

Transitions

Transitions help guide your reader through your ideas—from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph. Sometimes, the addition of a single word is enough to signal the relationship between ideas. Other times, an entire sentence or more may serve the purpose of connecting two thoughts.

Transition words

Below are some examples of transition words you can use to show the relationships between your ideas

Words that can be used to show location

above	behind	by	near	throughout
across	below	down	off	to the right
against	beneath	in back of	onto	under
along	beside	in front of	on top of	
among	between	inside	outside	
around	beyond	into	over	

Ex: I found the cat hiding behind the boxes stored under the bed.

Words that can be used to specify time

while	first	meanwhile	soon	then
after	second	today	later	next
at	third	tomorrow	afterward	as soon as
before	now	next week	about	when suddenly
during	until	yesterday	finally	

Ex: We can shop for a gift tomorrow while we're at the mall.

Words that can be used to **compare** two things:

likewise	also	in the same way
like	as	similarly

Ex: *Like first-semester college students who struggle to manage their time, newly hired employees may be inefficient at first.*

Words that can be used to **contrast** two things:

but	still	although	on the other hand
however	yet	otherwise	even though

Ex: *Although the new cancer drug has been shown to be effective, it cannot go on the market until it undergoes further testing.*

Words that can be used to **emphasize a point**:

again	truly	especially	for this reason
to repeat	in fact	to emphasize	

Ex: *Nurses administering penicillin should examine the patient for an allergic reaction, especially after the first and second doses.*

Words that can be used to **conclude or summarize**:

finally	as a result	to sum up	in conclusion
lastly	therefore	all in all	because

Ex: *Finally, it is hoped that this study will contribute to the fields of neuropsychology and cognitive psychology.*

Words that can be used to **add information**:

again	another	for instance	for example
also	and	moreover	additionally
as well	besides	along with	other
next	finally	in addition	

Ex: *Next, locate the oil drain plug and position a container under it to catch the old oil.*

Words that can be used to **clarify**:

Which is to say that is for instance in other words

Ex: The students recognized fewer vocabulary words after the summer, which is to say that some learning was lost while they were on break.

Transition phrases

In addition to using transition words to show how ideas within paragraphs relate to each other, you should also use your wording to help readers shift from one paragraph to the next. The following examples demonstrate how the wording of paragraph topic sentences can help smoothly guide your reader through your major points.

Example 1

Last sentence of a paragraph

For the most part, students in English 1301 classes demonstrate impressive growth over the course of a semester.

Topic sentence of the next paragraph.

Okay transition: *Another thing to note is that this growth continues even after the class has ended.*

Better transition: *This growth continues even after the class has ended.*

Example 2

Last sentence of a paragraph

As European settlers of the United States expanded westward, they instigated bloody conflicts with the Native American tribes already occupying the land.

Topic sentence of the next paragraph

Weak transition: *This happened everywhere throughout the Americas.*

Good transition: *This pattern of violence characterized European settlement throughout America.*