

Essay Tools & Tips

I. Transition Words and Phrases

Oftentimes, one of the hardest parts about writing essays is the transitions. Good writing has seamless transitions that cause your paper to naturally flow. Try using some of these in your paper and avoid using the same transition repetitively:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moreover • As well as • Whereas • However • Overall • Together with • Comparatively • Correspondingly • Similarly • Additionally • Furthermore • Likewise • Therefore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henceforth • Consequently • In light of • Nevertheless • Regardless • Although • Notwithstanding • In contrast • On the other hand • Even so • Equally important • Then again • In reality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granted that • Seeing that • To put it differently • To illustrate • In other words • Notably • To clarify • To explain • To emphasize • All things considered • Given these points • Generally speaking • All in all |
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* This is not an exhaustible list. For more, simply Google: “Transition words and phrases.”

II. Strong, Power Words

Good academic writing utilizes elevated vernacular. By this I mean that it doesn't use the same speech that occurs in casual conversations; rather, it uses stronger, more complex words to elevate your paper from casual to academic. Here are just a few words that are often found in strong writing:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juxtaposition • Myriad • Asserts • Egregious • Erroneous • Attributes • Engenders • Employs • Advantageous • Crafts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orchestrates • Substantiates • Profound • Astute • Observed • Remarked • Commented • Proclaimed • Invoke • Evoke | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elicits • Summons • Cultivates • Manifests • Maximizes • Fosters • Permeates • Solidifies • Articulate • Distinguish |
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* Make sure you understand the definition before you use a word! Thesauruses are great, but sometimes the suggested words are not completely interchangeable.

* **Tip:** Many people, when introducing or commenting on a quote, stick to the same old “he says” or “she said”. Try varying between alternatives such as “commented” or “remarks” like above. This will keep your language fresh and not repetitive.

III. Pronouns

Always avoid personal pronouns (I, my, you, your, us, we, etc.) in your academic essays! Keep it third person. Try using these instead:

- They
- Their
- She
- Them
- It
- One
- Each
- Someone
- Everybody
- That
- His
- Hers

III. Miscellaneous Tips

- **Plan Ahead!** Even though this may sound like a waste of time, especially during busy weeks or exams, planning ahead really does benefit your paper. Before you just start typing, take some time to make a plan or outline- organizing and structuring your paper to maximize topic sentences and flow. Don't pick the first supporting ideas that come to your mind, but make a list and then choose the strongest.
- **Thesis, Thesis, Thesis!** Everything in your entire paper should relate back to your thesis. If you cannot make a case for the connection, you either need to rewrite that section or ditch it entirely. Alternatively, sometimes the problem is a weak thesis. Make sure your thesis is concise and direct, but also just broad enough to allow a conversation within your paper.
- **Aim for Variety!** Sentences and vocabulary of varying complexity are one of the best ways to ensure effective writing. When you are writing, try to avoid using the same words and phrases over and over again. You don't have to be a walking thesaurus, but a little variance can convey the same idea in a brighter way.
- **Set a Timer!** Do you have writer's block? One of the best practices is to just set a timer and type until it dings. Start small (around 5 minutes), but don't stop until it's over. Don't worry about editing or not sounding smart – just try to get all your thoughts on the paper. This really helps to break the tension and to at least get started. After the time stops, you'll have at least something to work off of and a place to move forward.
- **Take a Break!** After you get a draft (complete or not complete) take a break from your writing. This may be hard if you're crunched for time, so plan ahead! I guarantee that once you come back to your paper refreshed, you will be able to spot errors and come up with better ideas than if you were to have tiredly pushed through the night before.
- **See a Tutor!** Our writing tutors do not require a complete draft. You can see any of our tutors from the beginning of the writing process to the end. They are happy to help you craft a thesis, work on structure, or edit the final draft. A second pair of eyes never hurts!