

## PLOT SUMMARY

Many writers struggle with resisting the temptation to incorporate too much plot summary. The objective of your paper is to defend your claim; not to paraphrase the work. However, some plot summary is necessary. The writer must keep in mind what the audience of the essay already knows. To avoid using excessive plot summary, make topic sentences that are not statements of the plot but claim some subtopic of your thesis. This coherent flow will make writing the paper easier and will clearly guide your reader. See transition paragraphs for developing concise topic sentences.

## TRANSITIONS WITHIN A PARAGRAPH

A **transitional paragraph** connects one section of the essay to another. At their simplest, transitional paragraphs can be single sentences that move readers from one point to the next. More often, writers use transitional paragraphs to present concise summaries of what they have already said before they move on to a new point.<sup>1</sup>

The transition should be the first sentence of your paragraph. Every paragraph should include a transition. This transition will make the paper flow and will provide the reader with a simple reminder of the previous paragraph while introducing the subject of the following paragraph.

Here are some examples of transitional sentences from one coherent paper:<sup>2</sup>

Thesis statement: Therefore, verbal expression, in particular writing and speaking, empowers Douglass, allowing him freedom over the system of slavery and to find his true identity as an abolitionist leader.

1. As Douglass progresses in the narration of his *Narrative*, he becomes more aware of his identity as the subject of it, resulting in his growth as an abolitionist leader.
2. Not only does speech aid in Douglass gaining identification as an abolitionist leader but so does his achievement in learning to write, demonstrating that he is a leader of himself.
3. Douglass becomes proactive in the abolitionist movement, demonstrating his leadership identity, by teaching slaves at the Sabbath school.
4. After successfully learning to write, Douglass finally escapes to the North but does not fully disregard his identity as a slave until he speaks to a white audience, completely identifying himself as an abolitionist leader.

---

<sup>1</sup> Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell. *The Wadsworth Handbook*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. United States: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Arnoldussen, Amie. "The Importance of Writing and Speaking: Frederick Douglass' Transition from Slave to Abolitionist Leader in the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*." Unpublished work. 2008.

**Note** that each transition at the beginning of the four paragraphs correlates to the thesis. The four sentences present one aspect that aids in the fulfillment of the thesis statement. These sentences should never appear at the end of a paragraph. Each paragraph must have ONE idea that it presents.

Use such words to transition between paragraphs:

**1. For continuing a common line of reasoning:**

consequently  
clearly, then  
furthermore  
additionally  
and  
in addition  
moreover

because  
besides that  
in the same way  
following this further  
also  
pursuing this further  
in the light of the... it is easy to see that

**2. To change the line of reasoning (contrast):**

however  
on the other hand  
but

yet  
nevertheless  
on the contrary

**3. For opening a paragraph initially or for general use:**

admittedly  
assuredly  
certainly  
granted  
no doubt  
nobody denies  
obviously  
of course

to be sure  
true  
undoubtedly  
unquestionably  
generally speaking  
in general  
at this level  
in this situation

**4. For the final points of a paragraph or essay:**

finally  
lastly

**5. Transitional chains, to use in separating sections of a paragraph that is arranged chronologically:**

first... second... third...  
generally... furthermore... finally  
in the first place... also... lastly  
in the first place... pursuing this further...  
finally

to be sure... additionally... lastly  
in the first place... just in the same way...  
finally  
basically... similarly... as well

**6. To signal conclusion:**

therefore  
this  
hence  
in final analysis

in conclusion  
in final consideration  
indeed

**7. To restate a point within a paragraph in another way or in a more exacting way:**

in other words  
point in fact  
specifically

**8. Sequence or time**

after  
afterwards  
as soon as  
at first  
at last  
before  
before long  
finally  
first... second... third  
in the first place  
in the meantime  
later  
meanwhile  
next  
soon  
then

## **Exercise: Writing Cohesive Topic Sentences**

Directions: Read the introduction and identify the thesis statement. Within the thesis statement locate the subtopics the paper will discuss. Then, using the subtopics in the thesis, create one transition sentence for each subtopic that will start the paragraphs. REMEMBER, make each new transition correlate to the point in the thesis and flow from the previous transitional sentences.

Introduction: Many students claim that pizza is the perfect snack for any time of the day. However, these students fail to realize that while pizza is a perfect snack, it also becomes the perfect dinner. If students do not rethink the value of pizza, then students will forever miss out on the incredible taste pizza can have as a dinner option. Therefore, pizza transitions from students' perfect snack to their perfect dinner because one does not eat as large of a quantity as one would if eating it for a snack, chooses different toppings for the pizza at different meals, and eats it at a consistent dinner time.

1. Paragraph One:

2. Paragraph Two:

3. Paragraph Three: