

Building and Connecting with Transitions!



The organization of your written work includes two elements: (1) the order in which you have chosen to present the different parts of your discussion or argument, and (2) the relationships you construct between these parts. Transitions cannot substitute for good organization, but they can make your organization clearer and easier to follow.

Transitions between sections and paragraphs act as cues/connectors/gears or glue that helps readers anticipate what is coming before they read it and helps readers understand how your next big idea connects to your thesis.

How can you tell whether you need to work on your transitions? Here are some possible clues:

Your instructor has written comments like "choppy," "jumpy," "abrupt," "flow," "need signposts," or "how is this related?" on your papers.

Your readers (instructors, friends, or classmates) tell you that they had trouble following your organization or train of thought.

You tend to write the way you think—and your brain often jumps from one idea to another pretty quickly.

Now begin to link one paragraph to the next by using my Seesaw Trick:

My trick:

1) Begin with a balanced correlative pair: Just as/ so too, Both/ and, not only / but also, rather/ or, whether/ or

2) Briefly note what you just discussed then ease readers into the next new idea

3) Think of it as a balance or see-saw to move the readers through your connective thinking

Example: Just as the narrator's tone is abrupt, so too is the narrator's sentence structure short and choppy.

Previous idea

new idea