbooks for more information and practice:

- *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988
- *Ready to Read More* by Blanchard & Root, 2006
- *A Good Read: Developing Strategies for Effective Reading* by Islam & Steenburgh, 2009

## Identifying In-Text Definitions

Because this book was written for a general audience, Appiah has included definitions for terms that are specific to philosophers. Finding these definitions as you read will help you avoid looking up words in the dictionary, which increases your reading speed and flow. Also, dictionary definitions you find may not be helpful, as words often have more than one meaning and you will need a definition specific to the context of this book. If you see a word you do not know, do not stop reading. Instead, look for a definition in the text. Definitions can be spotted by paying attention to punctuation, synonyms, defining verbs such as “called” and “means,” and descriptions in surrounding sentences.<sup>6</sup> See the table on the next page for examples.

**As you keep reading, if you do not see a definition in the text, you can follow these steps.**

1. Look for a prefix or suffix that might help you guess the meaning of the word and identify what part of speech (noun, verb, or adjective, etc.) the word has in the sentence.<sup>7</sup>
2. If the meaning of the word is still unclear, you can search for the definition in a dictionary. The ELC recommends using an English–English dictionary (such as the [Oxford English Dictionary](#) or [Merriam Webster](#)) for more precise definitions of the word. Choose the definition that best fits the context and part of speech for the sentence you are reading. If you prefer simpler definitions, you can use a learner's dictionary, for instance, the [Oxford Learner's Dictionaries](#).

<sup>5</sup> *A Good Read: Developing Strategies for Effective Reading 2* by Islam & Steenburgh, 2009, Cengage Learning, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Ready to Read More* by Blanchard & Root, 2006, Pearson Longman, Chapter 3: Use Vocabulary Strategies.

<sup>7</sup> *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 11.

Use the table below to help you identify definitions in *The Lies that Bind* without using a dictionary. Fill in some of your own terms and definitions to guide your reading.

Term	Definition	How I Recognized It
<i>norms of identification</i>	p. 10: It creates what you could call norms of identification: <b>rules about how you should behave, given your identity.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punctuation: colon</li> </ul>
<i>normative significance</i>	p. 10: People who give reasons like these—"Because I'm this, I should do that"—are not just accepting the fact that the label applies to them; they are giving what a philosopher would call "normative significance" to their membership in that group. <b>They're saying that the identity matters for practical life: for their emotions and their deeds.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Punctuation: quotation marks highlight the phrase</i></li> <li>• <i>Definition is found in a description in the following sentence</i></li> </ul>
<i>descriptive / normative</i>	p. 13: ...those "shoulds" are both descriptive ( <b>this is what we expect men and women to be like</b> ) and normative ( <b>this is what we think is right</b> ).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punctuation: parentheses</li> </ul>
<i>habitus</i>	p. 21: Each of us has what he called a <i>habitus</i> : <b>a set of dispositions to respond more or less spontaneously to the world in particular ways, without much thought.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Description in the sentence</i></li> <li>• <i>Punctuation: colon</i></li> <li>• <i>Defining verb: "called"</i></li> </ul>
<i>generics</i>	p. 26: ...one of <b>our most basic strategies for making sense of the world is to form the sorts of generalizations</b> that linguists call "generics"—generalizations like "Tigers eat people," and "Women are gentle."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining verb: "call"</li> </ul>



**Notice:  
Definitions**

If you look up the word **generics** in the online [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#), the linguist's definition described in the sentence above is not explicitly listed.

## Recognizing Organizational Elements in *The Lies that Bind*

Think of *The Lies that Bind* as a long argumentative essay, and all the chapters as pieces of a puzzle that come together and support the overarching argument that a modern understanding of identity, assumptions, and traditions can help unify people who have differing identities. This section can help you do two things to improve your reading comprehension and speed in *The Lies that Bind* and other materials you read at Vanderbilt:

1. Zoom in: Recognize the pieces of the organizational puzzle
2. Zoom out: See how the pieces fit together to support the thesis

## Argumentative Structure

Think of *The Lies that Bind* book as a big argumentative essay meant to support Appiah's overarching thesis: *If we can modernize our understanding of identity, we can reduce division and foster unity*. To make such a sweeping argument, Appiah breaks his thoughts into chapters, headings, and paragraphs. Recognizing an author's argumentative structure can help you read more accurately: it can help you understand the purpose of each section as you read.<sup>8</sup>

### Thesis Statements

Appiah provides a thesis statement at the beginning of each chapter, which is one or more sentences describing his main argument. Appiah uses many interesting and complex examples to support his arguments, and in long sections and chapters, it can be difficult to connect the examples back to his main idea. Identifying the thesis statement before reading the evidence and analysis can help you make those connections as you read. Skip ahead to see an [overview outline of Appiah's argument](#).

### Headers

After Appiah splits his argument into chapters, he further splits his thoughts into sections with headers. Reading headers can help you see what the next few pages will be focused on and even help you fit these sections into the larger thesis for the chapter. Some headers clearly show what the section will be about, while others leave room for interpretation by the reader.

*For example, on page 8, the section header is **Labels and Why they Matter**. This header reads like a shortened thesis and explicitly tells you the goal for this section. However, the next section header on page 12 is, **Woman, Man, Other?** This header leaves some room for you to wonder what will be explained next, but you might guess that gender could be discussed.*

### Roadmaps

Sometimes, at the beginning of complex sections, Appiah uses a roadmap, which is one or more sentences telling you that he is about to separate an argument into pieces. After that, he begins each piece with a number to help the reader follow the argument. For example, on page 8, Appiah writes,

"I began to see three ways in which these very disparate ways of grouping people do have some important things in common."

Then he explains each common attribute numbered with introductory phrases like:

- "The first is," (p. 8)
- "...the second most important thing..." (p. 9)
- "One further reason that's true is the third feature..." (p. 10)

Looking for these signal phrases can help you follow Appiah's argument as he shares and analyzes complex evidence and examples over many pages of text.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.uefap.com/reading/underst/undfram.htm>

## Concluding Summaries

At the end of such complex sections, Appiah often includes a summary of the thesis, as he does on page 12:

“In sum, identities come, first, with labels and ideas about why and to whom they should be applied. Second, your identity shapes your thoughts about how you should behave; and third, it affects the way other people treat you. Finally, all these dimensions of identity are contestable, always up for dispute: who’s in, what they’re like, how they should behave and be treated.” Appiah introduces the summary with the phrase, “In sum,” and these three sentences review all the points argued under this section header.

Use the summaries at the end of sections and chapters to help you reconnect with Appiah’s central claim before moving to the next section. Ideally, once you have identified his claim, you will be able to connect it to the overarching thesis for the book.

## Argument Outline Overview

Use this section to help you track Appiah’s argument throughout the book. The introduction (pp. *xi* - *xvi*) also explains the structure of the book. The chapters listed below fit together to support Appiah’s argument, which is proposed in the introduction and finished at the end of the last chapter, “Coda,” when he argues that humanity is an “identity that should bind us all.”<sup>9</sup>

At the beginning of each chapter about the 5 C’s (classification, creed, country, color, class, and culture), Appiah presents a thesis that he will argue. Then at the end of each chapter, he provides a summary and conclusion of the ideas he wants to leave you with. In between, many complex examples, stories, and explanations work to support these ideas. As you read through Appiah’s extensive explanations, use the thesis statements and conclusions below to help you draw connections to the main argument.

### Classification

**Thesis:** “As we shall see throughout this book, identity, in our sense, was a problem long before we began to talk about it in this modern way.” (p. 4)

**Conclusion:** “However much identity bedevils us, we cannot do without it.... Social identities may be found in error, but they give us contours, comity, values, a sense of purpose and meaning.” (p. 32)

### Creed

**Thesis:** “We’ve been taught to think of religion principally as a matter of beliefs. I want to argue that this simple idea is deeply misleading, in ways that can make interreligious comity seem both harder and easier than it really is. I want to persuade you that religion is *not*, in the first instance, a matter of belief.” (p. 36)

**Conclusion:** “Once you think of creedal identities in terms of mutable practices and communities rather than sets of immutable beliefs, religion becomes more verb than noun: the identity is revealed as an activity, not a thing. And it’s the nature of activities to bring change.” (p. 67) - [listen to Appiah’s BBC lecture about creed](#)

<sup>9</sup> *The Lies that Bind* by Kwame Anthony Appiah, 2018, Liveright Publishing Corporation, p. 219.



## Country

**Thesis:** “Today, in what we like to think of as a postimperial age, no political tenet commands more audible assent than that of national sovereignty.... And yet this ideal has an incoherence at its heart. That is the next of the great mistakes about identity that I want to explore.” (p. 73)

**Conclusion:** “But to come to terms with Svevo’s complex allegiances is to understand that we don’t have to accept the forced choice between globalism and patriotism. The unities we create fare better when we face the convoluted reality of our differences.” (p. 104) - [listen to Appiah’s BBC lecture about country](#)

## Color

**Thesis:** “If you read contemporaneous accounts of what distinguishes the various peoples of the world in the writings of European travelers and the thinkers who read them, the great debates were about the role of climate and geography in shaping color and customs, not about inherited physical characteristics.” (p. 111)

**Conclusion:** “In this new century, as in the last, the color line and its cousins are still going strong. Race, you might say, has become a palimpsest, a parchment written upon by successive generations where nothing is ever *entirely* erased. Often with the most benevolent of intentions, and sometimes with the least, we keep tracing the same contours with different pens.” (p. 133) - [listen to Appiah’s BBC lecture about color](#)

## Class

**Thesis:** “In my chapters on creed and country, I’ve pointed out that we have a tendency to exaggerate the continuities of such entities over time. When it comes to class, I’m going to argue the opposite—that the continuities here are far greater than we often think. In moving toward the meritocratic ideal, we imagined that we’d moved beyond the old encrustations of inherited hierarchies. As Michael Young knew, that’s not the real story.” (p. 141)

**Conclusion:** “But we also need to work to do something that we do not yet quite know how to do: to eradicate contempt for those who are disfavored by the ethic of effortful competition. Those who seek to cultivate class consciousness typically think about workers engaged in collective actions on their own behalf; those who seek to dampen class consciousness think about the social prerogatives of the privileged, the injuries extracted from the less privileges. Young rightly sought to enlist both vectors. So should we.” (p. 183-184)

## Culture

**Thesis:** “I’m going to talk about culture as a source of identity, and try to untangle some of our confusions about the culture...of what we’ve come to call the West.” (p. 190)

**Conclusion:** “Culture isn’t a box to be checked on the questionnaire of humanity; it’s a process you join, in living a life with others.” (p. 211) - [listen to Appiah’s BBC lecture about culture](#)



**Want to  
Know More?  
Arguments**

Appiah’s writing most closely fits with Toulmin’s Model of Argument, which contains 6 argumentative items. [Read this short handout](#) for an explanation of the steps and examples of Toulmin’s Model in use.

## Appiah's Writing Style

### Author Formality, Voice, and Tone

#### Formality

As indicated earlier, Appiah wrote *The Lies that Bind* based on [a series of his lectures](#) broadcast by BBC Radio in 2016. The lecture format has influenced Appiah's writing style and formality. You may notice the following stylistic elements in the book which are not always found in formal academic writing:

#### Informal Stylistic Elements

- **Contractions:** When words are combined with an apostrophe, i.e. *we would* → *we'd* or *we have* → *we've*
- **Direct Address:** When the author speaks directly to the reader, often using pronouns such as *you* or *we*
- **Sentence Fragments:** A sentence that does not contain a complete independent clause
- **Announcing Thesis/Topic Statements:** A thesis which declares that the author will make an argument before stating the argument directly
- **Informal Word Choices:** Word choices that reflect a more casual audience (for example, words often used in conversation, but not in formal writing)

Example	Informal Stylistic Elements
p. 5: As <b>you'll</b> see, I think Gouldner <b>got a lot right</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contractions</li> <li>• Informal Word Choices</li> </ul>
p. 10: Most Jains think that their religion requires them to be vegetarian, but not all agree that <b>you</b> must also avoid milk products. <b>And so on.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct Address</li> <li>• Sentence Fragment</li> <li>• Informal Word Choice</li> </ul>
p. 190: <b>I'm going to talk about</b> culture as a source of identity, and try to untangle some of <b>our</b> confusions about the culture...of what <b>we've come to call</b> the West.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcing Thesis/Topic Statement</li> <li>• Direct Address</li> <li>• Contractions</li> <li>• Informal Word Choice</li> </ul>

On the other hand, Appiah sometimes switches into using extremely formal and academic language, like on page 38:

"Colorless green ideas sleep furiously," a sentence the linguist Noam Chomsky devised as an example of something grammatically well formed but nonsensical, could function as the credo for some sect, baffling to the novitiate, but prodding the cohorts of adepts closer to ineffable revelation.

You may be surprised when these shifts happen, but remember that they are a result of the book's journey from oral presentation to written argument.

## Voice and Tone

Appiah wrote *The Lies that Bind* using evidence from philosophers, ancient texts, historical events, literature, and social science experiments to support his thesis. As you read and identify the parts of his argument, it will be important to recognize when you are reading Appiah’s own ideas or when you are reading descriptions of the ideas of others. This skill is known as identifying the author’s **voice**. Once you find Appiah’s voice, you can analyze the **tone**, which is the author’s attitude or opinion about a topic. Distinguishing between Appiah’s **voice** and reports of others’ ideas as well as analyzing the **tone** can help you identify which sources Appiah trusts and predict which information is important to the main idea.

*Example 1: “...the influential American sociologist Alvin W. Gouldner was among the first to offer a detailed definition of social identity as such.... As you’ll see, **I think that Gouldner got a lot right.**” (p. 5)*

The phrase in boldface shows Appiah’s **voice**, and we can imagine that this section describes Gouldner’s definitions of social identity. The bolded phrase also reveals Appiah’s **tone** of approval regarding Gouldner’s work, as he endorses Gouldner with a positive adjective: *influential*. The second sentence includes further praise for Gouldner’s work, which is written directly addressing you. After reading this sentence and interpreting Appiah’s tone, you can anticipate that Gouldner’s definition of social identity will be important evidence in this section.

*Example 2: “I wouldn’t **bother** to introduce this **horrible** jargon if it weren’t going to be useful later!” (p. 21)*

This sentence also directly addresses you, the reader, and Appiah’s **voice** reveals his opinion of the jargon (technical terms) he is explaining when his **tone** is analyzed. Consider the word choices Appiah makes here: *bother* and *horrible*. Both of these words are negative and describe actions and objects that are distasteful. These word choices show Appiah’s **tone**: that he does not approve of this jargon, but he must explain it to make his point.



Want to Know  
More?  
Author Voice

[Read this handout](#) about identifying whose voice you are reading and how to write with an academic voice.

## Considering Appiah’s Perspective

Appiah’s family history and life experiences have shaped the way he expresses his opinions in the book. He grew up outside of London and in Ghana, and has lived a large part of his adult life in the United States. As a result, when he uses pronouns like *us*, *our*, and *we*, it can sometimes be unclear who he is talking to, as seen in this example from page 15:

“Notice that neither of these terms corresponds to our terms ‘transgender’ or ‘homosexual,’ since (to mention only one difference) the South Asian categories don’t cover what we would call either F-to-M transsexuals or lesbians.”

In this example, the pronouns *our* and *we* seem to include a reader with a shared background, as he is referring to English language terminology and indicating that South Asian categories are outside of this audience. As you read, consider recognizing the moments Appiah addresses an audience with a particular identity.

## Cohesive Strategies

*The Lies that Bind* is a non-fiction book, and the audience is the general public, so Appiah needed to break down complex material in more comprehensible ways and carefully guide his readers (us) through his writing. He did this by using the set of 4 strategies listed below to create **cohesion**, or logical connections between ideas in sentences, paragraphs, and chapters.<sup>10</sup> Understanding **cohesive strategies** can help you follow Appiah's arguments throughout the book.

### Keyword Repetition

Repeating keywords helps the reader follow a topic clearly, especially when absorbing new information. Find keywords in the first sentence of each paragraph (topic sentences) or in definitions (see [Identifying In-text Definitions](#)). You may be surprised to see how many times these words are repeated even though it does not feel repetitive when you read. See the example on the next page to help you get started.



#### Notice: Repeated Keywords

As you read, notice how many keywords are repeated throughout the book, and not solely in individual sections. You may find that they appear more than you expect, as that is one of the ways Appiah helps connect pieces of the book's argument.

### Known to New Information Flow

Following a known to new information flow is why the writing does not feel repetitive even though keywords are often repeated. Each sentence starts with a *topic* and ends by sharing new information in what we call the *stress* position.<sup>11</sup> Then the next sentence can build off of the stressed information and add more content. Read the labeled excerpt below to see how this works.

### Generic Transitions

Transition words, such as *for example*, *however*, and *since*, help the reader see how information connects in precise ways. To illustrate, *however* signals disagreement, and *as a result* signals effect.

### Hook + summarizing phrases

The hook connects readers to an idea in the previous sentence(s). Some examples of hooks are: *this*, *these*, and *such*. Then the summary noun, keyword, or phrase explicitly tells the reader what is being referred to.<sup>12</sup> Appiah often uses hooks without the summary phrase attached.



#### Want to Know More? writeELC

If you would like to learn how to improve your own writing clarity and flow using these cohesive strategies, consider signing up for [writeELC](#).

<sup>10</sup> *The International Student's Guide to Writing a Research Paper* by Carlock, Eberhardt, Horst, & Kolenich, 2017, University of Michigan Press.

<sup>11</sup> *Making Complex Writing Intelligible with the Known-New Contract*: <https://www.cmu.edu/gcc/handouts/old-new-handout-pdf>

<sup>12</sup> *Just Writing: Grammar, Punctuation, and Style for the Legal Writer* (4th Ed.), Enquist, Oates, & Francis, 2013, Wolters Kluwer Law & Business.



### Focus on Cohesion

Use the paragraph from page 9 below to help you recognize and interpret cohesion strategies Appiah uses in the book.

“**That’s** because of the second important thing *identities* share: They matter to people. **And** they matter, **first**, because having an *identity* can give you a sense of how you fit into the social world. Every *identity* makes it possible, that is, for you to speak as one “I” among some “us”: to belong to some “we.” **But** a further crucial aspect of what *identities* offer is that they give you reasons for doing things. **That’s** true about being a *Jain*, which means you belong to a particular Indian religious tradition. Most *Jains* are...”

1. Keywords
2. Generic Transitions
3. **Hook (+ Summary phrase)**
4. Known to New Information Flow (connections between **topic** and **stress** positions)

## Discovering a Range of Opinions

Throughout *The Lies That Bind*, Appiah offers his perspective on the 5 C’s (classification, creed, country, color, class, and culture) and how modernizing our ideas of identity can help us avoid being confined by our own classifications. At the end of the book Appiah offers his final conclusion: humanity is an “identity that should bind us all.”<sup>13</sup>



### Focus on Your Opinions

Reflect on your opinions of Appiah’s argument by thinking of opinions as ideas lying along a spectrum of possibilities.

This book represents Appiah’s perspective on identity, and his arguments fall inside a range of opinions represented in discussions in the United States and around the world.

globalism ← | | | | | → patriotism

These two ideas represent the very ends of a wide spectrum of beliefs, and your opinion might lie anywhere along the way. As you read this guide and the book, think about where your opinion belongs within this range, and how you might best express it when you write your essay and arrive on campus to join the discussion with your classmates.

*For example, in the chapter about Country, Appiah discusses a misleading choice between two extreme opinions: either Svevo’s view of globalism (continuously shifting borders and nationalities) or patriotism (fixed borders and nationalities).*

## Summary

Now that you have finished reading this guide, you are ready to implement our advice as you read *The Lies That Bind*. As needed, refer back to this guide to develop your reading skills throughout your time at Vanderbilt University.

For further guidance from the English Language Center, sign up for a [1-to-1 Consultation](#) while classes are in session.

<sup>13</sup> *The Lies that Bind* by Kwame Anthony Appiah, 2018, Liveright Publishing Corporation, p. 219.