

# ***DukeWrites* Enrichment Suite**

## **Paragraphs, part three**

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Now that we've talked about paragraph structure – starting broad and moving to the specific, and covered topic sentences and supporting sentences, let's move on to building flow within a paragraph.

There are many techniques for building flow – and we are going to focus on three ways here: Many times we hear about varying our vocabulary when we write – but there are times when we want to repeat the same words – such as when we repeat key terms.

Repeating key terms can make your writing clearer and easier for a reader to understand. You also want to use the same term for a key term throughout your text. Changing the term to something else when you really mean the same thing can be confusing to readers.

For example, if the word soccer ball is a key term in your paragraph, you would not part way through the paragraph begin to refer to the soccer ball as the black and white sphere. It is clearer to keep referring to the soccer ball as the soccer ball. You might refer to it as the ball or it and then back to soccer ball – but you would not want to refer to it with completely new language.

Another way to build flow is to have sentences contain old information and move to new information. One technique for accomplishing this is to use the “This + summary word or phrase.”

Here we see how the sentences flow together with the second sentences starting with information from the previous sentence.

The writer summarizes information in the first sentence with “this association,” referring to the scientists' findings. The writer begins the second sentence with this old information.

In the second pair of sentences, the writer uses the word “these” instead of “this” because the summary phrase is plural. The writer begins the sentence with old information. “These more intricate characteristics” is really referring to “the more fine-scale genetic characteristics” from the previous sentence.

Here “this security” is summarizing the idea that Mooreman's husband had a job, which allowed her to stay home and care for her children.

Another way to build flow is by using transition words. These words clue readers to the meaning of the sentence and its intended relationship with the information surrounding the sentence.

For example, when we use the word, “however”, we know information contrasting with previous information is coming. The “However” here at the beginning of the second sentence is a clue to the reader that some sort of contrast is coming.

Although transition words can be an effective way to build flow – sometimes students rely on this technique too much and begin every sentence with a transition. Using transition words at the beginning of every sentence can make your sentence structure repetitive – you do not need a transition word at the start of every sentence.

Here are a few links to resources containing charts organizing transition words according to the meanings they convey.

Here is an example from the Deliberations article on Invasives showing some of these flow building techniques. This paragraph shows the different [flow-building] techniques this writer has used according to the highlighted color that they’re in.

So when this writer has chosen to repeat key terms, you can just glance and see that in green. When you’re using old information to new information, those techniques are in blue. And lastly, by scanning, we can quickly see that they used three transitions. Those are in red.

Let’s review flow-building techniques with a short quiz.