

Transitions

In order for your assignment to make sense, the reader must understand how your points relate to one another. **Transitions** are words and phrases that draw writing together, indicating relationships between ideas and helping build toward a greater overall point. Transitions allow the writer to organize their thoughts during the writing process, while also improving the reader's comprehension of the finished product.

Smooth transitions improve the “flow” of your writing. They guide the reader through the connections you reveal over the course of your essay and make it easier for them to follow your logic. Simply listing idea after idea without highlighting how they relate to one another makes your writing seem disjointed and leaves your reader wondering, “What’s the point?”

When to Use Transitions

Transitions should be used to show the relationship between ideas within a single sentence, between sentences in the same paragraph, and between paragraphs in an essay. Which transitions you use will vary depending on the type of logical relationship you wish to convey. Transitions can demonstrate:

- **Cause and effect** – accordingly, as a result, and so, because, in consequence, consequently, hence, for that reason, since, therefore, thus
- **Chronology and sequence** – after, afterwards, during, following, first/firstly, first and foremost, in the first place, initially, second/secondly, third/thirdly, previously, finally, subsequently, lastly
- **Similarity** – likewise, in much the same manner, in the same way, similarly
- **Contrast** – although, but, conversely, despite this, even so, however, in contrast, instead, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the other hand, on the contrary, otherwise, whereas, yet
- **Addition** – additionally, also, as well as, furthermore, in addition, moreover, not only. . . but also, too,
- **Emphasis** – indeed, especially, in particular, it must be noted that, of course, certainly, undoubtedly
- **Clarification** – in other words, that is to say, to clarify
- **Example(s)** – by way of an example, for example, for instance, such as, to illustrate

Tips for Using Transitions

- **Be strategic.** Make sure that the transition word or phrase that you have chosen accurately reflects the relationship you are attempting to emphasize. Are you trying to make a comparison? Indicate cause and effect? Choose the transition that best fits the connection you are making.
- **Don't overuse transitions.** Using too many transitions or using the same transitions again and again can make your writing seem clunky and redundant.
- **Don't over-explain.** Generally, you should use transitions to emphasize connections that may not be immediately obvious to the reader. Connections that are already clear, or that you have already indicated earlier in your essay, do not need the help of transition words or phrases for your reader to understand them.