

# From Sentence Paragraph

A WRITING WORKBOOK IN  
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Robert G. Bander

# FROM SENTENCE TO PARAGRAPH

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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HOLT, RINEHART AND WINSTON  
New York Chicago San Francisco  
Atlanta Dallas Montreal Toronto

**Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data**

**Bander, Robert G.**

From sentence to paragraph.

Includes index.

1. English language — Text-books for foreigners.
2. English language — Rhetoric. I. Title.

PE1128.B298 808'.042 79-2558

**ISBN 0-03-045641-X**

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Printed in the United States of America

0 1 2 3 090 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

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# PREFACE

*From Sentence to Paragraph* explains English paragraph building in simple terms to lift students to the competency level and beyond in writing. It is a compact book that gives the opportunity for giant-step progress to students who may have come to think of themselves as nonwriters.

Teachers of writing know that perhaps the biggest hurdle of all is bringing their students to the stage of mastering the English paragraph. Vocabulary words can be studied and learned. Grammatical rules can be memorized. Sentences — simple at first, more complex in time — can be formed with practice.

But paragraph control is a subtle concept in any language. In English, it is rooted in unique Anglo-American cultural thought processes; it is developed and refined through extensive exposure to reading. For these reasons, students from cultures other than English-speaking cultures will find the nature of the English paragraph alien. *From Sentence to Paragraph* provides ESL students with a criterion-referenced approach to expressing themselves effectively in English paragraphs.

Many native English-speaking students also find paragraph writing difficult. Those native students whose reading experience has been slight have difficulty understanding when paragraphs begin and end and how they are developed. This text will allow such students to develop their untapped writing skills.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part — *Focus on Sentences* — first introduces students to transitions, those helpers toward smoothly flowing sentences and paragraphs. Then, study of subordination and parallelism draws students beyond their habitual dependence

on simple and compound sentence forms. Part 2 — *Focus on Paragraphs* — deals with the four basic principles of paragraph development: the topic sentence, the controlling idea, unity, and coherence. *Four Pre-Writing Steps*, a short introductory section to Part 2, trains students in the key preliminary skills of choosing a topic, narrowing a topic, outlining a paragraph, and forming a topic sentence.

Major features of the book are the three evaluation instruments it contains. First, each chapter provides students with a *Test Yourself* exercise for self-evaluation. Answers to this activity are printed several pages after the exercise. By using this self-test halfway through a chapter, students can realistically pinpoint what they have learned and what they have failed to learn. Doing this allows them to review material early in the chapter before going on to the end-of-the-chapter activities.

Second, each chapter concludes with four to fourteen activities. Answers to these are printed at the end of the book. Since the pages are perforated, instructors who prefer students not to have access to the answers to activities can remove the *Answers to the Activities* pages at the end of the text before books are given out. Perforated pages also allow an instructor to collect assignment pages one at a time, while students retain their books for study and completion of further activities.

Pre- and post-tests are a third evaluation device. To measure overall progress, a Paragraph Writing Pre-Test comes at the beginning of Part 2 and a Paragraph Writing Post-Test comes at the end of Part 2. In addition, a pre-test before and a post-test after each chapter allow both instructor and students to chart learning in small steps from the start to the close of a course.

A four-part appendix contains a glossary of terms used in this book, a list of additional composition topics, forms for writing business letters, and a section of phrasal verbs.

Materials for all of the activities in *From Sentence to Paragraph* cover many areas of interest to students — physics, forestry, languages, rock music, history, mountaineering, economics, automobiles, chemistry, colleges and universities, contact lenses, airplanes, peer relationships. And the lively cartoons that open each chapter express in visual terms the writing concept that the chapter will focus on.

For their assistance in developing this text, I would like to thank Jack Calderon, East Los Angeles College; John F. Clark, University of Wisconsin at Madison; Ann Gier, Roosevelt University; Lyle Johnson, Santa Ana College; Carolyn Duffy, St. Michael's College; Ellen Hoekstra, Henry Ford Community College; Celia Merrill, University of Texas at Austin; Ely J. Marquez, Southern Illinois U.

R.G.B.

Palo Alto, California  
January 1980

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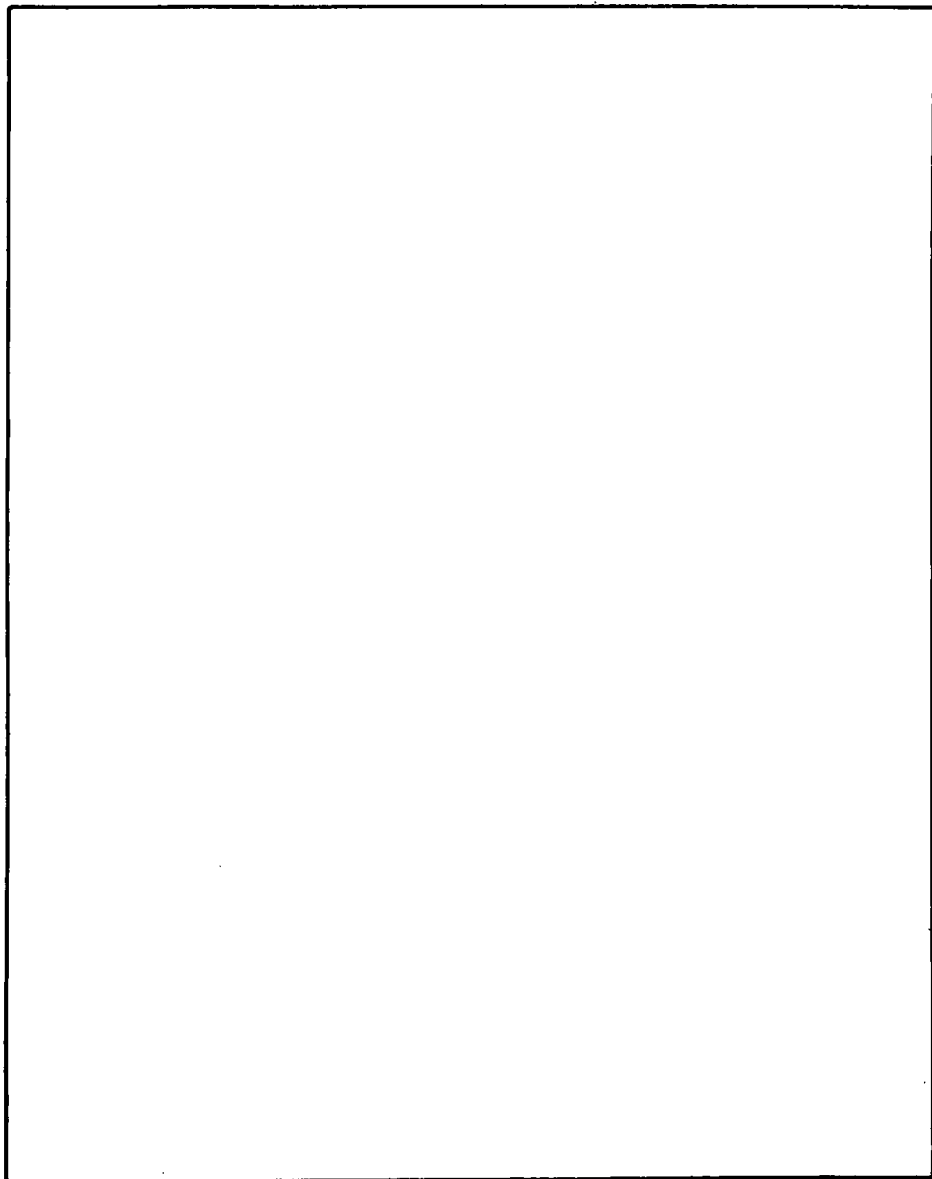
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# **part 1**

## **FOCUS ON SENTENCES**







# INTRODUCTION: BEFORE YOU WRITE — THINK LIKE A READER



It is 1942. World War II has started. The British learn that Hitler is ready to invade England. Prime Minister Winston Churchill quickly calls a meeting of the British War Ministry.

At the time for the meeting, the ministers sit around a large table at 10 Downing Street. Suddenly the door opens. Prime Minister Churchill walks in, his face serious. Churchill stands at the head of the table. He raises his right hand in the Nazi salute. He says, "Gentlemen, I am Adolf Hitler. You are the members of the German War Council. Today we shall make final plans to invade England."

Churchill's plan worked. He wanted his statesmen to think like Germans. For the entire meeting, the statesmen thought like Germans. And in the end, the Germans did not defeat the English. Maybe thinking like Hitler helped Churchill beat Hitler.

Writers of English will also succeed better if they think like someone else. Writers need to think like their readers. By doing this, they can make their writing easier to read.

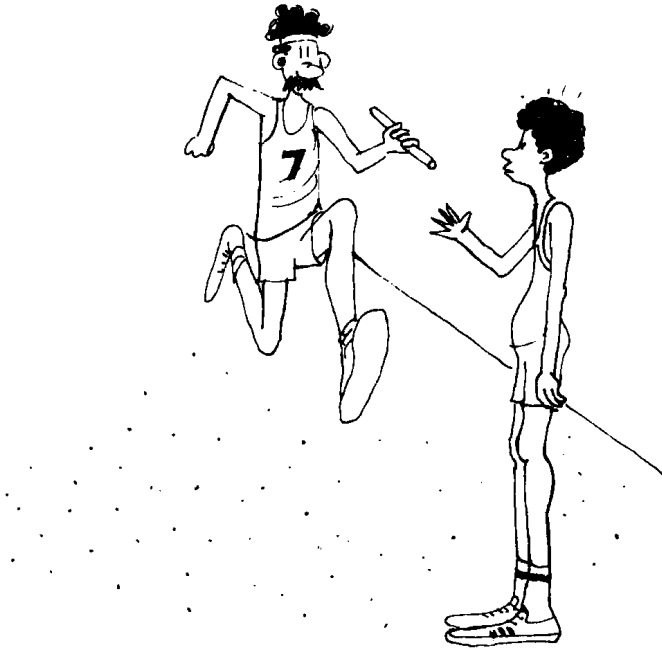
## 4 Introduction: Before You Write — Think Like a Reader

*From Sentence to Paragraph* will make your paragraphs easier to read by first introducing you in Part 1 to three helpful aids to *sentence* building: transitions, subordination, and parallelism. Though these may sound like big words, the ideas behind them will make your writing in English reach your reader. Then in Part 2, you will meet four *paragraph* helpers: the topic sentence, the controlling idea, unity, and coherence.

Moving from sentence-building skills in Part 1 to paragraph-building skills in Part 2, you will learn to write in a clear, well-organized way. When you have reached the end of the course, you will be communicating in written English.

Your ability to build paragraphs is the key that will open the door to a whole new world of writing competency.

# 1 Transitions



*When a runner in a relay race passes his wand to another team member, his team keeps moving ahead. When a writer uses transitions, he keeps his ideas moving ahead.*

---

## TRANSITIONS PRE-TEST

Complete the paragraph by choosing transitions to fill in the blanks. Write the transitions on the appropriate lines below the paragraph. The first one is done for you.

Vilma likes traveling by bus better than traveling by airplane for four reasons. \_\_\_\_\_ (1) \_\_\_\_\_ it costs less. She can ride by bus from New York to

Chicago for \$20. \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_, the air fare between the two cities is \$78.

\_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_, traveling by bus gives her a closer look at the cities and

countryside than she could get from a plane. \_\_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_\_, she

enjoys driving through the big cities of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Fort

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Wayne. \_\_\_\_\_ (5) \_\_\_\_\_, Vilma finds that the passengers on the bus are  
(Third, Now, Indeed,) often closer to her own age. \_\_\_\_\_ (6) \_\_\_\_\_, they are easy  
(Similarly, Instead, After all, So,) to talk with on the shared travel adventure. \_\_\_\_\_ (7) \_\_\_\_\_,  
(In contrast, Finally, Otherwise,) many airline passengers are businessmen who keep busy with  
their work while flying. \_\_\_\_\_ (8) \_\_\_\_\_, riding a  
(Therefore, Fourth, Accordingly,) bus allows Vilma to explore any stop along the way.  
(9) \_\_\_\_\_, once she got off the bus at a  
(On the other hand, Moreover, For instance,) small town in Indiana and spent the night with a girl friend. \_\_\_\_\_ (10) \_\_\_\_\_,  
(So, Then, Yet,) the next day she took another bus to Chicago.  
(11) \_\_\_\_\_, Vilma usually prefers buses instead of  
(For these reasons, At last, Now,) planes unless she has to get somewhere in a hurry.

- 1. First, \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. \_\_\_\_\_

**Transitions** are words that join one idea to another idea. Transitions add coherence to writing by joining ideas together.

Transitions add coherence in two important ways. First, transitions help *within a paragraph*. Transitions placed in sentences within a paragraph make it easier for a reader to follow the movement of an idea from one sentence to the next sentence. Second, transitions help *between paragraphs*. A transition that appears at the beginning of a paragraph carries

forward the idea that was talked about in the paragraph immediately preceding.

Here is an example of transitions **within a paragraph**:

To many foreigners, the American word *family* is confusing. Foreigners often hear an American say "My family is coming to visit." In **this** sentence, *family* means grandparents and perhaps other relatives. **However**, at other times, the same American might say, "I'm going to stay home with my family this weekend." In **this case**, he is talking about his wife and children. **This** is a much narrower meaning than the first **one**. Using *family* in **this** way makes a foreigner wonder which term *really* describes an American family. The answer, **of course**, is that there are two meanings for the word *family* in the United States — a narrow **one** and a broad **one**. And there is another term — *immediate family* — to describe something in between.

Note that there are two kinds of transitions in this paragraph. Such transitions as "however," "in this case," and "of course" are transitional words and phrases. But the pronouns "this" and "one" also act as transitions.

Now look at an example of transition **between paragraphs**:

When an American today says "my family is coming to visit," he or she is using *family* in the broad sense to include cousins, uncles, grandparents, or any other relatives who do not live with him or her. That is, this person is using *family* the way it was used one hundred and fifty years ago when the majority of Americans were farmers. In that earlier time, of course, three or more generations lived under one roof — grandparents, their children, their children's spouses, and their children's children.

**But** *family* is a very vague word. It can, mean for example, the speaker's parents, who do not live with him or her. Or it can mean uncles and aunts, nieces and nephews, first and second cousins, or even in-laws. As a result, the expression *immediate family* has come into use. It means something between the narrowest use of *family* and the broadest one: usually the grandparents, their children, and their children's children.

In this example, the transition "but" signals a change from talking about the *traditional* meaning of *family* in the first paragraph to talking about the *broad* meaning of *family* in the second paragraph. When the reader finds "but" beginning the second paragraph, the reader is prepared for the shift in the direction of thought that is coming.

The example paragraphs show transitions used at the beginning of a

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sentence, in the middle of a sentence, and at the end of a sentence. But not all transitions can appear in all three places. Many transitions are used only at the beginning or the middle of sentences. The placement of transitions often depends on the rhythm of a sentence or a paragraph.

Punctuating transitions may also confuse you. Rules do not help you here. A writer best learns about the position of transitions and their punctuation by practice. Study the examples in the sentences that follow.

You begin to learn about transitions by seeing how they are used in sentences. To help you organize your learning, let us divide them into ten groups. Each group is used for a different reason: (1) to explain; (2) to emphasize; (3) to qualify; (4) to illustrate; (5) to add; (6) to compare; (7) to contrast; (8) to concede; (9) to state a consequence; (10) to sum up.

### TRANSITIONS THAT EXPLAIN

*now, in addition, for, in this case, furthermore, in fact*

1. **Now**, follow the directions carefully.
2. **In addition**, there are fifteen churches in the city.
3. **For** the president did not want to sign the bill.
4. The problem, **in this case**, is hard to solve.
5. **Furthermore**, several people telephoned the same night.
6. The meeting went on for six hours, **in fact**.

### TRANSITIONS THAT EMPHASIZE

*certainly, indeed, above all, surely, most important*

1. **Certainly** the vacation was fun.
2. **Indeed**, a dessert is always enjoyable.
3. **Above all**, do not build an open fire in a forest.
4. **Surely** you agree that she won the debate.
5. **Most important**, the form has to be mailed by June 1.

### TRANSITIONS THAT QUALIFY

*but, however, although, though, yet, except for*

1. **But** the clerk refused to answer.
2. The letter came two days too late, **however**.

3. We hoped, **though**, that she would change her mind.
4. **Yet** there was still a chance that he would win.
5. **Except for** one girl, all the hikers returned.

#### TRANSITIONS THAT ILLUSTRATE

*for example, for instance, thus, such, next*

1. That experiment, **for example**, was a total failure.
2. **For instance**, a telegram often costs more than a telephone call.
3. **Thus** the trip finally began.
4. **Such** an earthquake happened last year in China.
5. **Next**, think of the courses you want to take.

#### TRANSITIONS THAT ADD

*in addition; furthermore; also; moreover; first, second, third, etc.; then*

1. **In addition**; the tour stops in Vancouver.
2. **Furthermore**, the time for registration has been extended.
3. She **also** asked for a recent magazine.
4. They expected, **moreover**, to remodel their house.
5. **First**, you mail in an application. **Second**, you ask for an appointment. **Third**, you send them three personal references.
6. **Then** you come to a traffic light and turn right.

#### TRANSITIONS THAT COMPARE

*like, in the same way, similarly, equally important, too*

1. **Like** the owl, the fox hunts at night.
2. **In the same way**, we look for a good doctor.



3. **Similarly**, the Thais enjoy spicy foods.
4. **Equally important**, the car drives thirty miles on a gallon of gas.

# TRANSITIONS THAT CONTRAST

*unlike, in contrast, whereas, on the other hand, instead*

1. **Unlike** the Porsche, the Cadillac is a large car.
2. **In contrast**, the red fluid does not lose its color.
3. The husband wanted a boy, **whereas** the wife wanted a girl.
4. **On the other hand**, a student needs time to relax.
5. **Instead**, the new law caused many problems.

# TRANSITIONS THAT CONCEDE

*although, nevertheless, of course, after all, clearly, still, yet*

1. **Although** she ran after the train, it left without her.
2. He planned, **nevertheless**, to ask for a promotion.
3. It may rain tomorrow, **of course**.
4. **After all**, you learn to cook many foods in this job.
5. **Clearly**, a garden needs a lot of attention.
6. **Still**, a winter vacation can be pleasant.

# TRANSITIONS THAT STATE A CONSEQUENCE

*therefore, as a result, consequently, accordingly, so, otherwise.*

1. They hoped, **therefore**, to pass the test.
2. **As a result**, the hospital hired three nurses.
3. **Consequently**, we opened an account at the bank.
4. **Accordingly**, she telephoned three different companies.