

Transitions

Transitions are connective words, phrases, or sentences that show the relationship between ideas. They are cues that help the reader interpret ideas the way that you, the writer, want them understood. Transitions are invaluable because they clarify the content of a written work by showing relationships between ideas and by maintaining a clear flow of thought throughout. Because they show how ideas relate to each other, transitions aid organization and prevent abrupt, confusing shifts. Thus, transitions can be critical to clear, effective writing. The best transitions are those that most clearly and effectively guide the reader; however, it is up the writer to determine which transitions will do this best.

Between Sentences:

To achieve unity between the sentences within paragraphs, transitions should be used. Transitions between two sentences in a paragraph are often only a word or a phrase, and a writer's choice of transitions may be somewhat restricted. Nevertheless, using transitions is critical to show the logical relationship and cohesive link between the sentences that make up the paragraph.

No Transition: Rudolpho is incredibly tall. He does not play basketball.

A relationship between the sentences is implied, but exactly what kind of relationship remains unclear until the writer modifies the sentences. Here is one possible solution highlighting the contrasting relationship between the two sentences.

With Transition: Rudolpho is incredibly tall; *nevertheless*, he does not play basketball.

Between Paragraphs:

Transitions should not only hold together sentences within a paragraph, but they should connect one paragraph to another. Transitions are critical between paragraphs because they bridge the gaps that can occur when the idea in one paragraph ends and a new idea begins. To ensure that the reader is able to clearly follow this shift between ideas, transitions should be used to both remind the reader of the previous paragraph and look forward to the idea discussed in the paragraph that follows. Therefore, transitions between paragraphs can be quite complex, often forming entire sentences. Although there are almost unlimited options when transitioning between paragraphs, a successful transition must convey how the two paragraphs are connected logically—that is, the transition should show the reader how the paragraph is important in relation to the other ideas put forth in the paper.

Strategies:

Here are a few approaches one can take when transitioning between sentences and paragraphs.

Use Words that Express Logical Relationships:

Use a transition word or phrase between sentences or paragraphs to show the logical link between the ideas they express. These transitions may simply express time sequence, cause and effect, comparison and contrast etc., or they might be more complex transitions which draw conclusions from preceding paragraphs and, thus, imply the building of an idea or thought. See the chart on the back of this handout for examples of transition words and phrases.

Use Repetition to Achieve Transition:

Another way to achieve transition is by repeating key words. You may have been told that repetition is annoying to the reader and a waste of words. Often this is true; however, at times, readers appreciate deliberate repetition because it bridges gaps and aids comprehension. Within sentences, transition can be aided by repeating words that reiterate key ideas. Within paragraphs, transition can be effectively achieved by reminding the reader how the idea expressed within each paragraph relates to the paper's thesis statement or main idea.

Word and Phrase Transition Chart*

Relationship Signaled	Transitions That Signal the Relationship	Examples
Addition:	also, and then, too, in addition, furthermore, moreover, equally important, another, first, second, third...	The mayor fully expects the city council to approve her salary recommendations for city employees. <u>In addition</u> , she is certain she will gain support for her road-repair program.
Time Sequence:	now, then, before, after, afterward, earlier, later, immediately, soon, next, meanwhile, gradually, suddenly, finally, previously, before, next, often, eventually.	<u>Before</u> an agreement can be reached between the striking hospital workers and management, both sides must soften their stands on the economic issues.
Spatial Arrangement:	near, near to, nearly, far, far from, beside, in front of, next to, beyond, above, below, to the right, to the left, around, surrounding, on one side, inside, outside, across, opposite to, far off, behind alongside, there.	As you leave the fair grounds, turn right on Route 76. <u>Just beyond</u> the junction sign is the turnoff you need.
Comparison:	in the same way, similarly, just like, just as, in like manner, likewise.	The current administration must not abandon its commitment to the poor. <u>Similarly</u> , it must not forget its promise to the elderly.
Contrast:	still, however, on the other hand, on the contrary, nevertheless, despite, in spite of.	<u>In spite of</u> the currently depressed housing market, money can still be made in real estate.
Cause And Effect:	because, since, consequently, hence, as a result, therefore, thus, because of this	<u>Because of</u> this year's frost, almost 30 percent of the state's fruit crop was lost.
Purpose:	for this purpose, so that this may occur, in order to	<u>In order to</u> pass the school levy, the school board must make clear just how desperately additional money is needed.
Emphasis:	indeed, in fact, surely, undoubtedly, without a doubt, certainly, truly, to be sure, I am certain	Adolescence is not the carefree time some adults view it to be. <u>In fact</u> , it can be the most unsettled period in a person's life.
Illustration:	for example, for instance, as an illustration, specifically, to be specific, in particular	Most of the parents complained that the schools were not tough enough. They said, <u>for example</u> , that their children were rarely assigned homework.
Summary Or Clarification:	in summary, in conclusion, as I have shown, in brief, in short, in other words, all in all, that is	The used car Joshua bought required brake pads, shocks, and a fuel pump. <u>In other words</u> , it was in terrible shape.
Admitting a Point:	although, while this may be true, granted, even though, while it is true that.	<u>While it is true that</u> too many Americans cannot read and write, this country's literacy rate is among the best in the world.

*Taken from *The Student Writer: Editor and Critic*, Fifth Ed., by Barbara Fine Clouse.