

Transitions



Transitions are words and phrases that connect and show relationships between ideas. Without transitions, it can be difficult to follow the flow of ideas from paragraph to paragraph and from sentence to sentence. This handout offers general principles for using transitions.

Using Transitions

Transitions belong between

- **Sections** (dividing the major ideas or topics of the writing)
- **Paragraphs** (dividing the minor ideas of the writing)
- **Sentences** (showing relationships between them)
- **Parts of sentences** (indicating how phrases connect)

Transitions should refer to the previous idea while still moving the reader on to the next idea, thereby showing the relationship between the ideas. Transitions can be used at the section, paragraph, sentence, or word level.

Cohesion or Flow

Cohesion or **flow** enables readers to clearly follow ideas. **In order to be cohesive, sentences should connect a previously established or familiar idea with a new idea.**

Example: Dark chocolate, milk chocolate, and white chocolate each has a different taste. In addition to varying in taste, varieties of chocolate can also differ in nutritional value. For instance, dark chocolate is uniquely known for its antioxidant properties that promote heart health.

The second sentence in this example provides cohesion by including both old and new information. The sentence provides a transition or bridge between the two ideas.

Note: Although transition words or phrases can be helpful, **if the ideas lack a clear connection, adding a transition word or phrase will not fix the problem.**

Example: For instance, dark chocolate is uniquely known for its antioxidant properties that promote heart health. Consequently, 75% dark chocolate is the perfect blend of bitter and sweet.

Consequently can function as a transition word, but in this case, the idea of dark chocolate having healthy properties does not clearly connect to the ideas related to taste of dark chocolate.

Transition Words and Phrases

Transition words and phrases indicate or emphasize the relationship between ideas. The categories below are divided according to the function of each transition word or phrase. Note that this is not a comprehensive list. Since transitions are more of a way of thinking than a limited list of words, many other words or phrases not on this list can serve as transitions as well.

Addition

Again
Also
Another
In addition
Moreover
Too

Similarity

Accordingly
Also
Comparatively
Likewise
Moreover
Similarly

Difference

Although
But
Conversely
However
In contrast
Nevertheless
On the contrary
On the other hand
Yet

Chronology

Afterward
Before
During
Earlier
First
Immediately
Meanwhile
Next
Second
Simultaneously
Soon
Still
Then
While

Location

Above
Below
Beyond
Farther
Further
Here
Nearby
Opposite
There
To the left/right

Result

And
As well
Besides
Accordingly
As a result
Consequently
For this reason
So
Then
Therefore
Thereupon
Thus
Because
Since

Example

For example
For instance
In fact
Namely
Specifically
Further
Furthermore
In addition
Such as
To illustrate

Summary

Finally
Generally
In brief
In conclusion
In other words
In short
In summary
On the whole
That is
Therefore
To sum up

General

Admittedly
Assuredly
Granted
To be sure
At this level
Basically
Certainly
Generally speaking
In other words
In this situation
Indeed
Certainly
Surely