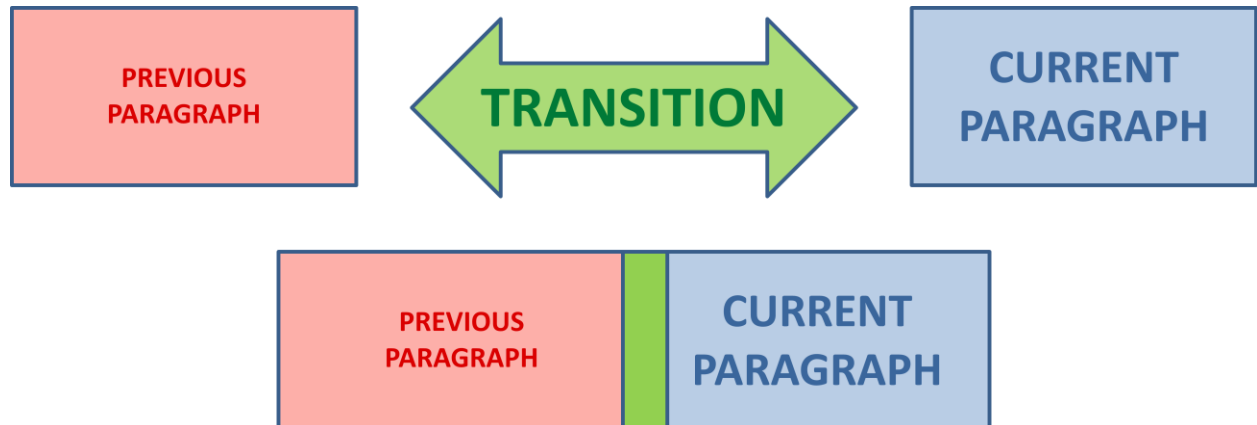


Transitions between Paragraphs

Transitions “signal to readers where your text is going: in the same direction it has been moving, or in a new direction.” A transition often connects two individual paragraphs, but it can also serve as a broader link between two larger ideas (i.e. sets of paragraphs) within a paper.



The transition sentence (the first sentence of the new paragraph) serves three functions:

1. It gives a **quick summary** of the previous paragraph's main point.
2. It shows how the new point connects to the previous one [via *transition words*].
3. It introduces the **new topic** corresponding to the current paragraph.

Transition words and phrases

Below are some general possibilities for types of transitions, organized by the next direction you are taking in the paper. Sample sentences are shown, with the transition words italicized and content color-coded according to the figure above. At times, a single word is sufficient to link the two paragraphs, *as long as the key idea from each paragraph is communicated explicitly*. Note that each example sentence would serve as the first sentence of the paragraph that contains it.

To explore a previous idea further

-Continue the current train of thought (a logical progression from point 1 to point 2)

Because (Since) psychologists have demonstrated that multi-media teaching styles maximize learning, school systems should rearrange their budgets to include funding for computers and projectors in more classrooms.

In light of (As a result of) Dante's lofty view of human reason, he places sinners who intentionally used their reason to harm others in the lowest circles of Hell.

-Introduce another perspective (not a counterpoint, but instead a distinction)

While Dante values his own ability to reason, his hope for salvation does not ultimately rest in human intellect.

Despite Smith's support for the random changes inherent in evolutionary theory, he argues that humans have essentially moved beyond evolution because they consciously manipulate their environment.

Even though the rate of computer use in classrooms has increased recently, many school systems have not sufficiently implemented technology in schools.

To give another example (introduce a different argument that parallels and reinforces the first)

In addition to its representation of hypocrisy in Anna's life, Tolstoy uses theater imagery to symbolize the fakery in Russian society as a whole.

The importance of women's rights in the workplace *also* extends to a woman's role and rights in her own home.

Authors in Latvia experienced *a similar* struggle with the tension between nationalist roots and the impositions of Soviet authority.

In the same way that Moses communicated God's commands to the Israelites, Mohammad gave the truth of Allah to the people of Arabia.

To give a counter-example (introduce a situation or argument that opposes the first one)

Whereas men and women should have equal rights in all roles in the workplace, many licensed counselors advise that the husband and wife identify their unique roles in the home.

In contrast to Anna's commitment to her own passion, Levin moves beyond his own desires by serving the other people within his community.

Although Plato emphasizes that truth stems from a transcendent reality, Aristotle proposes that an investigation of the natural world will end in truth.

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Worksheet designed by Jordan Ross, March 7, 2013 for the Communication Resource Center, Samford University, Birmingham, AL.

Quotation and a few transition words from

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Persuasive Writing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007.