

Cohesion Strategies: Transitional Words and Phrases

Here we'll consider how transitional words and phrases can help make our writing clear and cohesive.

A key quality of an effective paragraph is unity. A unified paragraph sticks to one topic from start to finish, with every sentence contributing to the central purpose and main idea of that paragraph.

But a strong paragraph is more than just a collection of loose sentences. Those sentences need to be clearly connected so that readers can follow along, recognizing how one detail leads to the next. A paragraph with clearly connected sentences is said to be cohesive.

The following paragraph is unified and cohesive. Notice how the italicized words and phrases (called transitions) guide us along, helping us see how one detail leads to the next.

Why I Don't Make My Bed

Ever since I moved into my own apartment last fall, I have gotten out of the habit of making my bed-- except on Fridays, of course, when I change the sheets. Although some people may think that I am a slob, I have some sound reasons for breaking the bed-making habit. **In the first place**, I am not concerned about maintaining a tidy bedroom because no one except me ever ventures in there. If there is ever a fire inspection or a surprise date, I suppose I can dash in there to fluff up the pillow and slap on a spread. **Otherwise**, I am not bothered. **In addition**, I find nothing uncomfortable about crawling into a rumpled mass of sheets and blankets. **On the contrary**, I enjoy poking out a cozy space for myself before drifting off to sleep. **Also**, I think that a tightly made bed is downright uncomfortable: entering one makes me feel like a loaf of bread being wrapped and sealed. **Finally**, and *most importantly*, I think bed-making is an

awful way to waste time in the morning. I would rather spend those precious minutes checking my email or feeding the cat than tucking in corners or snapping the spread.

Transitional words and phrases guide readers from one sentence to the next. Although they most often appear at the beginning of a sentence, they may also show up after the subject. Here are the common transitional expressions, grouped according to the type of relationship shown by each.

1. Addition Transitions

and

also

besides

first, second, third

in addition

in the first place, in the second place, in the third place

furthermore

moreover

to begin with, next, finally

Example

In the first place, no "burning" in the sense of combustion, as in the burning of wood, occurs in a volcano; **moreover**, volcanoes are not necessarily mountains; **furthermore**, the activity takes place not

always at the summit but more commonly on the sides or flanks; and **finally**, the "smoke" is not smoke but condensed steam.

(Fred Bullard, Volcanoes in History)

2. Cause-Effect Transitions

accordingly

and so

as a result

consequently

for this reason

hence

so

then

therefore

thus

Example

The ideologue is often brilliant. Consequently some of us distrust brilliance when we should distrust the ideologue.

(Clifton Fadiman)

3. Comparison Transitions

by the same token

in like manner

in the same way

in similar fashion

likewise

similarly

Example

When you start with a portrait and search for a pure form, a clear volume, through successive eliminations, you arrive inevitably at the egg. Likewise, starting with the egg and following the same process in reverse, one finishes with the portrait.

(Pablo Picasso)

4. Contrast Transitions

but

however

in contrast

instead

nevertheless

on the contrary

on the other hand

still

yet

Example

Every American, to the last man, lays claim to a “sense” of humor and guards it as his most significant spiritual trait, **yet** rejects humor as a contaminating element wherever found. America is a nation of comics and comedians; **nevertheless**, humor has no stature and is accepted only after the death of the perpetrator.

(E. B. White)

5. Conclusion and Summary Transitions

and so

after all

at last

finally

in brief

in closing

in conclusion

on the whole

to conclude

to summarize

Example

Reporters are not paid to operate in retrospect. **Because when news** begins to solidify into current events and finally harden into history, it is the stories we didn't write, the questions we didn't ask that prove far, far more damaging than the ones we did.

(Anna Quindlen)

6. Example Transitions

as an example

for example

for instance

specifically

thus

to illustrate

Example

With all the ingenuity involved in hiding delicacies on the body, this process automatically excludes certain foods. For example, a turkey sandwich is welcome, but the cumbersome cantaloupe is not.

(Steve Martin, "How to Fold Soup")

7. Insistence Transitions

in fact

indeed

no

yes

Example

The joy of giving is indeed a pleasure, especially when you get rid of something you don't want.

(Frank Butler, Going My Way)

8. Place Transitions

above

alongside

beneath

beyond

farther along

in back

in front

nearby

on top of

to the left

to the right

under

upon

Example

What did it matter where you lay once you were dead? In a dirty sump or in a marble tower on top of a high hill? You were dead, you were sleeping the big sleep, you were not bothered by things like that.

(Raymond Chandler, The Big Sleep)

9. Restatement Transitions

in other words

in short

in simpler terms

that is

to put it differently

to repeat

Example

Anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer studied the few peaceful human tribes and discovered one common characteristic: sex roles were not polarized. Differences of dress and occupation were at a minimum. Society in other words, was not using sexual blackmail as a way of getting women to do cheap labor, or men to be aggressive.

(Gloria Steinem, "What It Would Be Like If Women Win")

10. Time Transitions

afterward

at the same time

currently

earlier

formerly

immediately

in the future

in the meantime

in the past

later

meanwhile

previously

simultaneously

subsequently

then

until now

Example

At first a toy, then a mode of transportation for the rich, the automobile was designed as man's mechanical servant. Later it became part of the pattern of living.

above all

accordingly

additionally

after all

again

all in all

all things considered

also

as a consequence

as a result

as a rule

as an example of

as well as

aside from

at first glance

at the same time

beginning with

being similar in many ways

besides

beyond

briefly

but

by and large

certainly

chiefly

coincidentally

consequently

contrary to

contrasting

conversely

comparable

corresponding to

coupled with

depending upon

decidedly

despite

doubly important

effectively

especially

excluding

except

excepting

exclusive of

first of all

for example

for instance

for now

for one thing

for the most part

for the time being

for this reason

fortunately

frequently

furthermore

generally

gradually

however

in addition

in any case

in any event

in brief

in conclusion

in contrast

in essence

in other words

in particular

in short

in summary

in the end

in the final analysis

in the first place

subsequent to

such as

to summarize

to begin with

that is

the next step

there is no doubt

therefore

thereupon

thus

usually

wherefore

while

whereas

with attention to

with this in mind

yet

in the long run

in this case

in turn

including

independent of

instead

just as interesting

later

likewise

meanwhile

moreover

next to

normally

on one hand

on the bright side

on the whole

ordinarily

other than

otherwise

overall

particularly

previously

rather

restating the obvious

soon

similarly

simultaneously

specifically

subsequent to

such as

to summarize

to begin with

that is

the next step

there is no doubt

therefore

2. Organize Your Writing

Organization is the key to successful legal writing. Create a roadmap for your writing by using visual clues to guide the reader. Introduce your subject in an introductory paragraph, use transitional phrases (“moreover,” “furthermore,” “however,” “in addition,” etc.) between each paragraph, introduce each paragraph with a topic sentence and use headings and subheadings to break up blocks of text. Limit each paragraph to one topic and sum up your message with a

concluding sentence or paragraph. Organizational structure guides the reader through your text and promotes readability.

3. Ditch The Legalese

Legalese - specialized legal phrases and jargon - can make your writing abstract, stilted and archaic. [Examples of legalese](#) include words such as aforementioned, herewith, heretofore and wherein. Ditch unnecessary legalese and other jargon in favor of the clear and simple. To avoid legalese and promote clarity, try reading your sentence to a colleague or substituting abstract words with simple, concrete terms. For example, instead of “I am in receipt of your correspondence,” “I received your letter” is clearer and more succinct.

4. Be Concise

Every word you write should contribute to your message. Omit extraneous words, shorten complex sentences, eliminate redundancies and keep it simple.

Consider the following sentence:

“Due to the fact that the defendant has not attempted to pay back the money owed to our client in the amount of \$3,000 it has become absolutely essential that we take appropriate legal action in order to obtain payment of the aforesaid amount.”

A more concise version reads: “Since the defendant has not paid the \$3,000 owed our client, we will file a lawsuit seeking reimbursement.” The latter sentence conveys the same information in 18 words versus 44. Omitting unnecessary words helps clarify the meaning of the sentence and adds impact.

5. Use Action Words

Action words make your legal prose more powerful, dynamic and vivid. Add punch to your writing with verbs that bring your prose to life. Here are a few examples:

Weak: The defendant was not truthful. **Better:** The defendant lied.

Weak: The witness quickly came into the courtroom. **Better:** The witness bolted into the courtroom.

Weak: The judge was very angry. **Better:** The judge was enraged.

6. Avoid Passive Voice

Passive voice disguises responsibility for an act by eliminating the subject of the verb. Active voice, on the other hand, tells the reader who is doing the acting and clarifies your message. For

example, instead of “the filing deadline was missed,” say “plaintiff’s counsel missed the filing deadline.” Instead of “a crime was committed,” say “the defendant committed the crime.”

7. Edit Ruthlessly

Edit your writing ruthlessly, omitting unnecessary words and rewriting for clarity. Careful proofreading is particularly important in legal writing. Spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors in a document submitted to the court, opposing counsel or a client can undermine your credibility as a legal professional.

Lead with your main idea.

As a general rule, state the main idea of a paragraph in the first sentence--the topic sentence. Don't keep your readers guessing. See Practice in Composing Topic Sentences.

- **Vary the length of your sentences.**

In general, use short sentences to emphasize ideas. Use longer sentences to explain, define, or illustrate ideas.

See [Sentence Variety](#).

- **Put key words and ideas at the beginning or end of a sentence.**

Don't bury a main point in the middle of a long sentence. To emphasize key words, place them at the beginning or (better yet) at the end.

See [Emphasis](#).

- **Vary sentence types and structures.**

Vary sentence types by including occasional questions and commands. Vary sentence structures by blending [simple](#), [compound](#), and [complex sentences](#).

See [Basic Sentence Structures](#).

- **Use active verbs.**

Don't overwork the [passive voice](#) or forms of the verb "[to be](#)." Instead, use active verbs in the [active voice](#).

See [F. Scott Fitzgerald's New York in the 1920s](#).

- **Use specific nouns and verbs.**

To convey your message clearly and keep your readers engaged, use concrete and specific words that *show* what you mean.

See [Detail](#) and [Descriptive Details in Wallace Stegner's "Town Dump."](#)

- **Cut the clutter.**

When [revising](#) your work, eliminate unnecessary words.

See [Practice in Cutting the Clutter](#).

- **Read aloud when you revise.**

When revising, you may *hear* problems (of tone, emphasis, word choice, and syntax) that you can't see. So listen up!

See [On Reading Aloud](#).

- **Actively edit and proofread.**

It's easy to *overlook* errors when merely *looking over* your work. So be on the lookout for common trouble spots when studying your final draft.

See [Revision Checklist](#) and [Editing Checklist](#).

- **Use a dictionary.**

When [proofreading](#), don't trust your [spellchecker](#): it can tell you only if a word *is* a word, not if

it's the *right* word.

See [Commonly Confused Words](#) and [Fifteen Common Errors](#).

- "A good **topic sentence** is concise and emphatic. It is no longer than the idea requires, and it stresses the important word or phrase. Here, for instance, is the topic sentence which opens a paragraph about the collapse of the stock market in 1929:

The Bull Market was dead.

(Frederick Lewis Allen)

Notice several things. (1) Allen's sentence is brief. Not all topics can be explained in six words, but whether they take six or sixty, they should be phrased in no more words than are absolutely necessary. (2) The sentence is clear and strong: you understand exactly what Allen means. (3) It places the key word--'dead'--at the end, where it gets heavy stress and leads naturally into what will follow. . . . (4) The sentence stands first in the paragraph. This is where topic sentences generally belong: at or near the beginning."

(Thomas S. Kane, *The New Oxford Guide to Writing*. Oxford Univ. Press, 1988)

- "If you want readers to see your point immediately, open with the **topic sentence**. This strategy can be particularly useful in letters of application or in [argumentative](#) writing. . . .

"When specific details lead up to a generalization, putting the topic sentence at the end of the paragraph makes sense. . . .

"Occasionally a paragraph's main idea is so obvious that it does not need to be stated explicitly in a topic sentence."

(Andrea Lunsford, *The St. Martin's Handbook*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008)

- "The **topic sentence** is the most important sentence in your paragraph. Carefully worded and restricted, it helps you generate and control your information. An effective topic sentence also helps readers grasp your main idea quickly. As you draft your paragraphs, pay close attention to the following three guidelines:

1. Make sure you provide a topic sentence. . . .
2. Put your topic sentence first. . . .
3. Be sure your topic sentence is focused. If restricted, a topic sentence discusses only one central idea. A broad or unrestricted topic sentence leads to a shaky, incomplete paragraph for two reasons:

- The paragraph will not contain enough information to support the topic sentence.
- A broad topic sentence will not summarize or forecast specific information in the paragraph."

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<http://www.netplaces.com/grammar/the-final-dress-rehearsal/rereading-revising-and-rewriting.htm>

- How about your introduction — is it clear enough? Does it contain enough information to lead your readers to your main points? Is your conclusion effective? Does it stray from the topic or your thesis statement? One helpful trick is to read your introduction and your conclusion (skipping the parts in between), and ask yourself if both are saying the same thing. If not, you need to revise.
- Look closely at the bulk of your writing.
- ✓ If your piece of writing requires a thesis, do you state it clearly?
- ✓ Do you make sure that each of your supporting points relates to your thesis?
- ✓ Are all of your other sentences focused on your thesis?
- ✓ Have you checked that each sentence relates to the point of the individual paragraph it's in?
- ✓ Have you presented all of your information coherently?
- ✓ Have you given enough examples, facts, or details to support each of your points?
- ✓ If you gave examples in your work, did you explain why each example is significant? Do your examples follow each other in a logical order? Would rearranging them (for example, in chronological or emphatic order) make them clearer or more forceful?
- ✓ Would adding anything strengthen your work?
- ✓ Will your audience be familiar with all the terms you used? If not, you may need to add extra explanatory information.
- Take a look at the organization of your paragraphs.
- ✓ Would your points be more emphatic or clearer if your paragraphs were organized differently?
- ✓ If you moved or eliminated any of them, would your work be easier to understand? If you think a problem may be in the way your material flows, try cutting and pasting paragraphs into different positions.
- Consider the tone you've used throughout the piece.
- ✓ Is it suitable for your audience?
- ✓ Have you gone overboard and ended up presenting your material in a manner that's too personal or too emotional?
- ✓ Have you used any language that's inappropriate either for your audience or the genre of writing?
- ✓ Did you adhere to the formatting or style that was mandated?
- ✓ Did you format your material to use prescribed margin sizes, font style, point size, or spacing requirements?
- ✓ Were you mandated to use a particular style to identify yourself, your class, your department, or your company?
- ✓ Are your pages numbered in the right places? in the right way?
- ✓ If you have included any tables or graphs, have you labeled them well enough that your readers will have no problem interpreting them?

- ✓ Do any of them need information in addition to captions?
- ✓ Have you included a title that communicates the concepts of your paper?
- ✓ If your paper is about a literary work, have you stated the author's first and last names and the title of the work?
- ✓ After you cited the author the first time, have you used only his or her last name in later references?
- ✓ Have you used the citation or documentation methods required for your paper?
- ✓ Have you checked to see that any paraphrasing you included was in fact paraphrasing and not a direct quote?

Particulars to Ponder in the Perusal of Your Piece

Analyze each individual sentence. Have you varied your sentence structure and the length of your sentences? Do many sentences begin in the same way (for example, look for several sentences that start with “The company ...” or “The main character ...”)?

Sentence Structure

Check to see if a number of your sentences are composed in a subject-verb-complement format. If you have too much repetition, vary your sentence structure (create more compound or compound-complex sentences), change your sentence length, or alter the rhythm of your words. Do whatever it takes to keep monotony out of your writing. Finally, look to see if several of your sentences have nearly the same number of words; if so, try combining some of them.

Do you need to put any of your sentences on a diet? Have you over-explained anything? Look for wording that can be more concise. If you can use fewer words and convey the same meaning, by all means do so. Examine each sentence and ask yourself if your wording could be more precise, more vivid, or more explanatory.

Pronouns

Note the types of pronouns you use in your paper. Red flag any first-or second-person pronouns (I, me, we, you, us). Is using them in writing acceptable in your class or workplace? Is it appropriate? While you're looking at pronouns, check to see that you have maintained a consistent point of view with them.

Transitions

Study how you change course in your writing.

- ✓ Have you used transitional words and phrases to your best advantage?
- ✓ Have you used enough transitions so that your work reads smoothly?
- ✓ Do your transitions guide your readers from one thought to the next?

✓ From one paragraph to the next? Have you used them in the correct way?

✓ Do you see any related thoughts or sentences that would become stronger if you inserted a transitional word or phrase?

Voice

Except for certain scientific material, you should write using the active voice whenever possible. If you have a number of sentences that contain be verbs (is, are, was, were, and so on), change the structure of your sentence. For instance, you could change:

The downtown area is enhanced by the new streetlights. (passive voice)

to

The new streetlights enhance the downtown area. (active voice)

Along the same lines, look for sentences that begin with expletives like *it*, *this*, or *there*; these sentences often become more forceful when you reword them. If you've written, for instance:

There are six changes that should be made in the method of production of the widget.

you can make the sentence stronger by changing it to:

Six changes should be made in the production method of the widget.

Word Choice

Can you use any synonyms to make your meaning clearer or to make your work read more smoothly? Don't hesitate to consult a dictionary or thesaurus. (If you're using a word processor, you probably have quick access to a built-in thesaurus.) If you can, substitute synonyms for repeated words or phrases.

Has any slang or jargon crept into your work? Ask yourself if using it is appropriate, and reword as necessary. Also look for any clichés and change them to more original thoughts.

Some instructors (and perhaps some companies) dictate that certain words not be used (generally these are overused words like *great* and *very*). If that applies to you, have you checked through to see if you have deleted those particular words or phrases? The find function on word processing software can show you if any prohibited words or phrases appear in your work, and the thesaurus can help you to find replacements.

Jettisoning Gender-Based Generalities

One hot spot you want to make sure you avoid in your written work is the use of sexist language. If you've mentioned particular jobs by name, for example, make sure your wording isn't

exclusively all-male or all-female. The following list of substitutions might help you to avoid sexist language:

Sexist Term	Substitution
chairman/chairwoman	chair, chairperson, presiding officer
coed	student
congressman/congresswoman	congressional representative, legislator
forefathers	ancestors
foreman	supervisor
layman	layperson, nonspecialist
man/men	person/people, individual(s)
man hours	work hours
mankind	men and women, humankind, the human race, humanity
man-made	synthetic, manufactured
manpower	workforce
one-man show	one-person show
policeman	police officer
saleslady/salesman/saleswoman	sales clerk, salesperson, sales representative

In years gone by, the rule was to use the masculine pronouns he, him, or his to refer to any noun that could be masculine or feminine. (“Every employee must check his voice mail.”) Today that rule is obsolete; the generally accepted rule is to use both the masculine and feminine forms. (“Every employee must check his or her voice mail.”)

Look at these Web sites and try the online exercises about gender-based language:

tinyurl.com/yqf5z7

tinyurl.com/yv7knm

In an effort to avoid sexist language, however, you may find yourself using too many dual constructions (he or she, his or hers, and him or her), which can make your writing boring and cumbersome. To avoid having to use too many of these constructions, you might:

- Change your wording to plural pronouns.

Original: Each supervisor should greet all of his or her employees by name.

Revised: Supervisors should greet all their employees by name.

- Substitute a noun

Original: Tell him to change the sexist language.

Revised: Tell the writer to change the sexist language.

- Alternate using a male and a female pronoun in long constructions where you must use a singular form
- Reword your sentences to use the first or second person (providing this is permitted)

Original: If a driver loses a number of points on his license, he must attend driving school.

Revised: If you lose a number of points on your license, you must attend driving school.

Alternate revised: If we lose a number of points on our license, we must attend driving school.

The Revising Process

After you've checked your paper for all these points, you'll probably need to rewrite parts of it. Jump right in and do it. Then reread the revision section and apply it to your rewritten version. (Remember that warning that more than one revision would be necessary?)

If you're writing on a computer, use a spell checker to catch mistakes you don't see. Remember, though, that a spell checker won't catch words that are spelled correctly but that aren't the words you intended. To get around that problem, you need to use your own eagle eye for checking.

A computer's grammar checker is another story; use it with a grain of salt. If you send your manuscript through a grammar checker, be aware that you may disagree with what the computer tells you — and you may be right. If you're unsure about a grammar question, consult the corresponding section of this book or other grammar handbooks.

- [The Final Dress Rehearsal](#)
- [The Proof Is in the Reading](#)

Definition:

A word or phrase that shows how the meaning of one sentence is related to the meaning of the preceding sentence.

Though important for establishing [cohesion](#) in a text, transitional expressions can be overused as well as used too little.

See also:

- [Coherence](#)
- [Transition](#)
- [Cohesion Strategies: Transitional Words and Phrases](#)
- [Cohesion Exercise: Combining and Connecting Sentences](#)

- Sample Example Paragraphs: [Junk Food Junkie](#) and [Confessions of a Slob](#)

Examples and Observations:

- "*Far to his left*, in the northeast, beyond the valley and the terraced foothills of the Sierra Madre Oriental, the two volcanoes, Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, rose clear and magnificent into the sunset. *Nearer*, perhaps ten miles distant, and on a lower level than the main valley, he made out the village of Tomalín, nestling behind the jungle, from which rose a thin blue scarf of illegal smoke, someone burning wood for carbon. *Before him, on the other side* of the American highway, spread fields and groves, through which meandered a river, and the Alcapancingo road."

(Malcolm Lowry, *Under the Volcano*)

- "Learn to alert the reader as soon as possible to any change in mood from the previous sentence. At least a dozen words will do the job for you: 'but,' 'yet,' 'however,' 'nevertheless,' 'still,' 'instead,' 'thus,' 'therefore,' 'meanwhile,' 'now,' 'later,' 'today,' 'subsequently,' and several more. I can't overstate how much easier it is for readers to process a sentence if you start with 'but' when you're shifting direction. . . .

"Many of us were taught that no sentence should begin with 'but.' If that's what you learned, unlearn it--there's no stronger word at the start."

(William Zinsser, *On Writing Well*, Collins, 2006)

- "Do not be too self-conscious about plugging in **transition** words while you are drafting sentences; overuse of these signals can seem heavy-handed. Usually, you will use transitions quite naturally, just where readers need them."

(Diana Hacker, *The Bedford Handbook*, 2002)

Also Known As: transition, transitional word, signal word

Definition:

The connection (a word, phrase, clause, sentence, or entire paragraph) between two parts of a piece of writing, contributing to [cohesion](#).

Transitional devices include [pronouns](#), [repetition](#), and [transitional expressions](#).

See also:

- [Coherence](#)
- [Cohesion Strategies: Repetition of Key Words and Structures](#)
- [Cohesion Strategies: Transitional Words and Phrases](#)
- [Spacing](#)

Etymology:

From the Latin, "to go across"

Examples and Observations:

- [Transitional Words and Phrases](#)
 "At first a toy, then a mode of transportation for the rich, the automobile was designed as man's mechanical servant. Later it became part of the pattern of living."
- [Repetition](#)
 "The way I write is who I am, or have become, yet *this is a case in which I wish I had instead of words and their rhythms a cutting room, equipped with an Avid, a digital editing system on which I could touch a key and collapse the sequence of time, show you simultaneously all the frames of memory that come to me now, let you pick the takes, the marginally different expressions, the variant readings of the same lines. This is a case in which I need more than words to find the meaning. This is a case in which I need whatever it is I think or believe to be penetrable, if only for myself.*"
 (Joan Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking*, 2006)
- [Pronouns and Repeated Sentence Structures](#)
 "Grief turns out to be a place none of us know until we reach it. *We anticipate (we know)* that someone close to us could die, but *we do not look* beyond the few days or weeks that immediately follow such an imagined death. *We misconstrue* the nature of even those few days or weeks. *We might expect* if the death is sudden to feel shock. *We do not expect* this shock to be oblitative, dislocating to both body and mind. *We might expect* that we will be prostrate, inconsolable, crazy with loss. *We do not expect* to be literally crazy, cool customers who believe that their husband is about to return."
 (Joan Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking*, 2006)

- **Tips on Using Transitions**

"After you have developed your essay into something like its final shape, *you will want to pay careful attention to your **transitions***. Moving from paragraph to paragraph, from idea to idea, you will want to use transitions that are very clear--you should leave no doubt in your reader's mind how you are getting from one idea to another. Yet your transitions should not be hard and monotonous: though your essay will be so well-organized you may easily use such indications of transitions as 'one,' 'two,' 'three' or 'first,' 'second,' and 'third,' such words have the [connotation](#) of the scholarly or [technical](#) article and are usually to be avoided, or at least supplemented or varied, in the formal [composition](#). Use 'one,' 'two,' 'first,' 'second,' if you wish, in certain areas of your essay, but also manage to use [prepositional phrases](#) and [conjunctive adverbs](#) and [subordinate clauses](#) and brief transitional paragraphs to achieve your momentum and continuity. [Clarity](#) and [variety](#) together are what you want."

(Winston Weathers and Otis Winchester, *The New Strategy of Style*. McGraw-Hill, 1978)

- **Space Breaks as Transitions**

"**Transitions** are usually not that interesting. I use space breaks instead, and a lot of them. A space break makes a clean segue whereas some segues you try to write sound convenient, contrived. The white space sets off, underscores, the writing presented, and you have to be sure it deserves to be highlighted this way. If used honestly and not as a gimmick, these spaces can signify the way the mind really works, noting moments and assembling them in such a way that a kind of logic or pattern comes forward, until the accretion of moments forms a whole experience, observation, state of being. The connective tissue of a story is often the white space, which is not empty. There's nothing new here, but what you don't say can be as important as what you do say."

(Amy Hempel, interviewed by Paul Winner. *The Paris Review*, Summer 2003)