

Go With the Flow – Adding Transitions

Webinar, November 2009
ECS 3167
Critical Writing / Critical Thinking

Why?

Writing without Transitions

Sometimes FIFRA action might be unusually complex. Factors such as the geographic area or number of species affected by the action might complicate the action. A special provision (§ 402.47) allows EPA to address the effects of the action through successive effects determinations. Determinations should address groups or categories of species or habitats as established by EPA. EPA must confer with the Service. This provision is needed. Some species and habitats may be affected by the pesticide. For some widely-used pesticides, delaying the initiation of consultation until adequate information is available for every species or habitat may result in denying some of the most vulnerable species the benefits of the section 7 consultation process for as much as several years.

What? Definition of Transitions

Transitions include words and phrases that express logical connections and thus move the reader smoothly from one idea to another.

A + B = C

Practice!

My best friend has MS. Most days she seems pretty normal. I went to see her last weekend. She couldn't get out of bed.

Possible Revision

My best friend has MS, *and although* most days she seems pretty normal, *when* I went to see her last weekend, she couldn't get out of bed.

When?

??? A B C ???

!!! A + B = C !!!

How?

- ❖ Transitional Expressions
- ❖ Conjunctions
- ❖ Relative Pronouns
- ❖ Adverbs

(For Starters)

Transitional Expressions

Single words & short phrases:

- Indeed
- For example
- Clearly
- As previously discussed

Commas?

- 1) to set off parenthetical expressions
- 2) to create emphasis
- 3) to avoid confusion

Easy to add, hard to mess up, because they do not change the structure of the sentence.

Practice!

Sexual harassment is not just an issue for women. Men can be sexually harassed too.

Add a transitional expression.

Conjunctions

F	A	N	D	O	Y	S
For	And	Nor	But	Or	Yet	So

Commas?

when joining:

- a list of three or more items
- independent clauses

Practice!

The word status refers to relative position within a group. It is often used to indicate only positions of prestige.

Add a conjunction.

Relative Pronouns

- ❖ Who
- ❖ Whom
- ❖ Whose
- ❖ Which
- ❖ That

Commas?

see Restrictive / Non-Restrictive section in Grammar & Mechanics

See Problems, Below

Practice!

The word status refers to relative position within a group. It is often used to indicate only positions of prestige.

Add a relative pronoun.

Adverbs

Subjunctive:

- Although
- Because
- Since

Commas?

- 1) introductory phrase
- 2) see restrictive / non-restrictive rules

Conjunctive:

- However
- Therefore
- Moreover

Yes, always, and a semicolon when separating independent clauses.

Join us in December for more practice with these concepts!

Practice!

The word status refers to relative position within a group. It is often used to indicate only positions of prestige.

Add an adverb.

Possible Revisions

Conjunction:

The word status refers to relative position within a group **but** it is often used to indicate only positions of prestige.

Relative Pronoun:

The word status refers to relative position within a group **that** is often used to indicate only positions of prestige.

Adverb:

The word status refers to relative position within a group **however**, it is often used to indicate only positions of prestige.

To Summarize

Conjunctions, relative pronouns, and adverbs can join ideas in more complicated ways than transitional expressions alone, but because they change the structure of the sentence, they can cause some problems.

Problems with Transitions: Imprecise Use of Relative Pronouns

We want to hire someone **that** has had experience programming.

People are not "that"

We want to hire someone **who** has had experience programming.

Problems with Transitions: Unclear or Incorrect Pronoun- Antecedent Agreement

Definitions:

Pronoun – a word that refers a noun

Antecedent – the noun to which a pronoun refers

Rule:

Pronouns must clearly refer to the most recent noun, and must agree in number and gender.

Problems with Transitions: Unclear or Incorrect Pronoun- Antecedent Agreement

The word status refers to relative position within a group **that** is often used to indicate only positions of prestige.

The antecedent is “group”

Relative position within a group is referred to as **status, which** is often used to indicate only positions of prestige.

Problems with Transitions: Unclear or Incorrect Pronoun- Antecedent Agreement

Or, create a **summative modifier**:

The word status refers to relative position within a group, **an idea** that is often used to indicate only positions of prestige.

Summative Modifiers

Summative modifiers take a big idea, condense it into a few words, then continue with more information about it.

Practice!

Economic changes have reduced Russian population growth to less than zero, which will have serious social implications.

Replace “which” with a more precise word or phrase.

Possible Revision

Economic changes have reduced Russian population growth to less than zero, **a demographic event** that will have serious social implications.

Practice!

Due to these complications, a special provision allows EPA to address the effects of the action through successive effects determinations, which address groups or categories of species or habitats as established by the EPA.

Replace "which" with a more precise word or phrase.

Possible Revision

Due to these complications, a special provision allows EPA to address the effects of the action through successive effects determinations, **a series of decisions** that address groups or categories of species or habitats as established by the EPA.

Problems with Transitions: Subjunctive Adverbs Can Result in Sentence Fragments

We should not consider this as a revision to the regulation. Although it does make a big difference.

[Link to previous sentence.](#)

Problems with Transitions: Faulty Logic

Basil is omnipresent in the cuisine of some countries. Italians use basil in salads, soups, and many vegetable dishes.

Problems with Transitions: Faulty Logic

Basil is omnipresent in the cuisine of some countries. **For example**, Italians use basil in salads, soups, and many vegetable dishes.

Problems with Transitions: Faulty Logic

The culinary uses of basil are well known. This herb also has medicinal uses.

Problems with Transitions: Faulty Logic

The culinary uses of basil are well known, **because** this herb also has medicinal uses.

The culinary uses of basil are well known; **consequently**, this herb also has medicinal uses.

The culinary uses of basil are well known; **furthermore**, this herb also has medicinal uses.

The culinary uses of basil are well known **although** this herb also has medicinal uses.

Problems with Transitions: Faulty Logic

The culinary uses of basil are well known, **because** this herb also has medicinal uses.

C: medicinal uses → E: culinary uses

The culinary uses of basil are well known; **consequently**, this herb also has medicinal uses.

C: culinary uses → E: medicinal uses

Problems with Transitions: Misplaced Emphasis

Although the culinary uses of basil are well known, **this herb also has medicinal uses.**

The culinary uses of basil are well known, although this herb also has medicinal uses.

Join us in December for more practice with these concepts!

To Summarize:

When adding transitions, watch for and correct the following possible problems.

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Solution</u>
Unclear or incorrect pronoun-antecedent agreement	Specify Rearrange Summative
Subjunctive adverbs causing sentence fragments.	Modifier Link to previous sentence.
Faulty Logic	Consider your context

Transitions, One Final Word

Grace

Using Transitions to Develop Logical Relationships

The Indian, in the character of Tonto, was more positively portrayed in *The Lone Ranger*, but such a portrayal was more the exception than the norm. Tonto was never accorded the same stature as the man with the white horse and silver bullets.

The Indian, in the character of Tonto, was more positively portrayed in *The Lone Ranger*, but such a portrayal was more the exception than the norm. **Despite this brief glimpse of an Indian as an iron legal-sidkick,** Tonto was never accorded the same stature as the man with the white horse and silver bullets.

Practice!

This provision is needed. Some species and habitats may be affected by the pesticide.

Resumptive Modifiers

It was American writers who found a voice that was both true and lyrical.

It was American writers who found a voice that was both **true** and **lyrical**, **true** to the rhythms of the working man's speech and **lyrical** in its celebration of his labor.

Practice!

The Service has long been aware of contamination in the water supply from both toxic chemicals and natural sources.

Transition Created by Repetition of a Single Word

Never is the most powerful word in the English language, or perhaps any language. It's magic. Every time I have made an emphatic pronouncement invoking the word never, whatever follows that I don't want to happen happens. Never has made a fool of me many times.

Transition Created by Repetition of a Single Word

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Transition Created by Repetition of Sentence Structure

It was not the only disappointment my mother felt in me. In the years that followed, I failed her so many times, each time asserting my own will, my right to fall short of expectations. I didn't get straight As. I didn't become class president. I didn't get into Stanford. I dropped out of college.

Transition Created by Repetition of Sentence Structure

It was not the only disappointment my mother felt in me. In the years that followed, I failed her so many times, each time asserting my own will, my right to fall short of expectations. **I didn't** get straight As. **I didn't** become class president. **I didn't** get into Stanford. I dropped out of college.

Transitions, One Final Word

Grace

- ❖ Develop logical implications
- ❖ Create resumptive modifiers
- ❖ Repeat key words or structures

Practice!

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