



Guidelines and Suggestions for Writing Transitions

Transitions are the glue that holds a paper together. These cohesive allies are needed when a paper “does not flow,” is “choppy,” or seems unrelated to the thesis of their parent essay.

Transitions can be simple, such as the following: *moreover, therefore, nevertheless, despite, consequently, instead, also*. However (that’s another transition), it is better to use transitional phrases, rather than transitional words, to improve the clarity of your writing, emphasize your thesis, and keep you focused throughout your paper.

Explicit transitional phrases state the link between ideas A and B.

Example:

End of paragraph one: “Jill is to blame for all of Jack’s troubles.”

Beginning of paragraph two: “Jill is not an evil character.”

The relationship between these two ideas is not clearly presented. Shown below are two possible ways to fix that using transitional phrases:

- While Jill may have caused all of Jack’s problems, she is a still a benevolent character.
- Jill serves as a popular scapegoat for Jack’s troubles, but it is the fault of circumstance, rather than character, that gives Jill the reputation of a malicious individual.

Implicit transitional phrases, on the other hand, do not necessarily link a paragraph to its preceding paragraph, but instead to the thesis.

Example:

Thesis: “College professors intentionally choose individuals for tasks at which they believe the individuals can succeed, because students who have strong rapports with their professors are often charged with extra tasks and are given the inappropriate label of ‘teacher’s pet.’”

Beginning of paragraph one: “Calling individuals who have strong rapports with their

professors 'teacher's pets' is both demeaning and inaccurate, because these students are more likely to achieve their full potential because their professors challenge them more than the rest of the class, and no 'pet' is asked to do extra work to achieve more than they would ordinarily achieve."

Beginning of paragraph two: "Achievements made by students singled out by their professors are often ridiculed, but these achievements allow students to become more successful in finding a job due to their expanded network of professors who are willing to help them succeed beyond college.

The transitional idea between these two paragraphs is not found between the end of the first paragraph and the beginning of the second, but instead is shown through their link to the thesis, namely achievements made by "teacher's pets."