

THE FOUR T'S OF W131

Title – Thesis – Topic Sentences – Transitions

Keeping it Real: Paragraphs are Exactly like Bricks

Well, maybe not *exactly*. But say you took a pile of bricks and stacked them on top of each other. Would the stack be likely to stay standing for very long? No, because nothing is holding the bricks together. Bricks need **mortar** – a kind of cement – to hold them together and keep them from falling apart. Think of paragraphs in an essay as bricks stacked on top of each other: paragraphs also need mortar to hold them together, and the Four T's of an essay – the **TITLE**, **THESIS**, **TOPIC STATEMENTS**, and **TRANSITIONS** – are that mortar.



All For One and One For All!

Like the Three Musketeers, The Four T's *always* work together within an essay. The **TITLE** should announce the essay's topic fairly specifically ("Essay 1" isn't really specific enough, in other words). A title is a name, so try to name your topic. And if you can make it catchy and memorable, the title will be that much more effective ("Globalization: Technology Shrinks the World,"¹ for example, is more specific and thus more effective).



The **THESIS STATEMENT** comes at the very end of the Introduction, and it should relate to the **TITLE** in a clear way (Example: "Developments in transportation technology allow goods to be shipped around the world more rapidly; developments in communication technology allow information and ideas to be shared almost instantaneously, and together these form the driving force behind globalization.")

TOPIC SENTENCES do two things: they tell the reader what the topic of the paragraph will be, and – more importantly – they make a **claim** related to the **THESIS STATEMENT**. Topic sentences should always be your own words (there is rarely good reason to quote in a topic sentence). When properly used, topic sentences will keep your essay *focused* on the thesis statement and will link your paragraphs together. ("Communication technologies, such as the laptop computers, the internet, and cell phones, are an important force behind globalization.")



At the end of a body paragraph, it's important to give your reader some indication of what's going to come in the next one. To make a smooth **TRANSITION** between paragraphs, include a line or two at the end of each paragraph that sets the stage for your next point. These can be somewhat tricky: one strategy is to spend some time during the revision process focusing on topic sentences and making sure that each one is logically connected to the end of the previous paragraph. ("In this way, transportation technologies make the movement of goods and people much easier to accomplish, thus propelling global warming forward. / On the other hand, this type of transportation possible is only possible because of communication technologies – such as laptops, the internet, and cell phones – which are an even more important aspect of globalization." Finally, try to make the mortar a smooth and integrated part of the essay itself: these are the bridges that will carry your reader through your ideas and arguments, so make them clear and easy to follow.



¹ Title and examples adapted from Austin's Essay 1.

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Now let's have a look at the Four T's in their natural habitat, the academic essay:

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Prof. Bookman
W131
26 January 2009

[TITLE:] **Globalization: Technology Shrinks the World**

Background and context background and context. [...]

Background and context background background and context background and context background and context background and context. [THESIS STATEMENT:] **Developments in transportation technology allow goods to be shipped around the world more rapidly, and developments in communication technology allow information and ideas to be shared almost instantaneously; together, these forces make it easier for goods and information to move quickly around the world. Transportation and communication drive the process of globalization.**

[TOPIC SENTENCE:] **Because globalization is often defined in terms of the worldwide movement of people and products, it is essential to understand recent developments in transportation technology.**

Transition transition transition transition transition transition transition transition transition transition. Introduction of evidence intro of evidence, "quote about transportation technology" (CITATION). Warrant/explanation in terms of thesis. Warrant/explanation in terms of thesis. [Optional: further evidence...] [TRANSITION:] **In this way, transportation technologies make the movement of goods and people much easier to accomplish, thus propelling global warming forward.**

[TOPIC SENTENCE:] **On the other hand, this type of transportation possible is only possible because of communication technologies – such as laptops, the internet, and cell phones – which are an even more important aspect of globalization..** Transition transition transition transition transition transition transition transition transition transition. Introduction of evidence intro of evidence, "quote about communication technology quote quote quote" (CITATION). Warrant/explanation in terms of thesis. Warrant/explanation in terms of thesis. Warrant/explanation in terms of thesis. Warrant/ explanation in terms of thesis... [TRANSITION]

And so on.