

Connecting the Parts

For readers to follow your train of thought, you need not only to connect your sentences and paragraphs to each other, but also to mark the kind of connection you are making. One of the easiest ways to make this move is to use *transitions* (from the Latin root *trans*, “across”), which help your cross from point to another in your text.

Transitions are usually placed at or near the start of sentences so they can signal to readers where your text is going. More specifically, transitions tell readers whether your text is echoing a previous sentence or paragraph (“in other words”), adding something to it (“in addition”), offering an example of it (“for instance”), generalizing from it (“as a result”), or modifying it (“and yet”).

Addition

also	indeed
and	in fact
besides	moreover
furthermore	so too
in addition	for the same reason

Elaboration

actually	to put it another way
by extension	to put it bluntly
in other words	to put it succinctly
in short	ultimately
that is	said another way

Example

after all	for instance
as an illustration	specifically
consider	to take a case in point
for example	

Cause and Effect

accordingly	so
as a result	then
consequently	therefore
hence	thus
since	

Comparison

along the same lines	likewise
in the same way	similarly
relatedly	

Contrast

although	nevertheless
but	nonetheless
by contrast	on the contrary
conversely	on the other hand
despite	regardless
even though	whereas
however	while
in contrast	yet

Concession

admittedly	naturally
although it is true	of course
granted	to be sure

Conclusion

as a result	in sum
consequently	therefore
hence	thus
in conclusion	

However, be careful! Choosing transition terms should involve a bit of mental sweat, since the whole point of using them is to make your writing *more* reader-friendly, not less. The only thing more frustrating than reading transition-less passages like—

Spot is a good dog. He has fleas.

—is reading misconnected sentences like—

Spot is a good dog. *For example*, he has fleas.

Make sure to use a transition that accurately identifies the relationship between your ideas:

Spot is a good dog, *even though* he has fleas.

Connecting the Parts

The following paragraph does it not connect its parts well. It lacks transitions and pointing words.

One of my favorite hobbies is traveling. I couldn't afford my habit. I decided to get a job that paid me to travel. I worked for a company called Offroad where I led bicycle trips. I liked the job. It was really hard. I got to spend two months living and working in France's northern wine country. It was spring. The grapes were just beginning to grow. The grapes looked like little green beads. Later in the year, the grapes would be turned into wine. I love grapes. I love wine more. I traveled parts of southern France on the weekends. I made many exciting memories. I visited the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival. I tasted the one of the world's oldest cheeses. Riding bikes all summer was great, and traveling around France was incredible. The job was too much work and not enough play. It fed my traveling addiction. It left me exhausted. I knew that job wasn't for me.

In the box below, re-write the paragraph to include transitions and pointing words.

Connecting the Parts

Read carefully over the following paragraphs from Barbara Ehrenreich's "The (Futile) Pursuit of the American Dream" (pg. 260 of *They Say / I Say*). Underline or circle the transitions, pointing words, and uses of repetition (key words, phrases, or sentence structures) that Ehrenreich uses to connect her sentences and ideas. (Hint: there are many!)

Stories of white-collar downward mobility cannot be brushed off as easily as accounts of blue-collar economic woes, which the hard-hearted traditionally blame on "bad choices": failing to get a college degree, for example, failing to postpone child-bearing until acquiring a nest egg, or failing to choose affluent parents in the first place. But distressed white-collar people cannot be accused of fecklessness of any kind; they are the ones who "did everything right." They earned higher degrees, often setting aside their youthful passion for philosophy or music to suffer through dull practical majors like management or finance. In some cases, they were higher achievers who ran into trouble precisely because they had risen far enough in their company for their salaries to look like a tempting cost cut. They were the losers, in other words, in a classic game of bait and switch. And while blue-collar poverty has become numbingly routine, white-collar unemployment—and the poverty that often results—remains a rude finger in the face of the American dream.

But there have been growing signs of trouble—if not outright misery—within the white-collar corporate workforce. First, starting with the economic downturn of 2011, there has been a rise in the unemployment of highly credentialed and experienced people. In late 2003, when I started this project, unemployment was running at about 5.9 percent, but in contrast to earlier economic downturns, a sizeable portion—almost 20 percent—of the unemployed were white-collar professionals. Previous downturns had disproportionately hit blue-collar people; this time it was the relative elite of professional, technical, and managerial employees who were being singled out for media sympathy. In April 2003, for example, the New York Times Magazine offered a much-discussed cover story about a former \$300,000-a-year computer industry executive reduced, after two years of unemployment, to working as a sales associate at the Gap. Throughout the first four years of the 2000s, there were similar stories of the might or the mere midlevel brought low, ejected from their office suites and forced to service behind the counter at Starbucks.

Today, white-collar job insecurity is no longer a function of the business cycle—rising as the stock market falls and declining again when the numbers improve. Nor is it confined to a few volatile sectors like telecommunications or technology, or a few regions of the country like the rust belt or Silicon valley. The economy may be looking up, the company may be raking in cash, and still the layoffs continue, like a perverse form of natural selection, weeding out the talented and the successful as well as the mediocre. Since the mid-nineties, this perpetual winnowing process has been institutionalized under various euphemisms such as "downsizing," "right-sizing," "smart-sizing," "restructuring," and "delaying"—to which we can now add the outsourcing of white-collar functions to cheaper labor markets overseas.

Building Your Literature Review

Idea/common topic #1: _____

Topic sentence, introducing idea/topic and/or its relationship to the conversation:

Summary & Quotation Sandwich, from one source:

Transition sentence, describing the relationship between sources' points/arguments:

Summary & Quotation Sandwich, from another source:

Summarizing sentence to conclude the section

Building Your Literature Review

Idea/common topic #2: _____

Topic sentence, introducing idea/topic and/or its relationship to the conversation:

Summary & Quotation Sandwich, from one source:

Transition sentence, identifying relationship between sources' points/arguments:

Summary & Quotation Sandwich, from another source:

Summarizing sentence to conclude the section