

TRANSITIONS WORKSHEET

Transitions bridge the gap between ideas. They may be words or phrases used in the beginning, middle, and/or end of body paragraphs to lead the reader to a new idea and explain connections between the old and new ideas.

Most composition textbooks have a section on transitions. If students struggle in this area, it would be a good idea to teach them how to locate the section on transitions in their textbook and help them make sense of the ideas there.

Students should be encouraged to memorize some of the transitional words and the relationships they signal. In addition, to facilitate punctuating sentences, students should be able to differentiate between transitional words and other types of conjunctions like coordinating and subordinating. Of course, both coordinating and subordinating conjunctions function as transitions, but they are very familiar words that students seldom misuse. However, if students use very few subordinating conjunctions in their writing, they may need work in that area as well as on transitions.

Transitional words and relationships:

Words that show the second idea ADD to the previous idea:

also furthermore first in addition

Words that show a TIME or SEQUENCE relationship:

first next then

Words that show a DIFFERENCE between ideas:

However nevertheless on the other hand

Words that introduce an EXAMPLE:

For example for instance to illustrate

Words that show CAUSE and EFFECT:

Consequently therefore thus

Practice

1. Have students go through one page of a textbook (or through the last paragraph on this sheet) and underline all the transitional words. Ask them to look at the relationships between the ideas in the sentences and check to be sure that the transitions state the connections between ideas. Check their work.
2. Have students go through the body paragraphs in an essay they wrote. Ask students to underline all transitional words. If students did not use very many, ask them to add one or two (no more) transitional word to each paragraph to help the reader understand the connections between ideas. Check their word.

- Review punctuation of transitional words with students by looking at the last paragraph on this page for trends. **RULE:** When these transitional words start sentences, a comma follows them. When these words are in the middle of sentences, they have a comma before and after them. Have students check the punctuation of transitional words and phrases in the body paragraphs of their essay.

NOTE: In addition to words, sentences can act as transitions. These transitional sentences can also occur in the beginning, middle and/or end of a paragraph. If one body paragraph is, for example, about the writer's experience with overspending on trendy clothes and the next body paragraph is about overspending on credit cards, there might be a transitional sentence at the beginning of the second paragraph. It might read like this, "Not only were my financial problems caused by buying trendy clothes, but also I got into trouble using credit cards." The first part of the sentence sums up the previous paragraph, and the second part of the sentence points forward to the content of the next paragraph. Thus, the sentence is a bridge between ideas—it is a transition. Using transitional words, phrases and sentences strengthens the organization of all writing.

SAMPLE TRANSITIONS

ADDITION

besides
further
again
second
in addition
also
next
equally important

CONTRAST

however
on the other hand
on the contrary
but
yet
although
in contrast
nevertheless
whereas
in spite of this

COMPARISON

similarly
for instance
likewise

in comparison
as an example
in the same way

RESULT OR CONCLUSION

as a result
consequently
hence
as a consequence
thus
therefore

REASONS

because
for
for this purpose
since
for this reason

EMPHASIS

by all means
in fact
in any event
above all
indeed
of course

as a last resort
in particular

TIME

previously
meanwhile
afterward
shortly after
eventually
promptly
beforehand
later
immediately
soon
gradually
in the future

PLACE

here
there
nearby
in this location
on the opposite side
in this vicinity

SUMMATION

finally
in other words
to sum up
in conclusion

ILLUSTRATION

for example
in other words
namely
to illustrate
for instance
in particular
that is

QUALIFICATION

after all
by contrast
in contrast
whereas
specifically

especially
although
despite
though
yet
frequently
in general

CONCESSION

to be sure
granted
certainly
of course
no doubt
doubtless

RESTRICTION

if provided
provided
in case
unless
lest
when