

Transitions are used to _____ words, phrases or sentences. They are a roadmap that helps the reader to progress from one idea to the next idea by indicating the relationship between them.

The function and importance of transitions

In writing, your goal is to communicate information clearly and concisely. Transitions help you to achieve this goal by establishing _____ between sentences, paragraphs, and sections of your essay. Whether single words, phrases, or full sentences, transitions function as signs that provide the reader with directions for how to follow your ideas in a logical and coherent manner.

Transitions signal relationships between ideas—relationships such as: “Time to switch to a new topic!” or “Another example coming up—stay alert!” or “Here’s an exception to my previous statement” or “Although this idea appears to be true, here’s the real story.”

Transitions are not just verbal decorations that embellish your paper by making it sound better. They are words with particular meanings that guide the reader through your essay. In providing readers with these important cues, transitions help them understand the logic of how your ideas fit together.

Types of transitions

Transition can be a single word, a phrase, a sentence, or even an entire paragraph. In each case, the transition functions the same way: the transition both reminds the reader of what has come before and helps the reader anticipate or comprehend the new information coming next.

Transitions _____ paragraphs:

Transitions within paragraphs act as cues that help readers anticipate what is coming before they read it. These transitions tend to be single words or short phrases.

1. _____ **Transitions:** connect ideas within sentences and between sentences throughout a paragraph. Include restated words, synonyms, or restated thoughts from a previous sentence.
 - *Example with Restated Words:*
In late spring, the painted turtle searches for a warm, sunny location with soft, sandy soil in which to dig her nest. After she builds her _____, she lays 4 to 10 eggs. She does not stay and care for the _____ but immediately leaves them to hatch on their own in late summer.
 - *Example with Synonyms:*
Charles Dickens found himself with limited funds to support his growing family. Due to this _____, he needed to quickly write and publish a new novel.
2. _____ **Transitions:** signal a change in thought, whether through addition, opposition, example, or conclusion.
 - *Example within a Sentence:*
The climb held many obstacles and dangers; _____, the team reached the peak of Mt. Everest in record time.
 - *Example between Sentences:*
The human body contains many extremely complex systems. _____, most doctors specialize in one area of medicine in order to provide the best care.

Transitions _____ paragraphs:

A transition that links paragraphs together is called a _____ **Transition**. They help move your reader from one paragraph topic to another.

If you have arranged your paragraphs so that the content of one leads logically to the next, the transition between paragraphs will highlight a relationship that already exists by summarizing the previous paragraph and previewing the content of the paragraph that follows.

A bridge transition can be a word or two, a phrase, or an entire sentence. Bridge transitions can be located at the end of the first paragraph, at the beginning of the second paragraph, or in both places. Often, the concluding sentence of one paragraph will begin the transition to your next topic. Then, your new paragraph will complete the transition by including transition wording and/or mirroring some of the language of the previous sentence.

Paragraph A Topic: Don Diego's positive relationship with Juan.

Bridge Transition: Unlike Don Diego's kindness toward Juan, many other owners treated their slaves with severity and disdain.

Paragraph B Topic: Negative relationships between other slaves and owners in the novel.

In this case, the opening phrase that begins with "Unlike" tells the reader that the writer is making a change of topic and will contrast Juan's positive experience from what was typically much worse.

Signs that you might need to use transitions

How can you tell whether you need to work on your transitions?

Here are some possible clues:

1. Your tutor has written comments like "choppy," "jumpy," "abrupt flow," "need signposts," or "how is this related?" on your papers.
2. Your readers tell you that they had trouble following your organization or train of thought.
3. You tend to write the way you think or talk, and your brain often jumps from one idea to another pretty quickly.
4. You wrote your essay in several "chunks" and then pasted them together.

Works Cited

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