

Using Transitions

There are several ways to use transitional words and phrases between sentences, paragraphs and ideas to make the structure of your essay apparent to your reader at the paragraph and sentence level.

1. Verbal Bridges: Repeat Key Words Or Phrases

Repeating key words, and synonyms of these words, from your thesis and topic sentences throughout your paper reminds the reader of main ideas and themes.

Thesis:

•Herbs are both beautiful and flavorful, which makes them **versatile plants** that both gardeners and chefs can enjoy.

Topic sentences:

•In fact, these **versatile plants** are as easy to cook with as herbs are to grow.

•In addition, those who neither cook nor garden can enjoy these **versatile plants**.

Concluding sentence:

•From stems in a few pots on a small patio or window sill, to ground cover for a larger yard, these **versatile plants** can be used and enjoyed by many.

(You can build “logical bridges” between paragraphs as well, by reintroducing and then expanding on the same idea in more than one paragraph.)

2. Use Parallel Structure Within Sentences

Parallel structure within sentences can emphasize and connect ideas, and prevent confusion. Read the following examples and see how parallel structure makes the ideas clearer and the sentences easier to read. Transitions Between Sentences and Paragraphs

Not In Parallel Structure	In Parallel Structure
Bring a friend from out of town or who is free.	Bring a friend who is from out of town or who is free.
The students completed the reading, met for discussion and finish their written assignment.	The students completed the reading, met for discussion and finished their written assignments.
The city council was open to development, so they opened the nature preserve to developers	The city council was open to development, so the nature preserve was opened to developers
Children have a lot of energy and often enjoy running, biking, and to swim.	Children have a lot of energy and often enjoy running, biking, and swimming .

3. Verbal Cues: Transition Words And Phrases

Insert words where you need transitions in your own writing from the appropriate word banks below.

Cues that lead the reader forward:

If you want to...

...signal a sequence, use:	again, also, and, then, and then, besides, finally, first, second, third, furthermore, last, moreover, next, still, too, in addition, as well
...situate in time, use:	after a [time period], after a while, afterward, as long as, as soon as, at last, at that time, when, before, earlier, while, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, lately, later, soon, meanwhile, now, presently, since, so far, simultaneously, then, thereafter, until, at the moment, followed by, preceded by, subsequently, suddenly, today, currently
...to repeat or add, use:	again, and, as important as, besides, first, second, following, furthermore, least/most of all, neither, nor, not only ... but, primarily, secondarily, repeatedly, still, too

Cues That Make The Reader See Relationships

If you want to...

... make a comparison, use:	again, also, in the same way, likewise, similarly, once more
...contrast, use:	although, but, despite, even though, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the contrary, on the one hand, on the other hand, regardless, still, though, yet, conversely
...indicate cause and effect, use:	as a result, because, consequently, for this reason, hence, if, so, then, therefore, thus, accordingly, for this purpose, thereupon, to this end

Cues that Develop and Summarize

If you want to...

...introduce an example or evidence, use:	for example, for instance, indeed, in fact, of course, specifically, such as, the following example, after all, to illustrate
...generalize, use:	commonly, generally, in general, for the most part, on the whole, usually, typically
...concede a point, use:	certainly, even though, granted, in fairness, in truth, naturally, of course, to be fair, while it's true, although it is true that, I admit that, it may appear
...summarize or conclude, use:	again, as mentioned earlier, in conclusion*, in other words, in short, in sum*, therefore, thus, as a result, as has been noted, on the whole, to summarize*

**note that using these phrases makes explicit that you are concluding, but is not always viewed as sophisticated or subtle in college-level writing; use sparingly.*

Name _____

Practice With Transitions

Identify the transitions used in the following sample sentences from a research essay.

1. _____
Nutritionists, medical doctors and the USDA each propose many recommendations for a healthier lifestyle. **Specifically**, a balanced diet and regular exercise are two habits that experts recommend people develop (Smith, 2010).
2. _____
The food pyramid developed by the USDA advises that the average adult diet consist **primarily** of whole grains, fruits and vegetables, then dairy, and last of meat, fat and sugar.
3. _____
In the past, fats and meats have been considered more important to incorporate, but **in recent decades** much research has been done and now a very different diet is suggested(Chen, 2006).
4. _____
On the whole, variety in one's diet is recommended.
5. _____
In the same way, diversity in one's exercise routine is beneficial.
6. _____
However, consistency in healthy eating and exercising is most important.
7. _____
As a result of consistently healthy lifestyle, people found that they felt better and were able to enjoy life more.
8. _____
Of course, many people find maintaining a healthy lifestyle difficult, but fully understanding the benefits can help to motivate people to change their habits to healthy ones.
9. _____
Thus, education about healthy eating and activity is key to encouraging people to incorporate these habits into their daily routine.

Name _____

Plan To Revise Rough Draft

1. What is the purpose of this paper? Are you arguing a point? Are you comparing or contrasting? Are you describing a person, activity or event?

Add your thesis or main idea below:

2. What point are you making in this body paragraph? Are you making connections? Are you leading the reader toward an idea or point? Are you adding or repeating information?

Write the a main idea of one of your paragraphs in the box below that supports your thesis. This is your topic sentence. Choose an appropriate transition word or phrase from the word banks above to use in your topic sentence.

3. Write, rewrite, or add topic sentences for each of your paragraphs. Then choose transition words you might use for your body paragraphs for your ideas, paragraphs, and sentences

4. What is your concluding idea? Are you summarizing previous points? Are you reinforcing your argument?

Write your concluding idea in the box below. Then choose the appropriate transition words that summarize, repeat, conclude, or generalize.

Types of Transitions

Here are four types of transitions:

1. Additive: addition, introduction, similarity to other ideas

Addition: indeed, further, as well (as this), either (neither), not only (this) but also, (that) as well, also, moreover, what is more, as a matter of fact, and, furthermore, in addition (to this), besides (this), or, in fact, actually, to say nothing of, too, let alone, much less, additionally, nor, alternatively, on the other hand, not to mention (this)

Introduction: such as, as, particularly, including, as an illustration, for example, like, in particular, for one thing, to illustrate, for instance, especially, notably, by way of example

Reference: speaking about (this), considering (this), regarding (this), with regards to (this), as for (this), concerning (this), on the subject of (this), the fact that

Similarity: similarly, in the same way, by the same token, in a like manner, equally, likewise

Identification: that is (to say), namely, specifically, thus,

Clarification: that is (to say), (to) put (it) another way, in other words

2. Adversative: signal conflict, contradiction

Conflict: but, by way of contrast, while, on the other hand, however, (and) yet, whereas, though (final position), in contrast, when in fact, conversely, still

Emphasis: even more, above all, indeed, more importantly, besides

Concession: but even so, nevertheless, even though, on the other hand, admittedly, however, nonetheless, despite (this), notwithstanding (this), albeit, (and) still, although, in spite of (this), regardless (of this), (and) yet, though, granted (this), be that as it may,

Dismissal: either way, whichever happens, in either event, in any case, at any rate, in either case, whatever happens, all the same, in any event,

Replacement: (or) at least, (or) rather, instead

3. Causal: signal cause/effect and reason/result

Cause/Reason: for the (simple) reason that, being that, for, in view of (the fact), inasmuch as, because (of the fact), seeing that, as, owing to (the fact), due to (the fact that), in that since, forasmuch as

Condition: on (the) condition (that), granted (that), if, provided that, in case, in the event that, as/so long as, unless, given that, granting (that), providing that, even if, only if

Effect/Result: as a result (of this), consequently, hence, for this reason, thus, because (of this), in consequence, so that, accordingly, as a consequence, so much (so) that, so, therefore,

Purpose: for the purpose of, in the hope that, for fear that, so that, with this intention, to the end that, in order to, lest, with this in mind, in order that, so as to, so

Consequence: under those circumstances, then, in that case, if not, that being the case, if so, otherwise

4. Sequential: chronological or logical sequence

Numerical: in the (first, second, etc.) place, initially, to start with, first of all thirdly, (&c.) to begin with, at first, for a start, secondly,

Continuation: subsequently, previously, eventually, next, before (this), afterwards, after (this), then

Conclusion: to conclude (with), as a final point, eventually, at last, last but not least, in the end, finally, lastly,

Digression: to change the topic, incidentally, by the way,

Resumption: to get back to the point, to resume, anyhow, anyway, at any rate, to return to the subject

Summation: as was previously stated, so, consequently, in summary, all in all, to make a long story short, thus, to sum up, overall, as has been mentioned, then, to summarize, to be brief, briefly, given these points, in all, on the whole, therefore, as has been noted, hence, in conclusion, in a word, to put it briefly, in sum, altogether, in short

Useful Templates

INTRODUCING WHAT “THEY SAY”

A number of sociologists have recently suggested that X’s work has several fundamental problems.

It has become common today to dismiss X’s contribution to this field of sociology.

In their recent work, Y and Z have offered harsh critiques of Dr. X for _____.

INTRODUCING “STANDARD VIEWS”

Americans today tend to believe that _____.

Conventional wisdom has it that _____.

Common sense seems to dictate that _____.

The standard way of thinking about topic X has it that _____.

It is often said that _____.

Many X assumed that _____.

INTRODUCING SOMETHING IMPLIED OR ASSUMED

One implication of X's treatment of _____ is that _____.

Although X does not say so directly, she/he apparently assumes that _____.

While they rarely admit as much, _____ often take for granted that _____.

INTRODUCING AN ONGOING DEBATE

In discussions of X, one controversial issue has been _____. On one hand, _____ argues _____. On the other hand, _____ contends _____. Others even maintain _____.

When it comes to the topic of _____, most of us will readily agree that _____. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of _____. Whereas some are convinced that _____, others maintain that _____.

In conclusion, defenders of _____ cannot have it both ways. Their assertion that _____ in contradicted by their claim that _____.

CAPTURING AUTHORIAL ACTION

X acknowledges that _____.

X agrees that _____.

X argues that _____.

X believes that _____.

X denies/does not deny that _____.

X complains that _____.

X concedes that _____.

X demonstrates that _____.

X deplores the tendency to _____.

X celebrates the fact that _____.

X emphasizes that _____.

X insists that _____.

X observes that _____.

X questions whether _____.

X refutes the claim that _____.

X reminds us that _____.

X reports that _____.

X suggests that _____.

X urges us to _____.

INTRODUCING QUOTATIONS

X states, “_____.”

As the prominent philosopher X puts it, “_____.”

According to X, “_____.”

X himself writes, “_____.”

In her book, _____, X maintains that “_____.”

Writing the journal Commentary, X complains that, “_____.”

In X’s view, “_____.”

X agrees when she writes, “_____.”

X disagrees when he writes, “_____.”

X complicates matters further when he writes, “_____.”

EXPLAINING QUOTATIONS

Basically, X is saying _____.

In other words, X believes _____.

In making this comment, X argues that _____.

X is insisting that _____.

X’s point is that _____.

The essence of X’s argument is that _____.

DISAGREEING, WITH REASONS

X’s claim that _____ rests upon the questionable assumption that _____.

X contradicts himself/herself cannot have it both ways. On the one hand, he/she argues _____.

On the other hand, he/she also says _____.

By focusing on _____, X overlooks the deeper problem of _____.

X claims _____, but X does not need to _____. Anyone familiar with _____ has long known that _____.

AGREEING—WITH A DIFFERENCE

X is surely right about _____ because, as she may not be aware, recent studies have shown that _____.

X's theory of _____ is extremely useful because it sheds insight on the difficult problem of _____.

Those unfamiliar with this school of thought may be interested to know that it basically boils down to _____.

SIGNAL WHO IS SAYING WHAT

X argues _____.

According to both X and Y, _____.

Politicians _____, X argues, should _____.

However, _____ are real, and arguably, the most significant factor in _____.

_____, X is wrong that _____.

_____, it is simply not true that _____.

Indeed, it is highly likely that _____.

_____ the view that _____ does not fit all the facts.

X is right that _____.

X is wrong that _____.

X is both right and wrong that _____.

Yet a sober analysis of the matter reveals _____.

Nevertheless, new research shows _____.

Anyone familiar with _____ should see that _____.

NAMING YOUR NAYSAYERS

Here many feminists would probably object that _____.

However, social Darwinists would certainly take issue with the argument that _____.

Nevertheless, both followers and critics of Malcolm X will probably argue that _____.

Although not all Christians think alike, some of them will _____ the claim that _____.

Non-native English speakers are so diverse in their views that it is hard to generalize about them, but some are likely to object on the grounds that _____.

INDICATING WHO CARES

_____ used to think _____. _____, recently [or within the past few decades] _____ suggests that _____.

What this new research does, then, is correct the mistaken impression, held by many earlier researchers, that _____.

These findings challenge the work of earlier researchers, who tended to assume that _____.

Recent studies like these shed new light on _____, which previous studies had not addressed.

Researchers have long assumed that _____. For instance, one eminent scholar of cell biology, _____, assumed in _____, her seminal work on cell structures and functions that fat cells _____. As _____ herself put it, “_____” (Smith, 2006). Another leading scientist, _____, argued that fat cells “_____” (Roberts, 2008). Ultimately, when it came to the nature of fat, the basic assumption was that _____.

If sports enthusiasts stopped to think about it, many of them might simply assume that the most successful athletes _____. However, new research shows _____.

These findings challenge dieter’s common assumptions that _____.

At first glance, teenagers appear to _____; however, on closer inspection _____.

ESTABLISHING WHY YOUR CLAIM MATTERS

X matters/is important because _____.

Although X may seem trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of today’s concern over _____.

Ultimately, what is at stake here is _____.

These findings have important consequences for the broader domain of _____.

These conclusions/This discovery will have significant applications in _____ as well as in _____.

Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of _____, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about _____.

ADDING META-COMMENTARY

In other words,

What _____ really means by this is

What _____ really means is _____.

In other words, _____.

To put it another way, _____.

In sum, then, _____.

In short, _____.

What is more important, _____.

Incidentally, _____.

Chapter 2 explores, _____, while Chapter 3 examines _____.

Courtesy of California University Fresno and Odegaard Writing & Research Center Adapted from Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter In Academic Writing. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006.