



Pearson New International Edition

The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers  
Daniel E. Seward    Maxine E. Hairston  
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Ninth Edition

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**Chart 1 Common Transition Words and Phrases**

<b>TO SHOW SIMILARITY</b> likewise like similarly in the same way just as	<b>TO SHOW CONSEQUENCE</b> hence consequently so therefore as a result of thus
<b>TO SHOW CONTRAST</b> however instead nevertheless although in spite of on the other hand not only but rather	<b>TO SHOW CAUSATION</b> because since
<b>TO SHOW ACCUMULATION</b> moreover in addition to for example and for instance	<b>TO SHOW A SEQUENCE</b> next subsequently after finally first, second, third last

Style

• **2 Repeat a key term throughout a paragraph to establish a central idea.** Using one or two key words or phrases several times in a paragraph can tie it together effectively.

**REPEATED WORDS BOLDFACED**

The new black middle class came of age in the 1960s during an unprecedented American **economic boom** and in the hub of a thriving **mass culture**. The **economic boom** made luxury goods and convenient services available to large numbers of hard-working Americans for the first time. American **mass culture** presented models of the good life principally in terms of conspicuous consumption and hedonistic

indulgence. It is important to note that even the intensely political struggles of the sixties presupposed a perennial **economic boom** and posited models of the good life projected by U.S. **mass culture**. Long-term financial self-denial and sexual asceticism was never at the center of a political agenda in the sixties.

—Cornel West, *Race Matters*

● **3 Use the demonstrative pronouns *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, and *such* to tie ideas together.** But be very careful that the referent for these pronouns is always clear. In the following example, each boldfaced word hooks directly and unambiguously into the previous sentence or clause.

**DEMONSTRATIVE TERMS BOLDFACED**

Making a movie is a collaborative endeavor, and scriptwriters point **this** out frequently. Occasionally a screenplay will survive the transfer from paper to film intact, but **that** is the exception rather than the rule. Typically, producers, directors, actors, and agents all have a say in the final product. Coping with **such** high-handed meddling is often difficult for young writers, and **those** who cannot compromise rarely stay in the business for long.

● **4 Use relative pronouns to show links between ideas.** *Who*, *which*, *where*, and *that* are powerful words that link a descriptive or informative statement to something that has preceded it. Relative pronouns can be especially helpful when you need to combine several short, choppy sentences into one. Notice how the boldfaced pronouns in the following paragraph serve as links to previous ideas.

**RELATIVE PRONOUNS BOLDFACED**

Emma's first few weeks at the conservatory were exhausting but exhilarating. It was a place **that** challenged her, one **where** she could meet talented people **who** shared her passion for dance. The competition among the students was friendly but intense, **which** only increased her determination to practice and learn.

● **5 Use parallelism to link ideas.** You can create tightly focused paragraphs by writing a series of sentences that incorporate parallel phrases.

West, Cornel. "Race Matters." Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.

**PARALLEL PHRASES BOLDFACED**

I spent my two days at Disneyland taking rides. **I took** a bobsled through the Matterhorn and a submarine under the Polar Ice Cap and a rocket jet to the Cosmic Vapor Curtain. **I took** Peter Pan's Flight, Mr. Toad's Wild Ride, Alice's Scary Adventures, and Pinocchio's Daring Journey. **I took** a steamboat and a jungle boat. **I took** the Big Thunder Mountain Railroad to Coyote Country and the Splash Mountain roller coaster to Critter Country. **I took** a "Pirates of the Caribbean" ride (black cats and buried treasure) and a "Haunted Mansion" ride (creaking hinges and ghostly laughter). **I took** monorails and Skyways and Autopias and People Movers. More precisely, those rides **took** me: up and down and around sudden corners and over rooftops, and all I had to do was sit back and let whatever conveyance I was sitting in do the driving.

—William Zinsser, *American Places*

Zinsser holds the details of his paragraph together by using a parallel pattern that begins every sentence with the phrase "I took"; then, when he reverses the phrase to "More precisely, those rides **took** me," he wraps up his paragraph with a final unifying touch.

• **6 Use a semicolon to link two closely related statements.**

The semicolon signals a tight connection that says, "These groups of words go together." Often a semicolon can connect parts of a sentence more effectively than *and* or *also*.

**CONNECTING SEMICOLONS HIGHLIGHTED**

The sculptor Ilya Karensky no longer has to endure his neighbors' contempt for his work; now he has to put up with their insincere and inept praise. Ilya knows perfectly well that what his neighbors admire most about his work is the amount of money for which it now sells; they like the sculptures themselves no better than they did before.

• **7 Consider using headings or other visual markers as transitions.** In some kinds of documents, writers may use visual signals as well as—or sometimes instead of—words to help readers follow an argument.

Business and technical writers commonly use headings and subheadings to separate sections of a document so that readers can see where one idea ends and another begins. Résumés often use headings such as "Education,"

## How Do You Manage Transitions?

### Style

“Experience,” “Awards,” and “References” so that readers can locate relevant information. Brochures, flyers, and instructional manuals employ graphics, images, and color to mark divisions or to tie together related material. On the Web, writers create hyperlinks to connect documents.

When you incorporate visual transitions into a writing project, ask yourself whether the particular strategy is appropriate for the situation. Graphics and color fonts aren’t always welcome in academic papers, and a flyer or short essay might not need headings. If you’re not sure, look at models to see the kinds of visual devices other writers have used in similar situations.

Also be sure that a particular transition gives readers the right signal. For example, a heading indicates a new topic, but it doesn’t necessarily show readers how one topic relates to another. You’ll often need to supplement visual devices with traditional linking words and phrases.

### Taking Control

#### Use transitions for clarity

When you receive a paper back from an instructor, you may see the abbreviation *trans* written in the margin. What that mark usually means is that, for a moment, you have forgotten how tough it can be for readers to follow the sequence of your thoughts. Without a helpful *however*, *therefore*, or *on the other hand*, or more complicated transitional device, readers may have no clue why your paper is taking a turn or introducing a new idea. In editing for continuity, you must try—hard as it may be—to read a draft of your paper the way readers will. If it helps, highlight the transitions you have offered to readers. You may be surprised how few they are. Then fix any problems you detect.

**EXERCISE 1** Read the following two paragraphs and diagnose the transition problems you find between the paragraphs and within each one. Where do you have trouble following the writer’s line of thought? Why? Then revise the paragraphs to improve the transitions, drawing on at least two of the strategies described in this section.

#### How Do You Manage Transitions?

There is nowhere to park on campus. The parking situation is impossible for first-year students. My roommate missed her first college class because she could not find a parking spot. I have received three parking tickets already this semester. Some people say that freshmen should not be allowed to drive to campus. First-year students are required to live in the dorms. The dorm I live in is 15 minutes away from all my classes. I can't walk to them. I have to drive.

There are only a few parking garages and many underutilized grassy areas on campus. There is a large green space on either side of the engineering complex that is not being used. The courtyard in front of the library is always empty. The fountain attracts litter. Why can't the university use some grassy areas for parking garages? The university could use some money from parking tickets to pay for new parking. The shuttle bus system could be used to transport students from remote parking areas onto campus.

Style

**EXERCISE 2** Use one or more of the transitional devices discussed in this section to strengthen connections between new and old information in a writing project you're currently working on.

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