

FOCUSING ON TRANSITIONS

La Salle University Writing Handouts



TRANSITIONS BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS KEEP READERS ENGAGED IN YOUR ARGUMENT.

If your introduction tells readers where your argument is going, transitions get you there. Carefully crafted transitions act as tour guides: making connections between paragraphs and mapping out your argument's twists and turns so that readers can follow your train of thought

CRAFTING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS¹

The first step to crafting successful transitions is to understand the order of the ideas you present in your paper. To do this, you can use your list of the main idea statements from each of the body paragraphs from your paper. Add your thesis to the top of the list. Working alone or with a partner:

- Find a place where the topic shifts noticeably between sentences on the list of main ideas.
- Now look at the transition between those two paragraphs in the paper itself:
- How is the information presented in the first different from the second (does it contradict, shift focus, add to previous examples, etc.?)
- Does this transition go smoothly?
- How could the connection between the two paragraphs be made more clear? What transition words accurately depict the different kind of information presented in the second paragraph? (See the list below for examples.)

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REVIEWING YOUR TRANSITIONS

As you review the transitions in your paper as a whole:

- Try reading only the first and last sentences of each paragraph out loud to a friend. Do these sentences together tell a coherent story or make a coherent and logical argument? If not, spend more time figuring out the relationships between your ideas.

Express these relationships using appropriate transitional terms:

Time and Sequence	next, later, after, while, meanwhile, immediately, earlier, first, second, before
Comparison	likewise, similarly, also, too, again, in the same manner, equally
Contrast	in contrast, on the other hand, however, although, yet, still, nonetheless
Examples	for example, for instance, such as, specifically, thus, to illustrate
Cause and Effect	as a result, consequently, accordingly, for this reason, thus, because
Place	next to, above, behind, beyond, near, here
Addition	and, too, moreover, in addition, besides, furthermore, next, also
Concession	of course, naturally, it is true that, it may be the case that, though
Conclusion	in conclusion, in short, as a result, finally, therefore
Repetition	to repeat, in other words, once again
Summary	on the whole, to summarize, to sum up, in brief, therefore

Adapted from The Longman Writer's Companion (Anson, Scwegler, Muth: 2003)

