

Smoothing the Way

When sentences and paragraphs sound choppy and disconnected, a writer has probably failed to use *transitional expressions* (often called *transitions*). Transitions help readers go smoothly from one idea to another. They can be placed at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of sentences.

Some of the most common transitional expressions are listed in the box below.

although • after • afterward • also • and • because • before • besides
but • eventually • finally • first • however • meanwhile • on the other hand
next • similarly • since • then • therefore • today • unless • until • while

★ Read the story below and circle all the transitional expressions.

The Princess and the Squash

Lady Myrtle's little pet dragon Maynard had been dragging his tail ever since the draw-bridge accident, so she decided to perk him up by putting him to work. Because it was such a beautiful, leaf-scented spring day, she decided he should come outside and help her plant a garden.

First, Maynard waddled ahead of her, making nifty furrows in the soft dirt with his damaged tail. Then Lady Myrtle, addicted to turnips and full of joy, waltzed behind, casting seed onto the ground in neat, zippy rows.

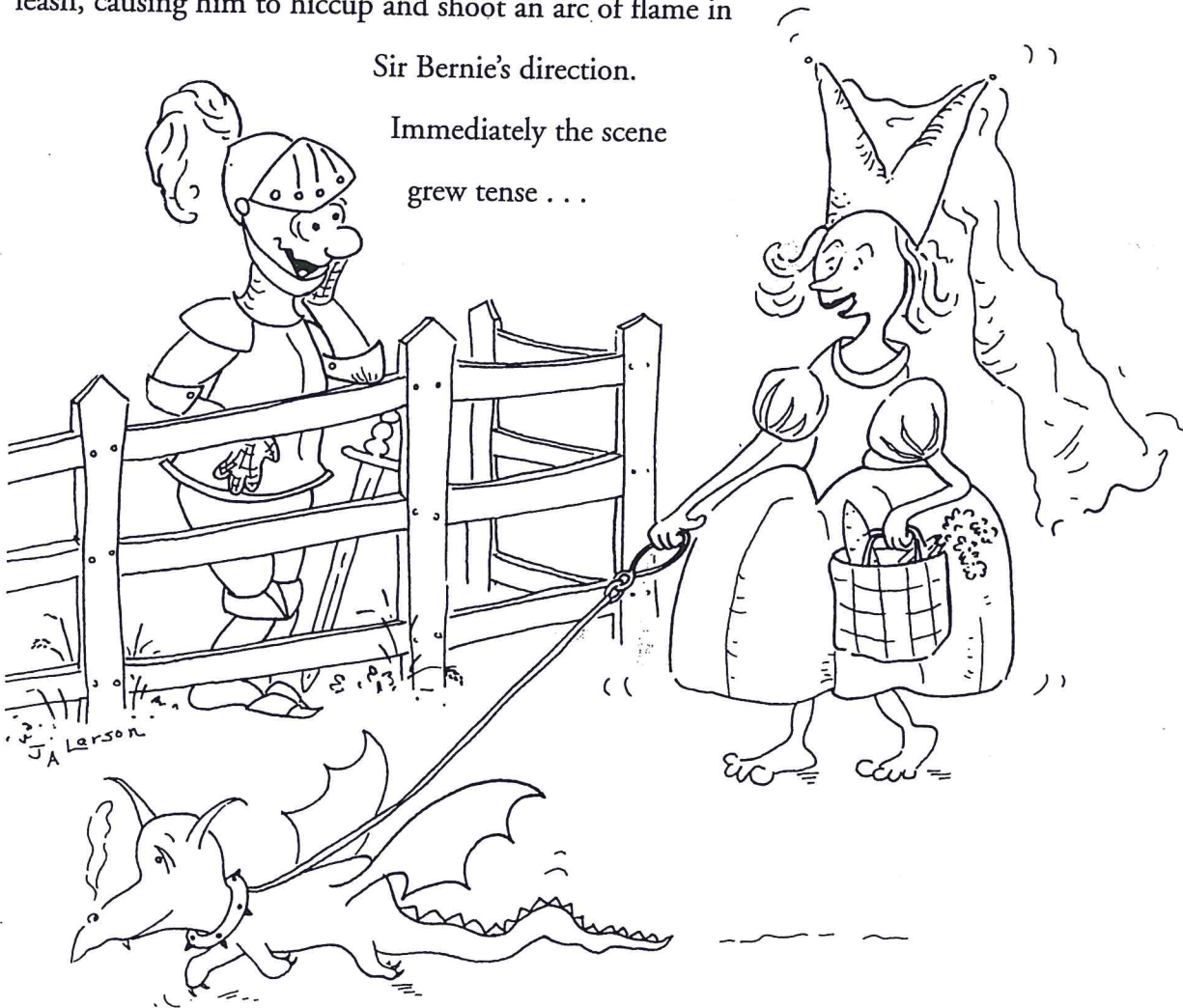
There was a problem, however. Lady Myrtle soon saw that she couldn't wear her slippers in the garden because it was so muddy. Sir Bernie often came up to the fence by the garden, hoping that someone would offer him a free squash. The problem? Everyone knew that if a knight saw a lady's bare feet, he would have to propose marriage — whether he loved her or not.

On this particular spring day, Lady Myrtle saw no sign of Sir Bernie, so she took off her slippers and continued planting. While she worked, though, Sir Bernie walked up to the fence and leaned against it, dreaming of luscious vegetables. Maynard sensed his presence and started growling. Lady Myrtle, who didn't know what was wrong at first, put Maynard on his leash.

Since Maynard hated knights, his nostrils started to flare. Red smoke wafted up in the form of a smoky little flame that didn't scare anybody. Lady Myrtle jerked on Maynard's leash, causing him to hiccup and shoot an arc of flame in

Sir Bernie's direction.

Immediately the scene
grew tense . . .



★ Add an exciting ending to Lady Myrtle's story, using transitional expressions to make your paragraphs read more smoothly.