Transitions

Transitions are a necessary part of writing. You need to connect your ideas to one another so readers can follow your train of thought. Remember, readers are not in your brain and don't understand why you went from talking about transitions to talking about why cats are so awesome. A great technique to try if you don't know how to connect your ideas is *Something Old, Something New*.

Something Old, Something New

This technique is an excellent way to not only help create transitions between paragraphs, but also a great tool to help create transitions between sentences and to help get a paper going if you're stuck.

Something Old, Something New is exactly how it sounds. You take an idea from a previous sentence and add onto it a new idea to create a new sentence. Writers often use this technique without realizing they are doing it.

Example:

Instead of:

My dog used to bite me all the time. Now I take him on a lot of walks.

These statements are sort of confusing. Why would you reward your dog   with a walk if he is biting you? Why would you want to spend more time with your dog if he is biting you?

You might want to try:

My dog used to bite me all the time. My vet told me my dog might be biting because he wasn't getting enough exercise. Now I take him on a lot of walks.

Now it is clear why you are taking your dog on walks. Notice how the second sentence contains some of the same words as the first sentence ("my dog," "biting"). The writer took something old from the first sentence, the idea that the dog was biting, and added new information to it, that the dog needed more exercise. The concluding sentence makes more sense now.

In the example above it may have seemed obvious that some information was missing. However, when you are writing, it is easy to forget that someone else will be reading what you are writing and don't know what you were thinking as you committed your thoughts to paper. It happens to everyone, so make sure that all of your sentences work together and that your reader will understand the point you are trying to get across without question.

Paragraph Transitions:

This technique is especially useful between paragraphs. If you have a paragraph about apples, and a paragraph about oranges…how do you connect them?

Paragraph about apples … Last sentence: <u>Since apples are such a hardy fruit, it is easy to grow anywhere, which makes it more accessible for everyday use</u>.

First sentence: <u>Oranges make great juice</u>. Paragraph about oranges …

Take something old from the last sentence of the apple paragraph:
Easy to grow, hardiness, everyday use
      Choose something that could easily be talked about with the new subject.

And add your new information:
Oranges make great juice.

Final product:
Oranges, however, are not as <u>hardy</u> as apples, which is unfortunate because oranges make great juice that many people want to drink <u>everyday</u>.

Next to each other, the two sentences would look like this:

… Since apples are such a <u>hardy fruit</u>, it is easy to grow anywhere, which makes it more accessible for <u>everyday use</u>.
      Oranges, however, <u>are not as hardy as apples</u>, which is unfortunate because oranges make great juice that <u>many people want to drink everyday</u>. …

You could continue talking about oranges with ease and wouldn't necessarily need to include anything else about apples if you wanted to. You could also add something about oranges to your last sentence about apples and leave apples out of the first sentence of the oranges paragraph.

Comparing the apples and oranges in that topic sentence for the orange paragraph makes it clearer to your reader why you are discussing the two fruits in the same paper and helps their mind adjust to the new point you are trying to make.

Transitional sentences don't need to be a comparison, but they do need to include more than just a transitional word. **Instead of thinking of using transitional words, try to think of using transitional concepts**.

NOT: Therefore, cats are awesome.

TRY: Therefore, since cats like to eat birds for dinner, they are awesome.