

TRANSITIONS

Why We Use Transitions

- When we speak about wanting a paper “to flow,” we mean that we want its structure to be smooth and coherent, that our style and organization makes it easy for our reader to follow our argument throughout the essay. *Transitions* are one way to show a logical progression of ideas. You should think about how you transition between sentences as well as between paragraphs.

Sentence-Level Transitions

- A strong argument already has a logical progression, and transitions *supplement* it by highlighting how your sentences relate to one another. Use sentence-level transitions *only* when they help you emphasize those connections, meaning they should not be in every sentence.
- These transitions don’t just have to be in the first clause of your sentences.
- Here is an inexhaustive list of types of sentence-level transitions:
 - *To link complementary ideas:* again, also, in addition, by the same token, additionally, similarly, likewise, hence, furthermore, moreover, indeed
 - *To link conflicting ideas:* but, yet, on the contrary, on the other hand, by contrast, nonetheless, however, as opposed to, nevertheless, meanwhile
 - *To demonstrate cause and effect:* because, as a result, therefore, thus, so, it follows, then, consequently, in doing so

Sentence-Level Transition Examples

- *In a paragraph discussing cellular mitosis:* Cell mitosis, a critical cellular process, unfolds through a meticulously coordinated series of events ensuring accurate replication and equal distribution of genetic material. **Initially**, during prophase, chromatin condenses into distinct chromosomes, triggering the disintegration of the nuclear envelope. As the cell progresses into metaphase, replicated chromosomes line up at the cell’s midline supported by spindle fibers attached to centromeres. In anaphase, sister chromatids **subsequently** separate and move towards opposite poles, driven by spindle fibers. This process culminates in telophase and cytokinesis, where nuclear envelopes reform around the segregated chromosomes and the cell divides into two daughter cells. **Ultimately**, mitosis plays a vital role in development, growth, repair, and reproduction, highlighting its indispensable nature in the lifecycle of multicellular organisms. The precise orchestration of cellular mitosis **thereby** underscores its fundamental importance in maintaining genomic stability and ensuring the proper functioning of living organisms.

- *In a paragraph arguing for how Emerson contradicts himself:* **While** it is only the human subject that experiences spiritual communion, it is Nature’s concrete and energetic creations that foster the conditions for it, and reducing it to an echo of people precludes that independent power. **Moreover**, while in one text Emerson contends that “Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit,” in the account of his actual experience we see an exact instance where guns, mechanical toys in some respect, are in service of human recreation to make Nature a secondary plaything (Emerson 1517). In Emerson’s artistic production of his experience in nature, he conveys his ideas with a traditional allusion, **and in doing so**, shows how his reverence for nature becomes easily subdued to the enjoyment of leisurely experience, undercutting his philosophical position.

Paragraph-Level Transitions

- Generally, the end of one paragraph should set up a clear connection to the next paragraph. Describing that "relationship" might mean adding to the paragraph’s idea, reemphasizing how it connects to your larger argument, or how this paragraph’s argument relates to your next point. In coming up with a transitional sentence, ask yourself what are the similarities and differences between the ideas you argue in the respective paragraphs. You can use a sentence-level transitional within that linking sentence or not.
- Writing paragraph-level transitions may help you realize that two paragraphs are making the same point in the same way. If you’re struggling to articulate a difference between the ideas in the paragraphs, this might indicate that either they should not be separate paragraphs, or your topic sentences don’t reflect the distinction between the two.
- Remember that writing is not necessarily a linear process, so your transitional sentence might only become clear to you upon revision, when you have actually written the paragraphs you are trying to link. Sometimes writing your transition sentences may even show you that your paragraphs could be reordered for a stronger logical flow.

Paragraph-Level Transition Examples

- *Linking sentence:* The precise orchestration of cellular mitosis **thereby** underscores its fundamental importance in maintaining genomic stability and ensuring the proper functioning of living organisms.
- *Next paragraph topic sentence:* The successful completion of cellular mitosis relies heavily on the regulation of key molecular pathways and checkpoints throughout the cell cycle.
- *Linking sentence:* Emerson’s artistic production of his experience in nature, he conveys his ideas with a traditional allusion, **and in doing so**, shows how his reverence for nature becomes easily subdued to the enjoyment of leisurely experience, undercutting his philosophical position.
- *Next paragraph topic sentence:* **Additionally**, the human-created challenge to nature in the form of technological advance eventually turns so awesome that it overthrows the power of all nature’s possible offerings.

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