

## Building and Connecting with Transitions!

The organization of your written work includes two elements: (1) the order in which you have chosen to present the different parts of your discussion or argument, and (2) the relationships you construct between these parts. Transitions cannot substitute for good organization, but they can make your organization clearer and easier to follow.

**Transitions between sections and paragraphs act as cues/connectors/gears or glue that helps readers anticipate what is coming before they read it and helps readers understand how your next big idea connects to your thesis.**

How can you tell whether you need to work on your transitions? **Here are some possible clues:**

- Your instructor has written comments like “choppy,” “jumpy,” “abrupt,” “flow,” “need signposts,” or “how is this related?” on your papers.
- Your readers (instructors, friends, or classmates) tell you that they had trouble following your organization or train of thought.
- You tend to write the way you think—and your brain often jumps from one idea to another pretty quickly.
- You wrote your paper in several discrete “chunks” and then pasted them together.
- You are working on a group paper; the draft you are working on was created by pasting pieces of several people’s writing together.

In order to ease from one paragraph to another with greater coherence, use a transition/topic sentence at the beginning of **every body paragraph EXCEPT THE FIRST BODY PARAGRAPH**. Such a sentence consists of linking one paragraph to another by referring back to the topic from the previous paragraph before introducing the topic that will be developed in the next paragraph.

To be able to create these sentences, you must know the main idea in each paragraph. Take a moment to:



Main idea of your drafted body paragraphs	Connection to your thesis
1	
2	
3	

Now begin to link one paragraph to the next by using my Seesaw Trick:

**My trick:**

1) Begin with a balanced correlative pair: Just as/ so too, Both/ and, not only / but also, rather/ or, whether/ or

Both ... and	Either ... or
Not only ... but also	So ... as
Just ... as	The ... the
As much ... as	No sooner ... than
If ... then	Hardly ... when
What with ... and	Such ... that
Neither ... nor	Rather ... than
Whether ... or	Scarcely ... when
As ... as	So ... that

2) Briefly note what you just discussed then ease readers into the next new idea

3) Think of it as a balance or see-saw to move the readers through your connective thinking

Example: **Just as** the narrator's tone is abrupt, **so too** is the narrator's sentence structure short and choppy.

Previous idea ↑



↑ new idea

PRACTICE: Write a transitional sentence for between two of the paragraphs you are currently working on:

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**Ex: Thesis-** Hansberry uses symbols to represent a family's strife amidst hardships, showing how deeply rooted racial injustices and prejudices are in society.

**Topic Sentence 1:** The reference to the singular window in the apartment and the feeble light that shines through is representative of opportunity. ①

**Topic Sentence 2:** Both the lack of light and a lack of space create problematic conditions for the growth of Mama's plant and ultimately, the growth of the family. ②