Physics 280
Week 13 Writing Lab

1. **[Copyediting] Transitions -- what do they do?**

- **help the reader to move forward and motivate the reader to keep reading**
  There should be no mystery or suspense in this kind of non-fiction writing -- the reader's motivation is to know/learn. Satisfy it early, directly, and often.

- **actively process information (ideas, claims, points) for the reader**
  The better you process information <u>for</u> the reader, the clearer your communication will be and the more likely that he or she will see things as you do, or at least understand your point of view.

- **create a sense of cohesiveness / flow for the reader**
  Cohesion helps the reader to understand how the fragments of information shared on the page are logically related to one another and, as a result, to organize that information into a mental scheme (framework).

- **can be used to emphasize and enrich the writer's themes**
  With experience, writers gain mastery of both what they are communicating and how they are communicating it. Themes are the ideas about a topic that may be expressed directly or indirectly as you discuss it (such as through the kinds of examples used to illustrate the topic).

Transitioning Between Sections or Paragraphs

Don't use headings/subheadings as a substitute for written-out transitions. They aren't as full integrated into the discussion and so don't make logical connections as explicit.

Do use section and paragraph transitions as bridges. They support readers in following a train of thought not only from one topic to the next, but also to what is being said about that topic and how that perspective is being expressed.

Point Statements Concept, Part I (Review)
Last week, we learned about point statements at the global level of a document. The point statement answered the reader's implicit *So what?* question about the thesis, now established, and came at the end of the paper, as the conclusion.

Point Statements Concept, Part II
Sections and paragraphs within a document also have point statements.

Point Statements Technique
Within sections and paragraphs, point statements can appear (1) after the section or paragraph's introduction or (2) at its end. A section or paragraph's point statement is shorter than the one at the conclusion of a document -- in a paragraph, a point statement is often written as a partial or single sentence.

Transitioning Between Sections or Paragraphs, Continued

Point Statements Technique, Continued

The topic and point, especially when combined, provide good content for a transition to the next topic.

ex. 1, point after paragraph intro. **A thoroughgoing survey of US public opinion about war in East Asia produced some reassuring results** [**topic sentence**]. Most Americans do not want the United States to launch a preventive war against North Korea. **But our survey also showed that a large hawkish minority lurks within the US public** [**point statement -- answers implicit *So what?***]; over a third of respondents approve of a US preventive strike across scenarios. For many of these hawks, support for an attack, even in a preventive war, does not significantly decrease when the story says that the United States would use nuclear weapons that are expected to kill 1 million North Korean civilians.

ex. 2, point at end of paragraph. **A thoroughgoing survey of US public opinion about war in East Asia produced some reassuring results** [**topic sentence**]. Most Americans do not want the United States to launch a preventive war against North Korea. But over a third of respondents approve of a US preventive strike across scenarios. For many of these hawks, support for an attack, even in a preventive war, does not significantly decrease when the story says that the United States would use nuclear weapons that are expected to kill 1 million North Korean civilians. **A large hawkish minority lurks within the US public** [**point statement -- answers implicit *So what?***]

Alteration from source:
7/2/19 *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*

Transitions Within Paragraphs (i.e., Between Sentences)

Transitions between sentences can be implicit or explicit.

When implicit, a transition between two sentences depends on "stringing" topics -- that is, repeating the topic that occurred at either the beginning or the ending of the preceding sentence.

> ex. Generally <u>interceptors</u> must be based far from the intercept point and fly to almost their maximum range. <u>They</u> [interceptors] must intercept the ICBM at the last possible moment. [topic string 1]

> ex. Generally interceptors must be based far from the intercept point and fly to almost their maximum <u>range</u>. <u>Their range</u> depends on regional geography. [topic string 2]

In complex sentences with multiple clauses, topic stringing occurs between clauses as well as between sentences.

Transitions Within Paragraphs, continued

When explicit, a transition between two sentences depends on a word or phrase that connects the sentences' topics by signalling a particular kind of logical relationship.

- **To add:** and, again, and then, besides, equally important, finally, further, furthermore, nor, too, next, lastly, what's more, moreover, in addition, first (second, etc.)
- **To compare:** whereas, but, yet, on the other hand, however, nevertheless, on the contrary, by comparison, where, compared to, although, conversely, meanwhile, in contrast, although this may be true
- **To prove:** because, for, since, for the same reason, obviously, evidently, furthermore, moreover, besides, indeed, in fact, in addition, in any case, that is
- **To show time or sequence:** immediately, thereafter, soon, finally, then, later, previously, formerly, first (second, etc.), next, and then
- **To give an example:** for example, for instance, in this case, in another case, on this occasion, in this situation, take the case of, to demonstrate, to illustrate, as an illustration
- **To summarize or conclude:** in brief, on the whole, summing up, to conclude, in conclusion, as I have shown, as I have said, hence, therefore, accordingly, thus, as a result, consequently, on the whole
- **To emphasize:** definitely, obviously, in fact, indeed, absolutely, positively, naturally, surprisingly, always, forever, unquestionably, without a doubt, certainly, undeniably
- **To repeat:** in brief, as I have said, as I have noted, as has been noted

Source: Purdue OWL

2. [Proofreading] Mechanics Review

Common Issues in Physics 280 Work this Term

- Comma Rules

- Run-On Sentences

- Em Dashes

- Verb Tense Consistency

- Subject-Verb Agreement

4 Key Comma Rules *(actual number of comma rules: 12+)*

1a. To separate a series of words or phrases. Default to the "Oxford" comma (i.e., including a concluding comma between items in a series).

ex. Nuclear-security analysts are concerned about the further proliferation of nuclear weapons, limited-scale nuclear conflict, nuclear terrorism, the safeguarding of nuclear materials, and the challenge of sustaining high-quality nuclear forces under "hair-trigger" alert.

1b. If a series item has internal commas (for any reason), then each main item in the series in separated by semi-colons instead.

ex. Nuclear-security analysts are concerned about mass-scale nuclear conflict, which could lead to mass loss of life and irradiate the planet; limited-scale nuclear conflict, which could lead to nuclear winter; and nuclear terrorism, which could lead to significant loss of life and contamination.

"comma" from the ancient Greek "komma": literally "piece which is cut off,"
originally used in metalwork and, later, rhetoric

4 Key Comma Rules, continued

2. To set off introductory words/phrases or clauses and or parenthetical elements.

ex., introductory. In addition to their concern over a world-ending nuclear war, nuclear-security analysts worry about the further proliferation of nuclear weapons, limited-scale nuclear conflict, nuclear terrorism, the safeguarding of nuclear materials, and the challenge of sustaining high-quality nuclear forces under "hair-trigger" alert.

ex., parenthetical. Terrorists target civilians, deliberately and violently, for political purposes.

3. To separate coordinating adjectives.

ex. Guerilla warfare is carried out by small groups in ambushes and raids against a larger, formal, less mobile **army.**

4. To connect two independent clauses (i.e., clauses that can stand as complete sentences on their own), when used with a coordinating conjunction (n.b. subordinating conjunctions can be used to connect an independent with a dependent clause).

ex. In state-sponsored terrorism, a state sponsors terrorist acts against the inhabitants of another country, and the targeted country may respond with military force.

Run-on Sentences
Run-ons contain more than one complete thought. Formally, run-ons join two independent clauses improperly.

ex. run-on sentence, with independent clauses underlined:

In state-sponsored terrorism, <u>a state sponsors terrorist acts against the inhabitants of another country</u> and <u>the targeted country may respond with military force</u>.

Why are run-on sentences a problem? They can confuse readers by "running" ideas together, as they organize thoughts by association rather than by logically separating and explicitly connecting them. Fused sentences (a run-on without the coordinating conjunction) are a more extreme example of this type of sentence-boundary problem.

<u>3 Fixes</u>

1. Add a comma and a coordinating conjunction between the independent clauses.
2. Add a semi-colon between the independent clauses.
3. Separate the independent clauses into two sentences.

Run-On Sentences, continued

The choice for writers has to do with style. Each solution below is equally correct.

Fix 1

In state-sponsored terrorism, a state sponsors terrorist acts against the inhabitants of another country**,** **and** the targeted country may respond with military force.

Fix 2

In state-sponsored terrorism, a state sponsors terrorist acts against the inhabitants of another country**;** the targeted country may respond with military force.

Fix 3

In state-sponsored terrorism, a state sponsors terrorist acts against the inhabitants of another country**.** The targeted country may respond with military force.

Em Dashes

Some editors consider em dashes to be an informal punctuation mark. When allowed, em dashes provide a versatile punctuation option used mainly to express stylistic choices.

<p align="center">em dash: —   vs.   en dash: –   vs. hyphen: -</p>

Em dashes (long) are used to (1) set off parenthetical information (in place of parentheses or commas), (2) set off appositives (i.e., more info about a noun/pronoun) that include commas, (3) bring focus to a list (in place of a colon), or (4) make a sharp turn in thought. [keyboard shortcut: alt-0151]

> **ex. India would take several days to deploy its small number of nuclear weapons—its nuclear weapons, as far as we know, are not deployed on missiles or among active military units.** (turn of thought)

> **ex. India would take several days to deploy its small number of nuclear weapons; its nuclear weapons—as far as we know—are not deployed on missiles or among active military units.** (parenthetical)

En dashes (medium) are used to (1) indicate number ranges and (2) act as a "super-hyphen" for compound modifiers. [keyboard shortcut: alt-0150]

Hyphens (short) are used (1) to create some compound nouns, (2) to join two or more words acting as a single adjective before a noun (but not after), (3) to express compound numbers, and (4) with certain prefixes (e.g., "self," "pre"), (5) with some prefixes to avoid confusion (e.g., "re-sign" vs. "resign").

Verb Tense Consistency

Verb tenses express when the things happen in time in relation to one another.

Some disciplines expect writers to report research in the past tense, while others expect them to report research in the present tense. Use the convention in your field and genre.

(1) Once you have chosen a tense, use it consistently. If you shift tense, be conscious of the shift and make sure that it makes sense **in context**.

(2) As a rule, avoid changing tense within the same clause. However, you can use more than one tense in a single sentence if you have more than one clause and each clause is describing an action that happened at a different type.

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ex. of a verb tense error. **In the 1980s, concerns over North Korea's nuclear weapons program grew when US intelligence satellites reportedly photograph construction of a research reactor and the beginnings of a reprocessing facility at Yongbyon.** (different tenses in different clauses, but the actions both happened in the past and in coordination with one another)

Subject-Verb Agreement Basics
Subjects and verbs should agree in number.

Proofreading Technique
When a phrase comes between a subject and its verb, trace back to the subject to make sure they agree in number. The verb agrees with the subject in number and not with any noun in the intervening phrase. (e.g., **An interceptor's** <u>ability</u> **to reach an ICBM, which can have two different propellants,** <u>depends</u> **in part on its target's type of fuel.**)

Use a plural verb when the subject is
- A plural noun (e.g., <u>Strategic missiles are</u> extensions of either artillery, when ballistic, or manned aircraft, when cruise.)
- Made up of two nouns joined by "and" (e.g., The <u>U.S. and North Korea are</u> not allies currently.)
- Made up of two nouns, one singular and one plural, joined by "or" or "nor" and the plural noun is closest to the verb (e.g., Interceptor range or global and regional <u>geographies determine</u> whether an ICMB can be reached in time.)

Use a singular verb when the subject is
- A singular noun
- Made up of two singular nouns joined by "or" or "nor" (e.g., Neither the president nor the premier is willing to compromise.)
- Made up of two nouns, one singular and one plural, joined by "or" or "nor" and the singular noun is closest to the verb (e.g., Global and regional geographies or interceptor <u>range determines</u> whether an ICMB can be reached in time.)
- A collective noun (i.e., Seems plural in form but conventionally takes a singular verb, such as, "The committee has made a decision.")
- Use a singular verb with the subject is or contains "each," "either," "neither," "everyone," "everybody," "anybody," "anyone," "nobody," "somebody," "someone," and "no one"