

Transition Toolbox

To be effective, your writing must be clear and easy to follow. It is therefore helpful to provide connections between ideas so the reader can easily see the progression of your thoughts. These connections serve as “direction signals” to guide the reader through your analysis, argument, or description. **Transitions** are words and phrases that are used to link ideas from one clause, sentence, or paragraph to the next and to show how those ideas are related. Using appropriate transitions makes a writer’s ideas more cohesive and coherent.

Repetition

Repetition of key words can link ideas clearly:

*Exercise is one of the keys to losing weight, but **exercise** alone is not enough. Unless we change our eating habits, we may see few results from a new **exercise** regimen.*

Pronouns

Some transitions of thought can be created by using pronouns to replace nouns rather than repeating those nouns:

Steve wanted very much to become a writer, so he read everything he could find about the lives of his favorite authors. He also tried to imitate the styles of the writers he most admired.

Instead of:

Steve wanted very much to become a writer, so Steve read everything Steve could find about the lives of Steve’s favorite authors. Steve also tried to imitate the styles of the writers Steve most admired.

Synonyms

Synonyms can be used to link ideas when repetition of the same word becomes boring or when you want to expand the original idea.

American cities today are facing difficulties as many people move from urban areas into surrounding suburbs and even beyond. Some major metropolitan centers are seeing increasing numbers of dilapidated buildings and decreasing revenues, and municipal budgets are stretched thin as city leaders try to deal with the challenges.

Instead of:

American cities today are facing difficulties as many people move from cities into surrounding suburbs and even beyond. Some major cities are seeing increasing numbers of dilapidated buildings and decreasing revenues, and city budgets are stretched thin as city leaders try to deal with the challenges.

Transitional Words and Phrases

Words and phrases that serve as transitions between ideas can be divided into categories, each with a specific purpose. Writers should use the correct transitional word or phrase to avoid creating confusion or an illogical transition. Some examples are provided in the following chart.

Purpose	Transitional Words and Phrases		
Addition	additionally also and another	besides both/and equally important in addition to	moreover not only/but also similarly
Cause/Effect	as a result because	consequently for that reason since	therefore thus
Comparison/Contrast	after all also and another but conversely	however in addition in spite of likewise nevertheless notwithstanding	on the contrary otherwise rather similarly too yet
Concession	even though granted granted that	in spite of it is true that of course	though while it may be
Developmental Order	another besides	despite furthermore	however nonetheless
Emphasis/ Intensification	above all by all means certainly definitely furthermore	generally in addition in fact indeed naturally	surely to repeat truly undoubtedly without doubt
Example/ Illustration	for example for instance for one thing	in other words in particular specifically	this can be seen in to demonstrate to illustrate
Place	above behind below beside	beyond here nearby opposite surrounding	there to wherever within sight
Purpose	for this purpose	in order that	so that
Qualification	almost always frequently	maybe nearly	never perhaps probably
Summary	accordingly as a result finally	in conclusion in other words in short in summary	it seems on the whole therefore
Time	after afterwards always as soon as at first at last before concurrently eventually	finally first/second immediately in the meantime last meanwhile never next once	ordinarily previously simultaneously sometimes soon subsequently then when while