

Transitions Between Paragraphs

After making sure that the content of one paragraph logically leads to the next, use transitions to link paragraphs together so your writing will flow coherently. Each paragraph should refer to an idea from the previous one. You can accomplish this connection by using a transitional word or two, phrase, or sentence.

1. Transitional word:

After roughly 600 million years of unglamorous obscurity, jellyfish are suddenly cool.

A few clarifications are *therefore* in order: They aren't fish, and they aren't jelly either. (National Geographic, June 2000)

Such institutions testify that grades are not absolutely necessary to promote learning.

Nevertheless, grades persist. (Blair Reader 150)

2. Transitional phrase:

Scientists would love to get their hands on a piece of Mars, but it will take until at least 2011 to plan a sample-return mission.

In the meantime, researchers will keep analyzing the data. (Newsweek, 12/18/2000)

Note: For further suggestions, refer to the Writing Center handouts on transitions.

3. Echo key word or recall a key idea:

Four classes take place within another undivided space with a low ceiling. Again, there are no windows.

The library is a tiny, *windowless* and *claustrophobic* room. (Blair Reader 103)

Formal usage occurs in situations that demand the most care and precision in the use of language.....[remainder of paragraph omitted]

Were we to move from *formal* to *informal usage*, however, the forms previously denied would not be allowed us. (The Scope of Grammar 258)

4. A sentence at the start of a paragraph that acts as a bridge:

For long periods London slumbers; then it rouses itself and in a burst of activity enters a period of extraordinary growth and change.

The last time London occupied center stage in world history was the "swinging sixties," then its music and fashion defined the look and sound of a generation. London is calling again. (National Geographic, June 2000)

Since many people consider the “it is I” construction to be stilted or affected, it is seldom really expected or required, except in very formal speech or writing.

More upsetting to most people are situations in which the antecedent of a pronoun is unclear. This problem is referred to as ambiguous pronoun reference. (The Scope of Grammar 146)

5. Answer one of more questions in previous paragraph:

“Why,” asks the city’s Board of Education, “should our students receive less than do similar students who live elsewhere? The inequity is clear.”

But the inequality to which these words refer goes even further than the school board may be eager to reveal. (Blair Reader 101)

Remember Saturday morning? The expectancy, the blissfulness, the sense of utter freedom?...as you realized you didn’t have to go to school.

You could do absolutely anything you chose. (Blair Reader 271)

6. Use parallel structure:

I want a wife who will not bother me with rambling complaints about a wife’s duties....I want a wife who will type my papers for me when I have written them.

I want a wife who will take care of the details of...(Blair Reader 385)

7. Use a transition paragraph:

A transition paragraph acts as a bridge between one section of your paper and the next, especially if it’s hard to see the connection between ideas.

I ended up with an unsentimental education in the seamy underside of publishing that few writers see (and even fewer magazines can publish).

Let me take you with us through some experiences, just as they happened: (Gloria Steinem in Blair Reader 282-283)

While the American automobile manufacturers were producing an almost unbroken string of successes, developments halfway around the world were laying the base for a new center of power in the industry. (Longman Handbook 110)