

TRANSITIONS

Transitions are used inside individual sentences and paragraphs to signal the connections between ideas, and they're also used as bridges between different sentences and different paragraphs. Consider these three short newspaper-style paragraphs:

Parking has been a problem at ISU for many years. Each morning, the neighboring streets are clogged with students circling in their cars, hoping against hope for any parking space. Each morning, many of the same students arrive late for their classes, missing quizzes and interrupting lectures already in progress.

Some of these students have already paid to park in an ISU lot, but, despite the university's best efforts, they can't find a spot. What happened to the parking they paid for?

Much of it is up at Holt Arena. The Whittier lot on South 4th St. has increased the number of parking spaces available on lower campus, but the greatest supply is still up by the mini-dome.

Like the writer of these paragraphs, you can use one, two, or more of the following strategies to smooth the transition from the end of one sentence or paragraph to the beginning of another:

Repeating one or more key words. Does the word "student" occur in the last sentence of one paragraph? By using the exact same word to make a new point in the opening sentence of the following paragraph, you can help the reader move along easily.

Referring to a previous point or idea. If you don't want to repeat a word from a sentence, you can still point to the idea it represents. A pronoun like **he** or **it**, referring to something discussed at the end of the previous paragraph (in this case, paid parking), can connect the two, and so can words like **these** or **that**. Be careful, though; it's easy to describe a previous idea as **this** without making it clear what you're referring to. You can avoid this problem by always following these words with a noun: **this** argument, **that** study, **these** students.

You can also refer to a previous idea with a synonym: if you write "space" at the end of one paragraph and "spot" at the beginning of another, your reader will easily stay on track.

Asking and answering a question. You won't often have a reason to end one of your paragraphs with a question, but if you do, then an answer in the first sentence of your next paragraph makes a great bridge.

Using a transition word or phrase. Groups of common transitions include words that:

Show Addition

and, also, besides, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, next, too, first, second.

Give Examples

for example, for instance, to illustrate, in fact, specifically, by way of illustration.

Compare

also, in the same manner, similarly, likewise.

Contrast

but, however, on the other hand, in contrast, nevertheless, still, even though, on the contrary, yet, although, though, granted that, though it is true, notwithstanding, admittedly, of course, in spite of.

Summarize or Conclude

in other words, in short, in summary, in conclusion, to sum up, that is, therefore.

Show Time

after, as, before, next, during, later, finally, meanwhile, then, when, while, immediately, after a while, afterwards, not long afterward, soon, again, at length, whereupon, suddenly, at present, shortly, now, at last, finally.

Indicate Logical Relationship

if, so, therefore, consequently, thus, as a result, for this reason, since, hence, accordingly, in this way, in such a way, in this manner.

Show Order Or Logical Arrangement

first, in the first place, initially, to begin with, at the outset, next, second, in the second place, following this, afterward, subsequently, later, to conclude.