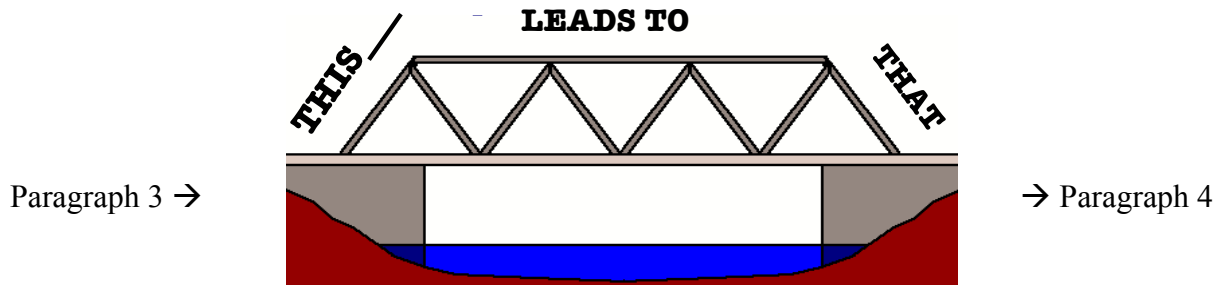




Bridge Sentences

A bridge sentence is a special kind of topic sentence. In addition to signaling what the *new* paragraph is about, it shows how that follows from what the *old* paragraph said. The key to constructing good bridges is briefly pointing back to what you just finished saying.



Here are three styles of paragraph bridges. Each example uses a pointing word such as “this,” “that,” or “such” to direct the reader’s attention back to the end of the previous paragraph. The *italicized part* is the pointing word, the underlined part refers to the old paragraph, and the **bold part** says what the new paragraph argues,

1. The Classic Bridge. Begin your new paragraph by concisely pointing back to what you just finished saying.

In short, the colonial Puritans established social discipline for an international audience—and particularly for the Anglican church back in England.

This effort to outperform the Anglican Church motivated the Puritans to **extend their authority even into the intimate details of family life.**

2. The Question (*and* answer!) When your previous paragraph raises a question, begin your new paragraph by asking the question. Then, explain how what follows answers it.

The ABC film concluded with South Vietnamese soldiers throwing the corpse onto a truck.

Why would network news programs carry *such* gruesome footage? Surely it was not because.... Instead, **the NBC news staff considered their report newsworthy because it contained exclusive footage with startling visual images.**¹

3. The Complication. Indicate how matters are becoming more interesting or complex than what you just finished discussing. Use words like “but,” “yet,” and “however” to signal the change.

In Rhode Island, John Easton remarked, “it was reported Sausimun before his death had informed of the Indian Plot, and that if the Indians knew it they would kill him.”

This motive seems simple enough, yet each of these three observers—Saltonstall, Mather, and Easton—suggested **other, broader reasons behind the murder.**²

¹ Chester J. Pach, Jr., “TV’s 1968...,” *South Central Review* 16/17 (1999): 30-31.

² Jill Lepore, “Dead Men Tell No Tales...,” *American Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (1994): 485.