

Transitions

Not only do you need to show the relationships between the ideas within a paragraph, but you must also move naturally between major points in different paragraphs. This ability to make successful transitions between ideas contributes to the overall flow and coherence of your paper. When it comes to reinforcing the links between paragraphs, some methods include using a key word from the preceding paragraph, reminding the reader of your thesis, or beginning a paragraph with a sentence that refers to an idea developed in a previous paragraph.

Examples of transition writing

For example, imagine you are writing a paper arguing that the presidency of John F. Kennedy was one of the most important in all of American history. You have just finished writing a paragraph discussing Kennedy's role in promoting the First Man on the Moon program as a particularly important facet of American foreign policy. However, you want to shift the focus of the essay away from foreign policy issues toward domestic issues such as Kennedy's impact on the Civil Rights movement. How do you link these two very disparate topics?

Here is one suggestion:

While Kennedy challenged NASA to put an American on the moon by the end of the decade, Kennedy's presidency faced challenges of its own from the Civil Rights Movement.

Or, you could try it this way:

While Kennedy's promotion of the Man in Space program was an important part of United States foreign policy during his presidency, the Civil Rights movement proved to be the most important domestic issue facing Kennedy during his brief years in the Oval Office.

In both of these examples, the writer uses a particular concept to serve as a hinge joining the two topics—a *hook*. The first transition focuses on challenges, showing that Kennedy both issued and was faced by challenges during his presidency. The second pivots on importance, linking the space program and civil rights as similarly key issues despite their different spheres of foreign and domestic policy. Both are succinct and clever transitions.

Transition word chart

In addition to such conceptual hooks, simple transition words and phrases can help aid the process of linking ideas within and between paragraphs. The following chart outlines some common transition words, as well as their logical contexts.

Common Transition Words			
Addition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • also • besides • furthermore • in addition • moreover • too • what is more • as well as 	Consequence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accordingly • as a result • consequently • hence • so • then • thus • therefore 	Generalizing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as a rule • for the most part • generally • in general • usually • ordinarily 	Diversion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by the way • incidentally
Contrast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • however • by contrast • conversely • instead • on the other hand • contrarily • rather • yet • nevertheless • this fact notwithstanding • even so • otherwise 	Comparison <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • likewise • in the same way • in comparison • comparatively speaking • similarly • next 	Sequence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • afterwards • at the same time • for now • in time • later on • then • subsequently • first/second/etc. • at first • first of all • finally • in turn • to begin with 	Restatement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in essence • in other words • namely • that is • that is to say
Illustration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for example • for instance • for one thing 	Intensification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • indeed • in fact • simply stated 	Summary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in closing • to sum up • on the whole • in brief 	