

Transition: From one paragraph to the next

An ideal topic sentence for the second body paragraph is one which connects the preceding paragraph with the new paragraph. This sentence briefly mentions the topic of the preceding paragraph, and then the topic of the new paragraph. Below is a topic sentence from an essay on people who influenced the writer's life. The first paragraph discussed the person's influence on the writer's character. How about this for a topic sentence for the second discussion paragraph?

“While my mother was a powerful influence on my character, my high school teacher was very influential in the development of my mind.”

Be careful, though, to present the elements in the correct order. The element from the preceding paragraph should come first, and the element of the new paragraph should come second. One student wrote this topic sentence:

TV makes children impatient as well as less imaginative in their lives.

The reader expected that the paragraph would discuss both “impatience” and “less imaginative.” However, the paragraph did not discuss “less imaginative.” Actually, the preceding paragraph discussed decrease in imagination, and this sentence was the writer's attempt to link the two paragraphs. The reader was confused because of the sentence's structure and the cohesion device that the writer used. Note the structure and the cohesion device in this sentence:

In addition to making children less imaginative, TV also makes children impatient.