

Body Paragraphs and Transitions

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial covers body paragraphs—what they're made up of, how to transition between these various parts, and how to transition between whole body paragraphs:

1. Body Paragraphs

An **essay** is a short piece of writing on a particular subject, and essays are in part made up of **body paragraphs**, or paragraphs within the body of an essay. Body paragraphs occur between the introduction and conclusion of an essay.

While you're doing your **essay development**, which is the act of developing an essay's ideas with relevant facts and details, you likely will do some prewriting during which you'll develop ideas to support your thesis statement. Those ideas are what you're going to work out in body paragraphs.

Each body paragraph should relate directly back to the thesis statement, developing support for one element of the essay's main idea. Each body paragraph will also have a topic sentence that expresses the main idea of the paragraph. Within each paragraph, all of the supporting sentences point back towards that topic sentence, providing support for that main point.

| Thesis Statement | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Body Paragraph 1: Topic Sentence | Body Paragraph 2: Topic Sentence | Body Paragraph 3: Topic Sentence | Body Paragraph 4: Topic Sentence |

Finally, each body paragraph will develop a new essential idea in support of the thesis, without adding irrelevant or extraneous detail.

Consider the following short essay:

The stunts are often stunning and the effects truly special. Viewers flock in droves to watch Hollywood's latest action blockbusters when they hit the movie theaters. But are these films worthwhile or just "brain candy" that leave us dumber for viewing them? Because Hollywood's action films feature complex emotional themes, they count as art despite being commonly characterized as disposable entertainment.

Many people refer to Hollywood action movies in negative terms, considering them disposable fluff pieces. These people argue that such films are not as representative of the nuances of human emotions

as they are, say, independent films or Hollywood dramas. So these critics rank action films as unartistic and simplistic.

In fact, action films can feature complex, artistic emotional themes. Many action heroes are driven to vengeance or heroism by the loss of a loved one, such as Batman being an orphan. Therefore even Batman can represent emotional artistry.

As the example shows, action films contain representations of complex emotions. Many films considered to be high art, such as Citizen Kane, feature similar depictions of humanity. Thus, action films can be considered art in the same fashion.

Here is the thesis statement:

The stunts are often stunning and the effects truly special. Viewers flock in droves to watch Hollywood's latest action blockbusters when they hit the movie theaters. But are these films worthwhile or just "brain candy" that leave us dumber for viewing them? Because Hollywood's action films feature complex emotional themes, they count as art despite being commonly characterized as disposable entertainment.

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In fact, action films can feature complex, artistic emotional themes. Many action heroes are driven to vengeance or heroism by the loss of a loved one, such as Batman being an orphan. Therefore even Batman can represent emotional artistry.

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And then here are the body paragraphs, each of which support the thesis:

The stunts are often stunning and the effects truly special. Viewers flock in droves to watch Hollywood's latest action blockbusters when they hit the movie theaters. But are these films worthwhile or just "brain candy" that leave us dumber for viewing them? Because Hollywood's action films feature complex emotional themes, they count as art despite being commonly characterized as disposable entertainment.

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In fact, action films can feature complex, artistic emotional themes. Many action heroes are driven to vengeance or heroism by the loss of a loved one, such as Batman being an orphan. Therefore even

Batman can represent emotional artistry.

As the example shows, action films contain representations of complex emotions. Many films considered to be high art, such as Citizen Kane, feature similar depictions of humanity. Thus, action films can be considered art in the same fashion.

More specifically, this one explains the opposition to a particular argument, which was previewed in the thesis:

*The stunts are often stunning and the effects truly special. Viewers flock in droves to watch Hollywood's latest action blockbusters when they hit the movie theaters. But are these films worthwhile or just "brain candy" that leave us dumber for viewing them? Because Hollywood's action films feature complex emotional themes, they count as art **despite being commonly characterized as disposable entertainment.***

Many people refer to Hollywood action movies in negative terms, considering them disposable fluff pieces. These people argue that such films are not as representative of the nuances of human emotions as they are, say, independent films or Hollywood dramas. So these critics rank action films as unartistic and simplistic.

In fact, action films can feature complex, artistic emotional themes. Many action heroes are driven to vengeance or heroism by the loss of a loved one, such as Batman being an orphan. Therefore even Batman can represent emotional artistry.

As the example shows, action films contain representations of complex emotions. Many films considered to be high art, such as Citizen Kane, feature similar depictions of humanity. Thus, action films can be considered art in the same fashion.

This next one gives some examples to support another part of the thesis:

*The stunts are often stunning and the effects truly special. Viewers flock in droves to watch Hollywood's latest action blockbusters when they hit the movie theaters. But are these films worthwhile or just "brain candy" that leave us dumber for viewing them? Because **Hollywood's action films feature complex emotional themes**, they count as art despite being commonly characterized as disposable entertainment.*

Many people refer to Hollywood action movies in negative terms, considering them disposable fluff pieces. These people argue that such films are not as representative of the nuances of human emotions as they are, say, independent films or Hollywood dramas. So these critics rank action films as unartistic and simplistic.

In fact, action films can feature complex, artistic emotional themes. Many action heroes are driven to vengeance or heroism by the loss of a loved one, such as Batman being an orphan. Therefore even Batman can represent emotional artistry.

As the example shows, action films contain representations of complex emotions. Many films considered

to be high art, such as Citizen Kane, feature similar depictions of humanity. Thus, action films can be considered art in the same fashion.

The final paragraph brings the whole argument together to support this last claim of the thesis:

*The stunts are often stunning and the effects truly special. Viewers flock in droves to watch Hollywood's latest action blockbusters when they hit the movie theaters. But are these films worthwhile or just "brain candy" that leave us dumber for viewing them? Because Hollywood's action films feature complex emotional themes, **they count as art** despite being commonly characterized as disposable entertainment.*

Many people refer to Hollywood action movies in negative terms, considering them disposable fluff pieces. These people argue that such films are not as representative of the nuances of human emotions as they are, say, independent films or Hollywood dramas. So these critics rank action films as unartistic and simplistic.

In fact, action films can feature complex, artistic emotional themes. Many action heroes are driven to vengeance or heroism by the loss of a loved one, such as Batman being an orphan. Therefore even Batman can represent emotional artistry.

As the example shows, action films contain representations of complex emotions. Many films considered to be high art, such as Citizen Kane, feature similar depictions of humanity. Thus, action films can be considered art in the same fashion.

As you can see, the body paragraphs each develop an essential element of the thesis statement, working together to build support so that the reader believes that thesis statement.



TERMS TO KNOW

Essay

A short piece of writing on a particular subject.

Essay Development

The act of developing an essay's ideas with relevant facts and details.

Body Paragraph

A paragraph within the body of an essay; body paragraphs occur between the introduction and conclusion of an essay.

2. Transitions

Now that you've seen some body paragraphs in action, you can think about the connections within and between them. **Transitions** are words, word combinations, and even sentences that highlight connections between ideas.

Because transitions make these connections, they help readers understand the relationships between different ideas, which in turn helps readers understand the whole essay better.

When you move between paragraphs, transitions help connect one big idea with the next, making the progression of ideas flow more smoothly. Then when you move between sentences within paragraphs, transitions do the same thing, helping you link smaller ideas with the same effect.

In both cases, transitions operate like signposts, pointing the reader to where the essay has been and where it's going. Therefore, an essay that doesn't have clear or regular transitions, uses its transitions ineffectively or even incorrectly, or just repeats the same transitions in every sentence and paragraph is going to be a weak piece of writing.

Reread this essay example to identify the transitions, and consider how they are working within and between the paragraphs.

The stunts are often stunning and the effects truly special. Viewers flock in droves to watch Hollywood's latest action blockbusters when they hit the movie theaters. But are these films worthwhile or just "brain candy" that leave us dumber for viewing them? Because Hollywood's action films feature complex emotional themes, they count as art despite being commonly characterized as disposable entertainment.

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In fact, action films can feature complex, artistic emotional themes. Many action heroes are driven to vengeance or heroism by the loss of a loved one, such as Batman being an orphan. Therefore even Batman can represent emotional artistry.

As the example shows, action films contain representations of complex emotions. Many films considered to be high art, such as Citizen Kane, feature similar depictions of humanity. Thus, action films can be considered art in the same fashion.

Notice how the author is transitioning between paragraphs here:

The stunts are often stunning and the effects truly special. Viewers flock in droves to watch Hollywood's latest action blockbusters when they hit the movie theaters. But are these films worthwhile or just "brain candy" that leave us dumber for viewing them? Because Hollywood's action films feature complex emotional themes, they count as art despite being commonly characterized as disposable entertainment.

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In fact, action films can feature complex, artistic emotional themes. Many action heroes are driven to vengeance or heroism by the loss of a loved one, such as Batman being an orphan. Therefore even Batman can represent emotional artistry.

As the example shows, action films contain representations of complex emotions. Many films considered to be high art, such as Citizen Kane, feature similar depictions of humanity. Thus, action films can be considered art in the same fashion.

The second paragraph starts with “many people” to show that this is going to be a discussion of one argument that many people hold. And that’s what this paragraph does—it introduces an argument.

Then the author follows up on that discussion in the next paragraph, beginning with “in fact.”

The stunts are often stunning and the effects truly special. Viewers flock in droves to watch Hollywood's latest action blockbusters when they hit the movie theaters. But are these films worthwhile or just "brain candy" that leave us dumber for viewing them? Because Hollywood's action films feature complex emotional themes, they count as art despite being commonly characterized as disposable entertainment.

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In fact, action films can feature complex, artistic emotional themes. Many action heroes are driven to vengeance or heroism by the loss of a loved one, such as Batman being an orphan. Therefore even Batman can represent emotional artistry.

As the example shows, action films contain representations of complex emotions. Many films considered to be high art, such as Citizen Kane, feature similar depictions of humanity. Thus, action films can be considered art in the same fashion.

By looking at both how this paragraph begins and how the previous paragraph ends, you can see that this “in fact” is responding to the previous argument. While the previous paragraph presented the argument against the thesis statement, this paragraph counters with the assertion that, in fact, those claims aren’t sound, but this thesis is.

Now that there have been two paragraphs that present opposing arguments and offer examples of those arguments, this next paragraph transitions in with the phrase “as the example shows.”

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In fact, action films can feature complex, artistic emotional themes. Many action heroes are driven to

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As the example shows, action films contain representations of complex emotions. Many films considered to be high art, such as Citizen Kane, feature similar depictions of humanity. Thus, action films can be considered art in the same fashion.

This statement connects not just to the preceding paragraph, but to the whole arc of this argument, to both of the prior paragraphs. You can see this by looking inside the paragraph.

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Many people refer to Hollywood action movies in negative terms, considering them disposable fluff pieces. These people argue that such films are not as representative of the nuances of human emotions as they are, say, independent films or Hollywood dramas. **So** these critics rank action films as unartistic and simplistic.

In fact, action films can feature complex, artistic emotional themes. Many action heroes are driven to vengeance or heroism by the loss of a loved one, such as Batman being an orphan. **Therefore** even Batman can represent emotional artistry.

As the example shows, action films contain representations of complex emotions. Many films considered to be high art, such as Citizen Kane, feature similar depictions of humanity. **Thus**, action films can be considered art in the same fashion.

Notice that the transitional word “thus,” which means “therefore” or “as a result of,” connects these two ideas. That tells you that this sentence is going to present an explanation of what the previous examples prove.

In all of these ways, the paragraphs, their examples, and even these transitions help point the reader back to the thesis statement and thus to the main idea and purpose of this essay.



TERM TO KNOW

Transition

Words, word combinations, and even sentences that highlight connections between ideas.



SUMMARY

In this tutorial, you learned that essays are in part made up of **body paragraphs**, which appear between the introduction and conclusion. Body paragraphs are a crucial component of essays because they are where you provide examples, evidence, and analysis to support your thesis statement.

You then learned that **transitions**, or words and phrases that highlight connections between ideas, are a useful way to show your reader the relationships between your ideas. Transitions can be used to connect separate paragraphs as well as individual sentences within a single paragraph.

Good luck!

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Martina Shabram.



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