

Transition Signals between Paragraphs

Linking paragraphs with transitions helps your reader see how the subtopics are related. Link one paragraph to the next by adding a transition to the topic sentence of the second paragraph. This transition may be a single word, a phrase, or a dependent clause that repeats or summarizes the main idea in the preceding paragraph.

Study the following model, and notice how the paragraphs are linked.

MODEL

Paragraph Transitions

INTRODUCTORY
PARAGRAPH

Aggressive Drivers

The number of vehicles on freeways and streets is growing at an alarming rate. This increase of motor vehicles is creating hazardous conditions. Moreover, drivers are in such a rush to get to their destinations that many become angry or impatient with other motorists who are too slow or who are in their way. Aggressive drivers react foolishly toward others in several dangerous ways.

BODY PARAGRAPH 1

TRANSITION WORDS

One way an angry driver may react is to cut off¹ another motorist.
(+ supporting sentences)

BODY PARAGRAPH 2

TRANSITION WORDS

Another way is to tailgate² the other car. (+ supporting sentences)

BODY PARAGRAPH 3

TRANSITION PHRASE

In addition to cutting off and tailgating other cars, aggressive drivers often use rude language or gestures to show their anger. (+ supporting sentences)

BODY PARAGRAPH 4

TRANSITION CLAUSE

Although law enforcement authorities warn motorists against aggressive driving, the number who act out their angry impulses has not declined. (+ supporting sentences)

CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

To conclude, aggressive drivers are endangering everyone because they create hazardous conditions by acting and driving foolishly. They should control their anger and learn to drive safely. After all, the lives they save could be their own.

¹cut off: drive in front of

²tailgate: drive closely behind or on the tail of another car

PRACTICE 5*Transitions
between
Paragraphs*

- A. Circle the transition expressions that link paragraphs in the model essay on pages 58–59.
- B. Connect the ideas in the following paragraphs by adding a transition word, phrase, or clause to the topic sentences of the third, fourth, and fifth paragraphs. Try to vary the transitional linking expressions you use. You may rewrite the topic sentences if necessary. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Icebergs: A Potential Source of Water

¹ In countries where rainfall is very sparse,¹ scientists must constantly seek ways to increase supplies of water. One method being considered is the use of desalination plants, which would remove salt from seawater. Another method being considered is the towing of icebergs. According to this method, large icebergs from Antarctica would be wrapped in cloth or plastic, tied to powerful tugboats by strong ropes, and towed to the countries needing freshwater. While this plan may have some potential, there are certain practical problems that must be solved.

² The first problem is the expense. According to estimates, it would cost between \$50 million and \$100 million to tow a single 100-million-ton iceberg from Antarctica to, for example, the coast of Saudi Arabia.

³ _____ is the possibility that the iceberg would melt en route.² No one knows if an iceberg could be effectively insulated for such a long journey. At the very least, there is the possibility that it would break up into smaller pieces, which would create still other problems.

⁴ _____ there is the danger that a huge block of ice floating off an arid³ coast could have unexpected environmental effects. The ice could drastically⁴ change the weather along the coast, and it would probably affect the fish population.

⁵ _____ the cost of providing freshwater from icebergs would be less than the cost of providing water by desalinization, according to most estimates. It would cost between 50 and 60 cents per cubic meter to get water from an iceberg, as opposed to the 80 cents per cubic meter it would cost to get the same amount by desalinization.

⁶ In conclusion, before icebergs can become a source of freshwater in the future, problems involving cost, overall practicality, and most important, environmental impact⁵ must be solved.

¹sparse: small in amount

²en route: during the journey

³arid: dry

⁴drastically: in an extreme way

⁵impact: effect

- C. Add transition words, phrases, or clauses to the topic sentences of the paragraphs in this essay. Rewrite the topic sentences if necessary.

Medicine and Ethics⁶

1 Recent advances in the fields of medicine and biotechnology have brought about situations that could scarcely be imagined only a generation ago. Battery-operated plastic hearts can be implanted into⁷ people. People can be kept alive indefinitely by machines. Exact duplicates of animals can be made. While such scientific achievements may ultimately benefit humankind, they have also created complex legal and ethical issues.

2 _____ involves doctors' ability to intervene in human reproduction. A well-known example is the case of Baby M. A man paid a woman to bear a child for him and his wife, who could not have children. They signed a contract, but after the baby was born, the woman wanted to keep the baby. The father said the baby was his, but the woman said it was hers. It took the courts many months to decide who was right.

3 _____ another ethical dilemma⁸ has arisen because doctors are now able to keep people who are in comas⁹ alive for years by attaching their bodies to machines. This gives great power and great responsibility to the people who control the machines. As a result of this power, society has had to develop a new definition of death. How does a person decide whether another person whose heart cannot beat on its own and whose lungs are pumped by a machine is still alive or not?

4 _____ the ability of biotechnologists to produce new forms of life in their laboratories is another area with profound¹⁰ ethical consequences. Isn't a scientist who creates, for example, a new bacterium "playing God"? Furthermore, is it even safe to introduce new life forms into Earth's atmosphere? Is there a risk that such life forms could get out of control? Some people fear so.

5 _____ scientists are now able to duplicate living organisms, cell by cell, through a process called cloning. Recently, the world was stunned by the successful cloning of a human embryo. Should biotechnologists be allowed to clone people? Who should control human cloning?

6 _____ revolutions—political or technological—cause upheaval¹¹ and force change. Our new ability to create and prolong life is raising questions and forcing changes in our very concept of life, an issue involving not only legal but also profound moral considerations.

⁶ethics: the study of right and wrong

⁷implanted into: put into

⁸dilemma: difficult problem

⁹comas: states of unconsciousness (being unable to see, hear, or speak)

¹⁰profound: important; serious

¹¹upheaval: social disturbance

The Concluding Paragraph

The conclusion is the final paragraph in an essay. It has three purposes.

1. It signals the end of the essay. To do so, begin your conclusion with a transition signal. See Transition Signals in Appendix C, pages 297–299.
2. It reminds your reader of your main points, which you can do in one of two ways: You can
 - summarize your subtopics.
 - paraphrase your thesis.
3. It leaves your reader with your final thoughts on the topic. This is your opportunity to convey a strong, effective message that your reader will remember.

Here are techniques that you can use to write a memorable conclusion.

Make a prediction.

We have seen how the costs of attending college have been rising while, at the same time, sources of financial aid for students have been disappearing. If this trend continues, fewer and fewer families will be able to send their children through four years of college.

Suggest results or consequences.

To sum up, the costs of attending college are up and financial aid for students is down. Fewer and fewer future members of the workforce are able to educate themselves beyond high school. As a result, the nation will waste the intelligence, imagination, and energy of a large segment of the present college-age generation.

Suggest a solution, make a recommendation, or call for action.

It is clear that the U.S. system of higher education is in trouble. For many students, four years of college is no longer possible because of increasing costs and decreasing financial aid. To reverse this trend, we must demand that government increase its financial support of colleges and universities and restore financial aid programs. Our future depends on it.

Quote an authority on the topic.

In conclusion, costs are rising and financial aid is declining, with the result that many can no longer afford to go to college. If our nation is to prosper, increased government funding for education is essential, even if it requires higher taxes. As Horace Mann¹ argued in his *Fifth Annual Report*, a nation's economic wealth will increase through an educated public. It is therefore in the self-interest of business to pay the taxation for public education.

¹Horace Mann (1796–1859) is considered the father of public education in the United States.

PRACTICE 6*Concluding Paragraphs*

Step 1 Read the following essay and the two possible concluding paragraphs.
Step 2 Then answer the questions.

Culture Shock

Moving to a new country can be an exciting, even exhilarating experience. In a new environment, you somehow feel more alive: seeing new sights, eating new food, hearing the foreign sounds of a new language, and feeling a different climate against your skin stimulate your senses as never before. Soon, however, this sensory bombardment becomes sensory overload. Suddenly, new experiences seem stressful rather than stimulating, and delight turns into discomfort. This is the phenomenon known as culture shock. Culture shock is more than jet lag or homesickness, and it affects nearly everyone who enters a new culture—tourists, business travelers, diplomats, and students alike. Although not everyone experiences culture shock in exactly the same way, many experts agree that it has roughly five stages.

In the first stage, you are excited by your new environment. You experience some simple difficulties such as trying to use the telephone or public transportation, but you consider these small challenges that you can quickly overcome. Your feelings about the new culture are positive, so you are eager to make contact with people and to try new foods.

Sooner or later, differences in behavior and customs become more noticeable to you. This is the second stage of culture shock. Because you do not know the social customs of the new culture, you may find it difficult to make friends. For instance, you do not understand how to make “small talk,” so it is hard to carry on a casual, get-acquainted conversation. One day in the school cafeteria, you overhear a conversation. You understand all the words, but you do not understand the meaning. Why is everyone laughing? Are they laughing at you or at some joke that you did not understand? Also, you aren’t always sure how to act while shopping. Is this store self-service, or should you wait for a clerk to assist you? If you buy a sweater in the wrong size, can you exchange it? These are not minor challenges; they are major frustrations.

In the third stage, you no longer have positive feelings about the new culture. You feel that you have made a mistake in coming here. Making friends hasn’t been easy, so you begin to feel lonely and isolated. Now you want to be with familiar people and eat familiar food. You begin to spend most of your free time with students from your home country, and you eat in restaurants that serve your native food. In fact, food becomes an obsession, and you spend a lot of time planning, shopping for, and cooking food from home.

You know that you are in the fourth stage of culture shock when you have negative feelings about almost everything. In this stage, you actively reject the new culture. You become critical, suspicious, and irritable. You believe that people are unfriendly, that your landlord is trying to cheat you, that your teachers do not like you, and that the food is making you sick. In fact, you may actually develop stomachaches, headaches, sleeplessness, lethargy, or other physical symptoms.

Finally, you reach the fifth stage. As your language skills improve, you begin to have some success in meeting people and in negotiating situations. You are able to exchange the sweater that was too small, and you can successfully chat about the weather with a stranger on the bus. Your self-confidence grows. After realizing that you cannot change your surroundings, you begin to accept the differences and

tolerate them. For instance, the food will never be as tasty as the food in your home country, but you are now able to eat and sometimes even enjoy many dishes. You may not like the way some people in your host country dress or behave in public, but you do not regard their clothes and behavior as wrong—just different.

Concluding Paragraph A

To sum up, culture shock is a very real phenomenon that has been studied for more than 30 years by psychologists and anthropologists. Its five phases are (1) positive feelings toward the new culture, (2) awareness of small differences, (3) growing discomfort and need for contact with home culture, (4) negative feelings, and (5) acceptance and adjustment. Symptoms may vary, and not all people experience all five phases. In the end, however, people who suffer culture shock are stronger from having overcome the difficulties and frustrations of adapting to life in a new land.

Concluding Paragraph B

In conclusion, nearly everyone moving to a new country feels some degree of culture shock. Symptoms may vary, and not all people experience all five stages. Newcomers with a strong support group may feel at home immediately in the new culture, while others may take months to feel comfortable. Staying in touch with friends and family, keeping a positive attitude, and, above all, learning the language as soon as possible are ways to overcome the difficulties and frustrations of adapting to life in a new land.

1. Which concluding paragraph is a summary of the subtopics? Which one paraphrases the thesis statement?
2. Which concluding paragraph gives suggestions? Which one makes a prediction?

PRACTICE 7

Writing Concluding Paragraphs

Step 1 Read the following “skeleton” essays. Only the introductory paragraph and topic sentences for the body paragraphs are given.

Step 2 Write a concluding paragraph for each essay.

Essay 1

Controlling Stress

Introductory Paragraph

The busy schedules that most adults face every day have created a growing health problem in the modern world. Stress affects almost everyone, from the highly pressured executive to the busy homemaker or student. It can cause a variety of physical disorders ranging from headaches to stomach ulcers and even alcoholism. Stress, like the common cold, is a problem that cannot be cured; however, it can be controlled. A person can learn to control stress in four ways.

Topic Sentences for Body Paragraphs

- A. Set realistic goals.
- B. Take up a hobby.
- C. Exercise regularly.
- D. Maintain close relationships with family and friends.

Concluding Paragraph

Essay 2

Studying in Great Britain

Introductory Paragraph

People come from all over the world to the United Kingdom to pursue education. Some come for a year, while others may stay four years or longer to complete a program or earn a degree. Of course, the first few weeks in a new country are always a little stressful, but knowledge of a few British characteristics and customs can smooth the path for new arrivals.

Topic Sentences for Body Paragraphs

- A. British people are usually reserved.¹
- B. British people are very orderly, so waiting in a queue² for a bus or in a shop is a must.
- C. The weather is no joke—it rains a lot.
- D. Cars drive on the left side of the road, and stepping off a curb can be dangerous if you are not used to looking to the right instead of to the left.

Concluding Paragraph

Essay Outlining

Because an essay is long, it is important to organize and plan before you begin to write. The best way to do this is to make an outline. An outline not only organizes your thoughts, but it also keeps you on track once you begin to write.

¹reserved: quiet, restrained, undemonstrative in words and actions

²queue: British English word for American English *line*. People in the United Kingdom stand in a *queue*; people in the United States stand in a *line* to get service at a counter in a shop, to buy tickets, to wait for a bus, to board an airplane, and so on.

