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.*