

# BODY PARAGRAPHS

- The basic building blocks of your essay
- There is no universal formula for how your paragraphs should look—no two should really be exactly the same
- However, there are ideas to keep in mind for how to organize the body paragraph to ensure it effectively makes/supports your argument

# TOPIC SENTENCES

- Topic sentences should lay out *what you are going to prove* in the paragraph
- It should transition or build from what has come before in order to lead into this new part of the argument
- Paragraphs are organized around coherent topics, so each paragraph should have it's own topic sentence that lays out what is being proven
- If a paragraph gets too long, over a page, then break it at a transition point—the transition will function as a topic sentence
- Multiple paragraphs can work together to support the same idea or part of your argument; it all depends on how long they are and how you choose to organize them

# TOPIC SENTENCES

- Although mainly concerned with political economy, Marxism can easily be applied to literature and the arts.
- (end of previous paragraph) While Henry James did not set out to write a piece of fiction that examined the relationship between social classes and the exploitation and alienation that occurs, his books still represents the structure of the late Victorian, turn of the century society that he was a part of.
- (beginning of next paragraph) The society that James came from was engaged in the spread of capitalism throughout the world through colonialism and imperialism; therefore, his novel contains representatives of the capitalist class and also the working class.

# SUPPORTING YOUR POINTS

- After the topic sentence, you must set out to prove what you say you are going to prove
- Integrate evidence:
  - Contextualize, blend, explain & analyze your evidence
- Key points:
  - your evidence should not come from nowhere, set it up
  - You should use enough evidence to fully prove your point
  - Your quotations cannot speak for themselves: ***You must state HOW the quotation PROVES your thesis correct***



# SUPPORTING YOUR POINTS

In the article “The one group we abandoned during the hurricanes” Van Jones correctly claims that the national government continues to fail at appropriately caring for inmates in federal facilities during hurricanes. Texas and Florida have recently been devastated by hurricanes Irma and Harvey. Hundreds of thousands of people and animals were evacuated and sent to safety, but the United States government failed in relocating and/or caring for federal inmates. While state and private institutions were evacuated, federal inmates suffered “as water rose above their ankles and the smell of sewage from backed-up toilets grew” (Jones). Inmates were forbidden from trying to escape from these horrid conditions and “were told they would be shot if they tried to escape a flooding building” (Jones). The desertion of these incarcerated men and women is not only immoral but “it is cruel to abandon human beings to face conditions that no American would allow a horse or a dog to suffer” (Jones). Cruel and unusual punishment goes directly against the constitution, and the federal government has repeatedly failed at upholding these basic rights of American citizens throughout these past hurricanes. Failure at caring for our own people (even if they are criminals) during catastrophic events such as hurricanes is unacceptable and must be stopped.



# TRANSITIONS

EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED TO EVERYTHING!

# WHY TALK ABOUT TRANSITIONS?

- EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED TO EVERYTHING!
- Good writing is tied together, has what we call “flow”
- Bad writing is disjointed and filled with false starts, awkward stops, and a mish-mash of ideas and sentences that don’t look connected
- Transitions are what keep your writing “flowing”
- They tie it all together, connect your ideas, and help craft an effective argument

# WHY TALK ABOUT TRANSITIONS WITH BODY PARAGRAPHS?

- You must be transitioning not only between body paragraphs, but also within your paragraphs to build to each individual piece of evidence



## EXAMPLES OF TRANSITIONS:

- **Cause and effects**: accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, hence, so, then, therefore, thus
- **Comparisons**: also, in the same way, like, likewise, similarly
- **Changes in direction or exceptions**: although, but, even though, however, in contrast, instead, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the contrary, on the one hand . . . On the other hand, still, yet
- **Examples**: for example, for instance, indeed, in fact, such as
- **Sequences or similarities**: again, also, and, and then, besides, finally, furthermore, last, moreover, next, too
- **Time relations**: after, as soon as, at first, at the same time, before, eventually, finally, immediately, later, meanwhile, next, simultaneously, so far, soon, then, thereafter
- **Summary or conclusion**: as a result, as we have seen, finally, in a word, in any event, in brief, in conclusion (never use), in other words, in short, in the final analysis, on the whole, therefore, thus, to summarize

# HOWEVER, (SEE THAT TRANSITION!)

- You don't want to overuse these transitional words/phrases
- You don't want to continue to use the same ones
- Try thinking about sentence structure to transition between ideas and paragraphs
- Use complex and compound sentences so you aren't always depending on the same words or phrases
- That way all your transitions don't sound the same
- Also, you don't always have to use transition words – you can also just connect the ideas



# SEE THE DIFFERENCE?

Bad transitions



Good transitions



# YOU ALSO DON'T WANT TO REPEAT YOURSELF WHEN TRANSITIONING

## First paragraph

- However, Guggenheim starts to show how great teachers are later in the film.

## Second paragraph

- Later in the film, Guggenheim shows how great teachers are.



LAME!



## EXAMPLES:

FROM NFG: EMILY NUSSBAUM, *IN DEFENSE OF LIZ LEMON*

- Aaron Sorkin's accidentally hilarious *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip* was a drama (or really, a temper tantrum) about two male comedy writers portrayed as heroic geniuses.
- In contrast, *30 Rock* was a brilliant comedy about a stupid comedy, a feminist sitcom about a woman whose feminism was endlessly lampooned.

## EXAMPLE 2:

FROM NFG, SAM ANDERSON, *JUST ONE MORE GAME . . . : ANGRY BIRDS, FARMVILLE, AND OTHER HYPERADDICTIVE STUPID GAMES*

- Today we are living, for better and worse, in a world of stupid games.
- Game-studies scholars (there are such things) like to point out that games tend to reflect the societies in which they are created and played.

## EXAMPLE 3:

FROM: LOSS OF CLASS PRIVILEGE IN VOYAGE IN THE DARK: FINDING A VOICE AMONG THE SUBALTERN

- The British society Hester represents makes her feel boxed in and controlled, and she would rather be free like she imagines Francine to be. However, Francine's freedom rests purely in her young imagination.
- While Francine does, in fact, behave differently and appear to be free of the strict moral codes of behavior that Hester represents, she is still a slave working on Anna's family estate.