



## Making Connections: Using Transitional Phrases and Repeated Words

Have you ever had the experience of writing something that you thought was as clear as could be but discovered, in fact, gaps of logic and meaning? Does your writing seem choppy and disconnected? Consider this example about the effects of air pollution, adapted from *The Longman Reader: Rhetoric and Reader* (Fifth Edition):

Trees die and allow sunlight to reach forest floors. The soil loses absorbency and becomes hard. This causes rain and snow to slide over the ground instead of sinking into it. This leads to erosion of the soil.

Now compare this version, with the changes italicized:

*As a result of air pollution*, trees die and allow sunlight to reach forest floors. *Thus*, the soil loses absorbency and becomes hard. *Moreover*, the *hard soil* causes rain and snow to slide over the ground instead of sinking into it. This, *finally*, leads to erosion of the soil.

This latter version seems much more connected than the earlier one—in large part because key phrases have been strategically placed to bring out the logical connections.

To do the same for your writing, I offer the following suggestions, again adapted from the *Longman Reader*:

1. Use words and phrases that allow readers to move easily from one idea to another. Such words or phrases are called “transitions” and can suggest a range of meaning from similarities to differences. Here’s a useful, if partial list:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Space</b>	<b>Addition</b>	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Contrast</b>
First	Above	Moreover	Similarly	But
Next	Below	Also	Likewise	However
During	Next to	Furthermore	Too	In contrast
Finally	Behind	In addition		On the one hand/ on the other hand

2. Repeat words to establish connections between sentences. While unintentional repetition can hinder communication, purposeful repetition of words and phrases can actually promote good continuity in your writing (note the effect of adding the words “hard” and “soil” above).