



Connors Writing Center

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Transitions

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.

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 this real self. The boss goes through a range of emotions and feelings. He expresses these feelings to a small but determined fly, whom the reader realizes he unconsciously relates 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 Woodfield, 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. The fly *in the story’s title* helps her to portray this real self. *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 Woodfield, *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.

Examples of commonly used transitions can be found on the reverse of this sheet.

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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