One of the larger impacts on our writing as students is how we go about reading the texts we’re assigned in classes. It is simple to suggest that actually doing our assigned reading is critical; however, effective, careful reading is a bit more involved than that, and it is this reading that is crucial to our writing process. For instance, I have a problem reading while lying down because I risk dozing off when I do. My solution has been to avoid this behavior, but in recognizing and remediaying that problem, I have only taken one step in the long process of developing useful reading strategies.

Successful reading strategies can help us understand complicated or confusing writing. They can improve our memory for what we have read. They can even help us with synthesis, or drawing connections across many texts. These strategies can involve how we read, when and how we make annotations, and what questions we ask ourselves as we read.


The writer concludes this paragraph with a discussion of the problem with thesis statements and suggests there is an easy comparison to make to solve this issue.

The next paragraph starts with the comparison and then continues on to explain that comparison.

These transitions work to guide the reader between paragraphs while also concluding or introducing their respective paragraphs.

First, the writer introduces the idea of reading strategies while concluding this paragraph.

The writer then provides a sentence to introduce the reader to this paragraph on reading strategies.

These two sentences work together to create a clear and smooth transition from one paragraph to the next.

More often than I’d like to admit, I see theses that look something like this: “In society today, a lot has changed.” The student then turns to me and asks if their thesis is okay, and I have to look them in the eye and tell them I honestly didn’t know they had a thesis. This is a tough conversation to have—after all, a thesis is an extremely important part of any scholarly essay, but it is an easy issue to solve, and I find myself drawing upon a specific comparison to describe a thesis in essay writing.

Your thesis is like a roadmap. It needs proper signposts and markings to let people know how to get to their destination, and in the event that it is unable to provide these signposts, people can get lost. Your thesis is exactly the same way. If your thesis can’t guide me through your argument, the nuance and logic of your essay can be lost, just like a person who doesn’t have a roadmap or directions. We need these signposts, as readers, to get through the paper without a hitch.