



Transitions are words and phrases that signal relationships between and among sentences. Transitions act as markers or signals that help readers follow the progression of one idea to the next within a paragraph. *Transitions can only clarify connections between thoughts; they cannot create connections.* As a writer, you must choose transitions that fit your meaning.

Transitions are also necessary between paragraphs. *We link one paragraph to the next with common ideas and logical arguments,* in much the same way we link sentences together.

Why Transitions are Important

- **A paragraph with no transitions:**

In “The Fly,” Katherine Mansfield tries to show us the “real” personality of “the boss” beneath his exterior. The fly helps her to portray the character’s real self. The boss goes through a range of emotions and feelings. He expresses his feelings to a small but determined fly. He unconsciously relates the fly to his son. The author basically splits up the story into three parts, with the boss’s emotions and actions changing quite measurably. With old Woodifield, with himself, and with the fly, we see the boss’s manipulateness. Our understanding of him as a hard and cruel man grows.

If we work at it, we can figure out the relationship among these ideas. However, the lack of transitions results in an abrupt and choppy rhythm that jumps from one idea to the next, leading to confusion.

- **The same paragraph, with transitions:**

In “The Fly,” Katherine Mansfield tries to show us the “real” personality of “the boss” beneath his exterior. *In the course of the story,* the boss goes through a range of emotions and feelings. *At the end,* he *finally* expresses these feelings to a small but determined fly, whom the reader realizes he unconsciously relates to his son. *To accomplish her goal,* the author basically splits up the story into three parts, with the boss’s emotions and actions changing quite measurably *throughout.* *First,* with old Woodifield, *then* with himself, and *last* with the fly, we see the boss’s manipulateness. *With each part,* our understanding of him as a hard and cruel man grows.

Most of the transitions here point to movement in time, helping us to follow the chronology of the story being discussed.

Commonly Used Transitions

- **To signal sequence:** again, also, and, and then, besides, finally, first...second...third...etc, furthermore, last, moreover, next, still, too, A, B, C, and so forth, next, then, following this, at this time, now, at this point, after, afterward, subsequently, finally, consequently, previously, before this, simultaneously, concurrently, thus, therefore, next, soon
- **To signal changes in time:** after a few days, after a while, afterward, as long as, as soon as, at last, at that time, before, earlier, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, lately, later, meanwhile, now, presently, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, then, thereafter, until, when, after a few hours, finally, previously, formerly, first (second, etc.), next
- **To signal comparison:** again, also, in the same way, likewise, once more, similarly, similar to, by comparison, where, compared to, up against, balanced against
- **To signal contrast:** although, but, despite, even though, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the contrary, on the one hand, on the other hand, regardless, still, though, yet, whereas, conversely, although this may be true
- **To signal examples:** after all, even, for example, for instance, indeed, in fact, of course, specifically, such as, the following example, to illustrate, in this case, in another case, on this occasion, in this situation, take the case of, to demonstrate, as an illustration
- **To signal cause and effect:** accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this purpose, hence, so, then, therefore, thus, to this end
- **To signal place:** above, adjacent to, below, beyond, closer to, elsewhere, far, farther on, here, near, nearby, opposite to, there, to the left, to the right
- **To signal concession:** although it is true that, granted that, I admit that, it may appear that, naturally, of course, even though
- **To signal summary, repetition, or conclusion:** as a result, as has been noted, as I have said, as mentioned earlier, as we have seen, in any event, in conclusion, in other words, in short, on the whole, therefore, to summarize, in brief, summing up, to conclude, as I have shown, hence, accordingly, thus, as a result, consequently, on the whole
- **To signal additions:** and, again, and then, besides, equally important, finally, further, furthermore, nor, too, next, lastly, what's more, moreover, in addition, first (second, etc.),
- **To prove:** because, for, since, for the same reason, obviously, evidently, furthermore, moreover, besides, indeed, in fact, in addition, in any case, that is
- **To show exception:** yet, still, however, nevertheless, in spite of, despite, of course, once in a while, sometimes
- **To show emphasis:** definitely, extremely, obviously, in fact, indeed, in any case, absolutely, positively, naturally, surprisingly, always, forever, perennially, eternally, never, emphatically, unquestionably, without a doubt, certainly, undeniably, without reservation

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