

Using Transitions to Improve Writing Flow

How Do You Improve your Flow?

- Understand terminology
- Use transitions in writing
- Use resources to improve your writing

Understand Terminology

- **Transitions** – words and phrases that connect ideas within a paragraph and between paragraphs; transitions help the reader understand the relationships between ideas and help the writing flow
- **Flow** – the smooth movement from one idea to the next in what seems like an effortless manner; good writers work at developing flow and when the writing flows, readers find the text easier to read
- **Unity** – oneness; focus; relevance; each sentence in a paragraph must support, clarify, or explain the main idea of the paragraph's topic sentence
- **Coherence** – the quality that makes writing logical and connected and where one point leads to another; some ways to organize your writing include chronological order, cause and effect, providing an example, contrast, showing time, adding a point, and conclusion
- **Thesis Statement** – tells your reader the main argument or position of the paper and often outlines the sub-topics and method of organization
- **Topic Sentence** – tells the reader the main idea of each paragraph and must clearly relate back to the thesis statement
- **Transitional Words or Expressions** – connect points within a paragraph, connect the paragraphs back to the thesis, and help guide the reader through your writing

Use Transitions in Writing

- It is essential that you clearly explain your points and remind your reader/ audience of your purpose – repeating key vocabulary, using synonyms, and using parallel structure can be very effective
- Your thesis tells your reader/ audience what you will prove; support your thesis in each paragraph and link that support through the use of transitions

Examples of Transitions

- Chronological order: first, second, third, additionally, last
- Cause and effect: consequently, since, so, as a result, therefore, accordingly, for this purpose
- Providing an example: for instance, indeed, specifically, to illustrate, for example
- Contrast: nevertheless, however, on the other hand, instead, by comparison, even though
- Showing time: during, next, afterward, usually, eventually, meanwhile, simultaneously
- Adding a point: furthermore, moreover, in addition to, indeed, besides, equally important
- Conclusion: to sum up, finally, in brief, on the whole, to summarize, consequently

Supporting a Thesis Statement using Transitions

- Thesis: It is essential for ECE educators to understand the symptoms of autism, the treatment options available, and the best way to help parents manage the disorder so children with autism can reach their full potential.
 - Use parallel structure within your thesis to build coherence
 - Use transition sentences to help your paper flow and connect each paragraph to your thesis; use some of the same vocabulary/ word forms as in your thesis to help maintain your reader's focus
- One option is to conclude the first sub-topic and 'hint' at the second sub-topic
 - It is important for ECE educators to first understand the symptoms of autism and then learn about the treatment options available to help children with autism reach their full potential.
- Another option is to have the transition in the first sentence of the second paragraph
 - In addition to understanding the symptoms of autism, ECE educators must learn about the treatment options available for children with autism so the children can reach their full potential.

Examples

Poor Flow

Taking a course is a great way to learn. If an ECE educator takes a course or attends a workshop, he or she will be able to learn more about autism.

- The paragraph lacks a direct link to the thesis statement.

Good Flow

Since an ECE educator needs to fully understand the symptoms of autism, he or she must attend courses and workshops to further his or her understanding.

- The paragraph uses the transition 'since' to create a link to the thesis statement.

Use Resources to Improve Your Writing

- Assignment rubric
- Your professor
- Course text
- SALS DC Connect course resources
 - Tip sheets: Transition Words and Phrases, Thesis Statements, Parallel Structure
 - Essay Outline Template and Essay Writing Checklist
- Writing Workshops at SALS
- Peer Writing Tutor
- Writing Specialist/ ESL Specialist