



# W. L. Adams Center for Writing

## TRANSITIONS

In everyday life, you move from home to school, or from one class to another—those are transitions. In writing, **transitions** work the same way. They help your reader move smoothly from one thought, sentence, or paragraph to the next.

Think of transitions as **bridges** between ideas. Without them, your writing can feel choppy or confusing. With transitions, your ideas flow, and your writing feels clear, organized, and interesting.

### Where Do Transitions Appear?

- At the beginning of a sentence or paragraph.
- In the middle of a sentence.
- As the topic sentence of a new paragraph that connects back to the last one.
- As a separate sentence (bridge) between ideas, such as a hook and a thesis in an introduction.

### Ways to Create Strong Transitions

1. **Repeat Key Words or Ideas.** Use a word or phrase from the end of one paragraph at the beginning of the next.

**Example:**

End of paragraph 1: "Many students fear a failing grade."

Start of paragraph 2: "That fear often leads to writer's block."

2. **Summarize the Previous Idea.** Begin your next paragraph with a phrase that restates the big idea from the last paragraph and leads into your next point.

**Example:**

End of paragraph 2: "That fear often leads to writer's block."

Start of paragraph 3: "This emotional block can make even simple writing tasks

3. **Use Common Transition Words or Phrases.** Choose a transition that makes sense for the relationship you're showing:

To Add Ideas	also, in addition, furthermore
To Show Contrast	but, however, although, even though
To Show Cause/Effect	so, because, as a result
To Show Order/Time	first, then, next, finally
To Emphasize	in fact, especially, above all, for instance
To Wrap Up	in conclusion, to sum up, overall

4. **Write a Bridge Sentence.** A bridge sentence is just a regular sentence with a specific job. It comes after one idea and helps lead into the next. Consider it a sentence that builds a connection so your reader doesn't get confused, lost, or left guessing.

**Example:**

(1) Writing is hard for many people.

(3) Writing can improve literacy, open job opportunities, and even help people speak more clearly.

Jumping straight from sentence 1 to sentence 3 feels sudden. So we add a bridge sentence (sentence 2) to connect them:

**Bridge Sentence (2):** While writing is difficult at first, it has important benefits that make it worthwhile.

**Revised Example**

(1) Writing is hard for many people. (2) While writing is difficult at first, it has important benefits that make it worthwhile. (3) To illustrate, writing can improve literacy, open job opportunities, and even help people speak more clearly.

## More Tips About Using Transitions

1. **Use Transitions Inside Paragraphs Too.** Transitions don't go just between paragraphs. You can also use them within a paragraph to connect sentences and keep the flow going.

**Example:**

Many students find writing stressful. For example, some stare at a blank screen unsure how to begin. In contrast, others enjoy writing because it lets them express themselves.

2. **Don't Overuse the Same Transition.** Try not to start every sentence with "however" or "for example." Mix it up so your writing sounds more natural.
3. **Don't Add a Transition Just to Fill Space.** Only use a transition if it actually shows how one idea connects to the next. Otherwise, it can confuse your reader.

**Example:**

I love reading. However, I read every day.

("However" doesn't fit—there's no contrast.)