

Organization Transitions

Transitions connect ideas in writing and show readers why different points make sense together. Without these connections, readers may feel the paper jumps from idea to idea without moving toward a main point or conclusion. Transitions are a simple way to make your paper easier to understand.

TRANSITIONS BETWEEN PHRASES

Transitions should be used whenever you change ideas in a paper. Adding transitions between phrases or sentences can explain how ideas are connected and help the paper flow smoothly.

TRANSITIONS SHOW THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDEAS

Transitions guide readers through your paper and show them why you put two ideas next to each other. Never assume readers already understand how your ideas connect. Also, make sure each transition fits the specific situation. A badly selected transition may confuse, rather than help, readers.

CONFUSING: Nobody inquired about the money found outside. **Moreover**, it was given to charity.
(The word *moreover* indicates that one action happened in addition to the other.)

HELPFUL: Nobody inquired about the money found outside, **so** it was given to charity.
(The word *so* indicates that one action happened as a result of the other.)

TRANSITION WORDS

Sometimes transitions can be as short as one word. If two sentences sound choppy and disconnected, adding a one-word transition often makes them easier to read.

BEFORE: Henry didn't understand his homework. His dad helped him.

AFTER: **Since** Henry didn't understand his homework, his dad helped him.
Henry didn't understand his homework, **so** his dad helped him.

TRANSITIONS BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS

In addition to transitions that connect sentences, using transitions between paragraphs helps your reader understand how they are related to each other. Without such transitions, readers may not understand how ideas build on each other to prove your main point. Using transitions between each of your paragraphs will help readers follow your argument more easily.

OLD/NEW CONSTRUCTION

Since the ideas in your paragraphs are longer than the ideas in your sentences, the transitions between paragraphs will often consist of several words. A good way to create a transition between paragraphs is to use **old and new construction**. While creating the new topic sentence, mention the main idea of the previous paragraph plus the new paragraph's idea. For example, if you were writing a paper about health, you might transition from a paragraph about exercise to one about diet by emphasizing that both are essential for a healthy lifestyle:

EXAMPLE: . . . Thus, establishing a daily exercise routine is essential for maintaining good health.
In addition to exercise, a well-balanced diet is **essential** to good health. Any well-balanced diet should include. . .

In this example, placing the phrase *in addition to* at the beginning of the second paragraph prepares the reader for a change in ideas or a transition from the old idea to a new one. The use of the word *essential* with *exercise* and *diet* emphasizes the similarity between the two topics. This comparison connects exercise and diet and shows they are both important for health.

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COMMON TRANSITIONS

The following charts list some common transitions used to indicate relationships between ideas:

ADDITION	CONTRAST	CONCESSION
Additionally Also As well as Besides Furthermore In addition Likewise Moreover Not only Similarly	Although But Despite However In contrast Instead On the contrary On the other hand Unlike Yet	Admittedly Certainly Clearly Evidently Granted Naturally Obviously Of course Undeniably Understandably

CAUSE AND EFFECT	EXAMPLES	CONCLUSIONS
As a result Because Consequently Since So Therefore	For example For instance In particular Specifically Such as To illustrate	Finally Generally In brief In conclusion In summary On the whole

TIME AND ORDER	
After At once Before During First . . . second . . . third First . . . next . . . then If . . . then . . . In the meantime Meanwhile	Often Presently Shortly Soon after Still Temporarily Until When While

NOTE: TRANSITIONS DO NOT FIX BAD ORGANIZATION

All papers need transitions, but your paper may not be perfect just because you've used transitions. If sentences or paragraphs do not make sense in the order you have them, transitions won't help much. If you have a hard time finding the connection between two ideas, check to see if there is a better place to put one of the ideas. If you cannot find a good place anywhere, check to see if that idea supports your thesis or main idea. If it does not, think about taking it out of your paper or changing it so that it supports your thesis and relates to your other ideas.

F-16 pilot was ready to give her life on Sept. 11

By Steve Hendrix

Late in the morning of the Tuesday that changed everything, Lt. Heather "Lucky" Penney was on a runway at Andrews Air Force Base and ready to fly. She had her hand on the throttle of an F-16 and she had her orders: Bring down United Airlines Flight 93. The day's fourth hijacked airliner seemed to be hurtling toward Washington. Penney, one of the first two combat pilots in the air that morning, was told to stop it.

The one thing she didn't have as she roared into the crystalline sky was live ammunition. Or missiles. Or anything at all to throw at a hostile aircraft.

Except her own plane. So that was the plan.

Because the surprise attacks were unfolding, in that innocent age, faster than they could arm war planes, Penney and her commanding officer went up to fly their jets straight into a Boeing 757.

"We wouldn't be shooting it down. We'd be ramming the aircraft," Penney recalls of her charge that day. "I would essentially be a kamikaze pilot."

For years, Penney, one of the first generation of female combat pilots in the country, gave no interviews about her experiences on Sept. 11 (which included, eventually, escorting Air Force One back into Washington's suddenly highly restricted airspace).

But 10 years later, she is reflecting on one of the lesser-told tales of that endlessly examined morning: how the first counterpunch the U.S. military prepared to throw at the attackers was effectively a suicide mission.

"We had to protect the airspace any way we could," she said last week in her office at Lockheed Martin, where she is a director in the F-35 program.

Penney, now a major but still a petite blonde with a Colgate grin, is no longer a combat flier. She flew two tours in Iraq and she serves as a part-time National Guard pilot, mostly hauling VIPs around in a military Gulfstream. She takes the stick of her own vintage 1941 Taylorcraft tail-dragger whenever she can.

But none of her thousands of hours in the air quite compare with the urgent rush of launching on what was supposed to be a one-way flight to a midair collision.

She was a rookie in the autumn of 2001, the first female F-16 pilot they'd ever had at the 121st Fighter Squadron of the D.C. Air National Guard. She had grown up smelling jet fuel. Her father flew jets in Vietnam and still races them. Penney got her pilot's licence when she was a literature major at Purdue. She planned to be a teacher. But during a graduate program in American studies, Congress



Lt. Heather "Lucky" Penney

opened up combat aviation to women and Penney was nearly first in line.

"I signed up immediately," she says. "I wanted to be a fighter pilot like my dad."

On that Tuesday, they had just finished two weeks of air combat training in Nevada. They were sitting around a briefing table when someone looked in to say a plane had hit the World Trade Center in New York. When it happened once, they assumed it was some yahoo in a Cessna. When it happened again, they knew it was war.

But the surprise was complete. In the monumental confusion of those first hours, it was impossible to get clear orders. Nothing was ready. The jets were still equipped with dummy bullets from the training mission.

As remarkable as it seems now, there were no armed aircraft standing by and no system in place to scramble them over Washington. Before that morning, all eyes were looking outward, still scanning the old Cold War threat paths for planes and missiles coming over the polar ice cap.

"There was no perceived threat at the time, especially one coming from the homeland like that," says Col. George Degnon, vice commander of the 113th Wing at Andrews. "It was a little bit of a helpless feeling, but we did everything humanly possible to get the aircraft armed and in the air. It was amazing to see people react."

Things are different today, -Degnon says. At least two "hot-cocked" planes are ready at all times, their pilots never more than yards from the cockpit.

A third plane hit the Pentagon, and almost at once came word that a fourth plane could be on the way, maybe more. The jets would be armed within an hour, but somebody had to fly now, weapons or no weapons.

"Lucky, you're coming with me," barked Col. Marc Sasseville.

They were gearing up in the pre-flight life-support area when Sasseville, struggling into his flight suit, met her eye.

"I'm going to go for the cockpit," Sasseville said.

She replied without hesitating.

"I'll take the tail."

It was a plan. And a pact.

Penney had never scrambled a jet before. Normally the pre-flight is a half-hour or so of methodical checks. She automatically started going down the list.

"Lucky, what are you doing? Get your butt up there and let's go!" Sasseville shouted.

She climbed in, rushed to power up the engines, screamed for her ground crew to pull the chocks. The crew chief still had his headphones plugged into the fuselage as she nudged the throttle forward. He ran along pulling safety pins

from the jet as it moved forward.

She muttered a fighter pilot's prayer — "God, don't let me [expletive] up" — and followed Sasseville into the sky.

They screamed over the smoldering Pentagon, heading northwest at more than 400 mph, flying low and scanning the clear horizon. Her commander had time to think about the best place to hit the enemy.

"We don't train to bring down airliners," said Sasseville, now stationed at the Pentagon. "If you just hit the engine, it could still glide and you could guide it to a target. My thought was the cockpit or the wing."

He also thought about his ejection seat. Would there be an instant just before impact?

"I was hoping to do both at the same time," he says. "It probably wasn't going to work, but that's what I was hoping."

Penney worried about missing the target if she tried to bail out.

"If you eject and your jet soars through without impact . . ." she trails off, the thought of failing more dreadful than the

thought of dying.

But she didn't have to die. She didn't have to knock down an airliner full of kids and salesmen and girlfriends. They did that themselves.

It would be hours before Penney and Sasseville learned that United 93 had already gone down in Pennsylvania, an insurrection by hostages willing to do just what the two Guard pilots had been willing to do: Anything. And everything.

"The real heroes are the passengers on Flight 93 who were willing to sacrifice themselves," Penney says. "I was just an accidental witness to history."

She and Sasseville flew the rest of the day, clearing the airspace, escorting the president, looking down onto a city that would soon be sending them to war.

She's a single mom of two girls now. She still loves to fly. And she still thinks often of that extraordinary ride down the runway a decade ago.

"I genuinely believed that was going to be the last time I took off," she says. "If we did it right, this would be it."