

## Transitioning

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Transitions are important for achieving coherence and cohesion, which are two aspects of clear writing that allow your reader to understand what you are trying to communicate.

Cohesion: sensible flow from one sentence to the next

Coherence: a paper or paragraph's overall focus on one topic

### *Transition Words*

Transition words tell the reader the relationship between what comes before the word and what comes after. Many types of relationships can be expressed with different transition words. The following list of transition words is from George Mason University's Writing Center Resources:

#### **Transitions showing accumulation**

also, in addition, again, once again, further, furthermore, moreover, then, besides, equally important, finally, next, lastly, what's more, similarly, likewise, not only...but also

#### **Transitions showing contrast**

however, by contrast, while, whereas, but, yet, on the other hand, except, by comparison, compared to, conversely, meanwhile

#### **Transitions showing cause or effect**

because, for, since, for the same reason, evidently, consequently, thus, therefore, hence, accordingly, as a result

#### **Transitions signaling example or evidence**

for example, for instance, in this case, in another case, on this occasion, in this situation, take the case of ..., to demonstrate, to illustrate, as an illustration

#### **Transitions indicating exceptions**

yet, still, nevertheless, nonetheless, in spite of, despite, in any case, of course, once in a while, sometimes, after all

#### **Transitions showing sequence or order**

first, second, third, previously, prior to this, simultaneously, concurrently, soon, at this time, now, at this point, next, then, following this, after, afterward, finally, consequently, subsequently

#### **Transitions signaling a summary or conclusion**

in brief, on the whole, summing up, to conclude, in conclusion, as I have shown, as I have said, thus

Transitions may be used from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph to bolster the cohesiveness of the writing.

### *Transitioning with Ideas*

As important as transition words, transitioning with ideas will help your reader move smoothly from one paragraph or key point to the next. To transition between ideas, restate a summary or part of the previous idea before you move into your new point. You can do this by repeating key words and phrases or by summarizing the ideas of a previous paragraph.

Consider the following examples:

\*The ghazal poem has a specific structure that not only shapes the piece but is integral to its unity. Each couplet ends in the same refrain and the word directly preceding each refrain rhymes in every couplet. The stanzas are thematically independent, except for occasional subtle allusions, and should be able to stand as individual poems. Also important, the ghazal was traditionally meant to be sung or at least intoned (Alston 43). Like any genre of poetry, ghazals were meant to be heard.

The essence of the ghazal is also important because it depicts more about the genre's cultural resonance. Ghazal poet Shahabuddin Rahmatullah passionately explains the nature of this form. "Ghazal means 'talking to the tender sex and singing of love and beauty'. Its nearest equivalent in English is 'love-lyrics'" (Rahmatullah 21). ...

VS.

The ghazal poem has a specific structure that not only defines the genre but is integral to each poem's unity. Each couplet ends in the same refrain and the word directly preceding each refrain rhymes in every couplet. The stanzas are thematically independent, except for occasional subtle allusions, and should be able to stand as individual poems. Also important, the ghazal was traditionally meant to be sung or at least intoned (Alston 43). Like any genre of poetry, ghazals were meant to be heard.

While structure and oral tradition define the ghazal, the essence of the ghazal depicts more about the genre's cultural relevance. Ghazal poet Shahabuddin Rahmatullah passionately explains the nature of this form. "Ghazal means 'talking to the tender sex and singing of love and beauty'. Its nearest equivalent in English is 'love-lyrics'" (Rahmatullah 21). ...

\*Adapted for educational purposes from an essay written by Steph A. Bates

Which set of paragraphs transitions more smoothly? Which set gives you more information about the relationship between the two paragraphs?

The second set of paragraphs transition better because the main ideas of the first paragraph are repeated at the beginning of the next paragraph. The reader gains a better understanding of the relationship between the first paragraph and the second one. Your reader will transition better from one paragraph or idea to the next when you recapitulate the most recent point before introducing your next idea.

### *Practice with Transition Words*

Insert a transition word or phrase in the pairs of sentences below that makes the first sentence transition more smoothly into the second sentence. You can refer to the lists of transition words above.

EX: Most of the islands south of Florida are easiest to access by boat. Cuba may be reached easily by plane. *^However,*

1. The little boy prefers running to walking. He likes basketball more than football.
2. The narrator never mentions any details about her husband. The audience doesn't know his name, profession, or anything else about him.
3. In 2005, the president announced intentions to balance the budget. The national debt at the end of 2009 had grown to nearly twice what it was just five years ago.
4. Eco-tourism has bolstered the economies of many island nations, but it has also forced locals to change their professions. Many former farmers in St. Lucia now drive around truckloads of tourists who are interested in snapping photos of idyllic banana plantations.
5. Write a short paragraph about the role of family in Greek culture that uses the following transition words: furthermore, consequently, in comparison to, on the other hand, despite, on the whole.

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*Practice with Transition Ideas*

For the following sets of paragraphs, rewrite the first sentence of the second paragraph to improve the transition.

Each paragraph in the passage has its own piece of imagery—both about fear. The first paragraph’s imagery is about a flood Ingeli remembers from his childhood. He “remembers lying on the mat, listening to the water breeding around them and the screams of families waking and dying, his own skin bleeding fear” (Whitney, 22 Sept, 58). Though Ingeli remembers the event in connection to another character, in the context of the novel it is clearly a metaphor for the HIV pandemic in Africa. Like Ingeli lying passively on the mat while the water overwhelms him, Zandu seems to lie passively while HIV overwhelms the country.

The word “breeds” in the passage intensifies the imagery because one does not typically think of water breeding; but people do breed, and their breeding is what spreads HIV. The author effectively compares HIV with water, not a placid lake or peaceful pond, but the threatening water of an inescapable flood. The widespread occurrence of HIV, its uncontrollable rate of infection, and its ability to mutate, similar to the way floodwater fluidly adapts to its surroundings, are the aspects that make it so deadly and uncontainable.

New transition sentence:

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The imagery in the second paragraph is more abstract, concerning how Ingeli and Suzanne “mesh, like two wild dreams holding one another, trying to find a place to stand” (Whitney 58) because of fear. The author chooses dreams as her metaphor because dreams are intangible and hard to define, like culture. Ingeli and Suzanne coming together represents Africa and the West meshing together respectively. Each character belongs to one culture but is trying to understand the other culture. Ingeli is African but studied in Britain and now dates Suzanne. She is American but has come to work in Africa and dates Ingeli. The dream imagery in this paragraph illustrates how the characters handle culture: Dreams are personal and intimate, representing each character’s own internal discussion of culture; but, the meshing together of the

dreams represents each character's concern with balancing culture within their relationship with the other person.

It is fear that brings Ingeli and Suzanne together. Ingeli sees in Suzanne the same kind of fear he felt about the flood as a child. The author purposefully uses fear rather than love or some other emotion to break through the bounds of culture and ethnicity. Ingeli and Suzanne exemplify the power of the fear of HIV that reigns in Sub-Saharan Africa. Ingeli's thoughts directly mention the "unspoken fears between them, fears each has known" (Linnea 58). The unspoken fears of these two characters represent the unspoken fears many Africans have of HIV.

New transition sentence:

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