

Using Transitions

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn further methods for integrating transitions into your speech. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Using Transitions with Body Language
 - a. Transitions Paired with Hand and Arm Movements
 - b. Transitions Paired with Walking Backwards or Forwards
 - c. Transitions Paired with Other Movements

1. Using Transitions with Body Language

Transitions go a long way in improving the quality of your speech. However, there is something that can make the quality of your transitions truly bring your speech alive: combining your transitions with **body language**.

You may be surprised to learn that only 7% of the information you transmit to others is in the language you use. The remainder comes from the following:

- 38% is how you speak— the quality of voice, accent, voice projection, emphasis, expression, pace, volume, pitch, etc.
- 55% Body language— posture, position, eye contact, facial expression, head and body movements, gestures, touch, etc.

Armed with this information, it is easy to understand why body language can make your transitions even more attention-grabbing.



TERMS TO KNOW

Body Language

Body language is a form of mental and physical ability of human non-verbal communication. It consists of body posture, gestures, facial expressions, and eye movements. Humans send and interpret such signals almost entirely subconsciously.

Transition

The process of change from one form, state, style, or place to another.

1a. Transitions Paired with Hand and Arm Movements

You can probably think of many good speakers who have used a finger wag or other hand gesture to emphasize a point. President Kennedy did this quite a bit and so did Bill Clinton . Be careful, however. If there is a note of admonishment in your voice, try to avoid finger pointing because it will seem insulting. An open-palmed hand spread wide, as if in appeal, is far less confrontational and is therefore more likely to be seen as positive.

Other hand or arm movements can be useful—even positive—if it is well-chosen and sparse. An animated speaker who punctuates every expression with hand or arm gestures can create a diversion or distraction. Used occasionally, however, movement adds weight and gravity to important points.

How would you use a transition with this movement? Perhaps you are explaining a strategy with similarities to something that was implemented in the past. You want to emphasize that the past errors must be avoided. To emphasize this point, you might say, "However, we must be careful to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. " As you say this you may use a hand gesture such as the finger wag or the open palmed gesture.

1b. Transitions Paired with Walking Backwards or Forwards

When Steve Jobs gave a presentation, people listened. The buzz created around his product announcements and the announcements themselves had a lot to do with it, but so did his presentation style. He incorporated movement within his style. He didn't just stand behind a podium and speak. He knew how to enhance his story using transitions by changing his position on the stage.

You can do the same. You may be talking about the present and then want to take your audience back to the past. In doing this, you may use the transition phrase, "let me take you back. " As you say this, move slowly to the right or left to show that you are moving into the past. Moving forward in time? Move in the opposite direction. Moving back again? Move the same direction in which you previously moved.

You may have been talking about something positive and now need to talk about something negative. To do this, you might use the transition phrase, "Now I need to take you to a different place. " As you say this, step backwards. Or try adding even more emphasis by stepping backwards and then diagonally. Both movements signal that you now moving into a negative aspect of your talk.

Have something positive to say? Step toward the front of the stage as you say your transitional phrase.

1c. Transitions Paired with Other Movements

Remember that your head and face are your key expression amplifiers. With appropriate movement and expressions of the face you can add emphasis where needed.

An exaggerated eyebrow lift or the removal of eyeglasses at an appropriate moment can give the appearance of your own realization of the importance of the particular point being made. Expressing a negative point while shaking the head from side to side, or a positive point while nodding are standard devices for amplification. Use these movements along with your transitions.

Finally, remember to alter your tone as you deliver your transitions. Think of what transition delivery methods you can use as you write your transitions into your speech outline.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned how to **use transitions with body language**. You can **use transitions along with hand movements** to emphasize a point. You can **use transitions while walking backwards or forwards** to indicate that you are going to talk about the past or the future. **Transitions can also be used with other movements**, such as facial expressions.

Source: Boundless. "Using Transitions." Boundless Communications Boundless, 14 Mar. 2017. Retrieved 21 May. 2017 from <https://www.boundless.com/communications/textbooks/boundless-communications-textbook/organizing-and-outlining-the-speech-10/transitions-55/using-transitions-219-7613/>



TERMS TO KNOW

Body Language

Body language is a form of mental and physical ability of human non-verbal communication. It consists of body posture, gestures, facial expressions, and eye movements. Humans send and interpret such signals almost entirely subconsciously.

Transition

The process of change from one form, state, style, or place to another.