

Transition words and phrases order ideas – by time, cause, or other relation. They alert the reader that the course of the paper is about to change. They can be useful at the beginning of a paragraph, at the end of one, or within a sentence.

Providing transitions between the ideas in your paper helps your reader understand what you are saying. These brief words and phrases, stating what to the writer is often obvious from their context, can make the difference between an easily understood paper and a confusing one.

Basic Transitions

Here are some common and useful transitions, grouped by function to help you identify exactly what you want to say. Choose one, insert it in your paper, and then read it aloud.

addition	again, also, and, and then, besides, equally important, finally, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, second, still, too
comparison	also, in the same way, likewise, similarly
concession	granted, naturally, of course
contrast	although, and yet, at the same time, but at the same time, despite that, even so, even though, for all that, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, nevertheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the other hand, otherwise, regardless, still, though, yet, while
emphasis	certainly, indeed, in fact, of course
example or illustration	after all, as an illustration, even, for example, for instance, in conclusion, indeed, in fact, in other words, in short, it is true, of course, namely, specifically, that is, to illustrate, thus, truly
summary	all in all, altogether, as has been said, finally, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, in simpler terms, in summary, on the whole, that is, therefore, to put it differently, to summarize
time sequence	after a while, afterward, again, also, as long as, at last, at length, at that time, before, besides, earlier, eventually, finally, formerly, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, in the past, last, lately, meanwhile, moreover, next, now, presently, second, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, still, subsequently, then, thereafter, too, until, until now, when

Advanced Transitions

1. Repeat key words or phrases. “Dickens suffered as a child under the British welfare system. He was hungry, lonely, and cold. . . . Because he had suffered as a child, Dickens was able to write his novels of social injustice and reform with a profoundly compelling realism.” First state one idea or fact (“Dickens suffered”), then relate that to another (“Because he had suffered”).

2. Refer to a noun mentioned earlier by using a pronoun. “Dickens suffered as a child under the British welfare system. He was hungry, lonely, and cold. . . . His childhood suffering gave Dickens’s novels of social injustice and reform a profoundly compelling realism.” Make doubly and triply sure that the pronoun you use is very clearly connected to the noun you have in mind. Adjectives or adverbs should prove useful here.

3. Parallel ideas. “The social injustice Dickens experienced in his underprivileged youth became the social injustice his thousands of fans experienced in his reform-minded novels.” Here, using the same terms (“social injustice” and “experienced in”) and the same arrangement of words (“The social injustice ____ experienced in ____”) in each phrase clearly and memorably connects the two parts of the sentence. Use of “became” rather than “was” emphasizes the transition.

Exercises

1. Basic:

- Choose a transition to add *emphasis* to the sentence:
Bananas are not only delicious; _____, they contain valuable amounts of potassium.
- Organize a time sequence using transitions:
_____, Yeats wrote exquisite poems about Celtic mythology. His poems changed _____, in response to the First World War and political turmoil in his own nation.
- Use a transition to show addition:
Jars of Clay and DC Talk were two of the most visible Christian contemporary bands of the last decade; _____, they were two of the most rewarded and beloved bands of that time.

2. Advanced:

- Repeat a key word or phrase:
The Wheaton College men's basketball team had excellent public relations during the 2001-02 academic year. _____, in fact, tables in SAGA regularly bore small flyers advertising the next game.
- Refer to a noun mentioned earlier by using a pronoun:
Children's literature is generally characterized by vivid imagery, humorous details, and rhythmic speech patterns, _____ certainly appear in such classics of the genre as *Green Eggs and Ham*, *Goodnight Moon*, and *Madeleine*.
- Parallel ideas:
Familiar breeds of dog, such as the poodle and the golden retriever, are now challenged in popularity by more exotic _____, such as the Chihuahua and the Shih-Tzu.

3. Basic and Advanced:

- Fill in the blank, using the advanced and basic transitions provided below:
Wheaton students had always hoped for pepperoni slices at the SAGA salad bar, _____ the fall of 2001, it was only a dream. _____, pepperoni was not a necessity for salads. _____, many students enjoyed the combination of lettuce and pepperoni so much that they were found peeling the pepperoni slices off of the pizza at the pizza bar and putting them on their salads. _____ was upsetting the pizza cooks, who felt like their hard work was useless. _____, several students submitted serious comment cards begging for the delicacy of pepperoni slices. _____, the customer-friendly caterers began supplying the salad bars with pepperoni. _____, pepperoni slices have become a part of Wheaton students' everyday cuisine.

Suggestions for the above exercises: 1.1 *In fact* is an example of a transition that adds emphasis. 1.2 *At first* and *at length* would help organize these sentences. 1.3 *In addition* or *moreover* or another similar phrase would smooth the transition here. 2.1 *After that time* or a similar phrase is suggested. 2.2 *All of which* is suggested. 2.3 *Breeds* is suggested. Note the verb: "are now challenged," which complements the parallel structure. 3.1 *But, until; Certainly; However; This practice; In addition; Consequently;* and *Since that time* are suggested, as examples of the many combinations possible.

Internet Resources:

<http://www.nutsandboltsguide.com/middle.htm#pointers>
<http://depts.gallaudet.edu/englishworks/writing/transitions.html>
<http://www.powa.org/orgnfrms.htm>
<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/transitions.html>
<http://www.hamilton.edu/academics/resource/wc/EffectiveTransitions.html>
<http://www.engl.niu.edu/sourcebook/II-3-10.html>
<http://webster.commnet.edu/grammar/transitions.htm>
<http://www.engl.iastate.edu/OWL/transitions.html>