

## Paragraph transitions and hooks

When you begin a new paragraph, it is important to show your reader the connections between the paragraph that just ended and the new one you are beginning. A good way to make this *transition* between the paragraphs is to use what are called “transition words” and “paragraph hooks.”

**Transition words:** "first," "second," "next," "another," "in addition," "last," "finally," "most importantly," and so on, show your reader that a new idea or a new part of the idea is coming up in the new paragraph.

While beginning paragraphs with basic transition terms such as "First," "Next," and "Finally" is better than having no transitions at all, it still makes for a fairly bumpy movement from one idea to the next. Your job as the writer is to try to highlight the connections between ideas, between paragraphs, for your reader, making the essay as smooth and unified as it can be. Beginning paragraphs with *paragraph hooks* requires only a little more effort than using the basic transition terms, but it goes a long way toward making a smoother and more coherent essay.

To create a **paragraph hook**, include an important word or idea from the previous paragraph in the first sentence of the next paragraph. The idea of hooks is that the first sentence of the new paragraph will briefly remind the reader (through the use of that keyword) of the topic that has just been covered, while introducing the new idea to be covered in the new paragraph, and showing the connection between the two.

Choose this hook carefully, however. Not just any word will do. It should reflect the topic you want to develop in your second paragraph and should not merely repeat what is said in the paragraph that comes before.

### ***Example 1, from an essay on music:***

One important element of most popular music is the rhythm section. Usually featuring a drummer and a bass player, the rhythm section keeps the beat of the music and makes sure the other band members play together.

In addition to *the rhythm section*, the singers are also extremely important...

(In this example, the phrase "the rhythm section" early in the second paragraph creates the paragraph hook. You also can see the transition words "in addition" at the beginning of the sentence.)

### ***Example 2, from an essay on success in school:***

Every good student knows that doing homework on time is essential to success at school. Failure to complete homework always leads to academic problems. On the other hand, those students who put in the time to finish all homework assignments learn more about the subject while gaining valuable practice that will help them on exams.

Still, *good homework habits* alone are not enough to guarantee success in school. Students also need to pay attention and be actively involved in the classroom...

(In this example, the phrase "good homework habits" early in paragraph 2 creates the hook. It shows the reader that the next topic coming up, paying attention in class, is related to the previous topic, homework.)

**Names:**

**Exercise:** Read through the following four paragraph essay. You will notice that there are no transitions between the paragraphs. **After you read the whole essay, go back and make transitions between the paragraphs.** To do this, look at the first sentences of paragraphs 2, 3, and 4, and either rewrite them or add a whole new sentence before them to create a transition. **Your new sentences at the beginning of paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 should include "hooks" that show the connections between paragraphs.**

### *Challenges for Immigrants*

Anyone who has ever moved from one country to another knows that immigrants face many challenges in their new home. Often the biggest problem is learning a new language. As every immigrant knows, it can take a long time, sometimes many years, for a person to feel comfortable with a second language.

Social customs vary from country to country. Different cultures have different customs that they follow for doing business, talking with others, and even eating.

Education is often difficult at first for new immigrants. School is hard enough in the first place, but it can be more difficult for someone just learning the language. Still, working hard at school is important, because through education, the new immigrant comes to better understand the culture. This helps a person feel more a part of their new country.

Making new friends is never easy, and it can be especially challenging for a new immigrant. Still, this is an important step toward feeling at home in a new country. Usually when people make new friends, they find life in their new country a lot more enjoyable.

**Paragraph #2:**

**Paragraph #3:**

**Paragraph #4:**