Transitions

Tertiary

Protein function[1]: The paper effectively and efficiently communicates the central message.

Secondary

Protein folds[2]: The paragraphs provide the correct information in the correct order, forming informational links between appropriate transitions.

Primary

The relationships between the paragraphs form a logical order (i.e., a complete polypeptide chain).

Amino Acid

Every paragraph has the same three components. However, the topic (AA properties) determines the placement and contribution to the structure and function.

[1]Image: By Pleiotrope - Own work, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=15989620
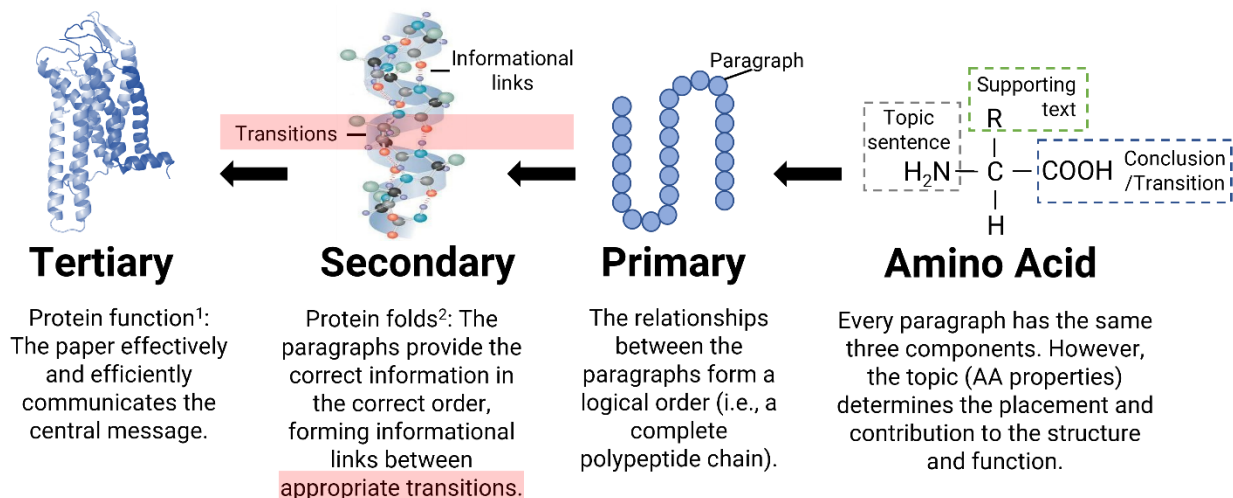[2]Image: Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=533202

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Transitions:

- Signal relationships between topics, sub-topics, etc.
- Occur between sections and topics, between paragraphs and sub-topics, and within paragraphs.
- Can be words, phrases, sentences, or even paragraphs.
- Are a brief summary or reference to previously discussed information followed by a description of a relationship that helps readers anticipate what will come next.
- Cannot replace good organization and structure but enhance and clarify it.
- Ensure that readers understand the relationship(s) between topics and sub-topics by preventing mistaken inferences.

Transition Types and Functions

- **Familiarity** – Use a reader's existing knowledge as a bridge to what they don't yet know.
- **Causation** – Focus on cause and effect by connecting an action with its outcome.
- **Chronology** – Use an order of events to relate multiple items together. E.g., a regulatory pathway.
- **Lists** – Use the inclusion of a topic's placement in a collection to relate between it and others in the collection.
- **Part/Whole** – Focus on how discrete topics combine or interact to create a whole. E.g., distinct protein domains.
- **Contrast** – Focus on the differences between two topics.
- **Example** – Focus on how a particular instance connects to a general idea.
- **Importance** – Use the order of importance (e.g., most to least) or scope (e.g., big to small). Be explicit and consistent in the directionality.
- **Location** – Use physical positions to relate topics to one another. E.g., in relation to a cell: extracellular, cytoplasm, nucleus.
- **Similarities** – Focus on how concepts or topics are related to each other, or how you hypothesize that they are related.

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Transitions

Tips for Writing Transitions

- Be judicious using transitional words and phrases; overuse is tedious for readers.
- Single words don't work well to transition between paragraphs as additional context is required to be effective.
- Be specific with transitions; don't use/reuse general transition language.
- Use topic and conclusion sentences to build transitions between paragraphs.
- Place transitions at the end of one paragraph, the beginning of a paragraph, or both, but avoid repetition.
- Consider transition types (e.g., lists, chronology) to organize information during the outline stage of writing.
- Transitions are not mutually exclusive.

When to Focus on Transitions

Feedback:
- Includes comments like "choppy", "abrupt", or "doesn't flow".
- Indicates that readers had difficulty understanding how topics are organized and/or related, e.g., "how is this related?"

The manuscript was written:
- Using the freewriting (if your brain tends to jump between topics) or outline methods.
- As stand-alone pieces that need to be merged into a single, cohesive paper.
- By multiple authors.

Relevant sources:

- [Examples of common transition words and phrases](#)
- [Transitions – The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#)
- [Connecting Ideas Through Transitions – The Writing Center – UW–Madison](#)

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