

Writing Transitions

Good transitions can connect paragraphs and turn disconnected writing into a unified whole. Instead of treating paragraphs as separate ideas, transitions can help readers understand how paragraphs work together, reference one another, and build to a larger point. The key to producing good transitions is highlighting connections between corresponding paragraphs. By referencing in one paragraph the relevant material from previous paragraphs, writers can develop important points for their readers.

It is a good idea to continue one paragraph where another leaves off. (Instances where this is especially challenging may suggest that the paragraphs don't belong together at all.) Picking up key phrases from the previous paragraph and highlighting them in the next can create an obvious progression for readers. Many times, it only takes a few words to draw these connections. Instead of writing transitions that could connect any paragraph to any other paragraph, write a transition that could only connect one specific paragraph to another specific paragraph.

Example 1

Example: Overall, Management Systems International has logged increased sales in every sector, leading to a significant rise in third-quarter profits.

Another important thing to note is that the corporation had expanded its international influence.

Revision: Overall, Management Systems International has logged increased sales in every sector, leading to a significant rise in third-quarter profits.

These impressive profits are largely due to the corporation's expanded international influence.

Example 2

Example: Fearing for the loss of more Danish lands, Christian IV signed the Treaty of Lubeck, effectively ending the Danish phase of the 30 Years War.

But then something else significant happened. The Swedish intervention began.

Revision: Fearing for the loss of more Danish lands, Christian IV signed the Treaty of Lubeck, effectively ending the Danish phase of the 30 Years War.

Shortly after Danish forces withdrew, the Swedish intervention began.

Example 3

Example: Amy Tan became a famous author after her novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, skyrocketed up the bestseller list.

There are other things to note about Tan as well. Amy Tan also participates in the satirical garage band the Rock Bottom Reminders with Stephen King and Dave Barry.

Revision: Amy Tan became a famous author after her novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, skyrocketed up the bestseller list.

Though her fiction is well known, her work with the satirical garage band the Rock Bottom Reminders receives far less publicity.

The content of this handout was adapted with changes from the following source:
"Writing Transitions." *Purdue Online Writing Lab*, Purdue U, owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/574/01/. Accessed 18 July 2019.

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