

Transition Words

Transitions are used in writing to show a relationship between ideas. Transitions help readers progress from one idea to another, building coherence within a text. They can be a single word, a phrase, or a sentence. This handout will provide a list of commonly used transitional words and phrases that can be used in essays and paragraphs, and it will discuss when it is appropriate to use them. The charts in this handout will also designate when a comma should be used after specific transition words or phrases.

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Compare and Contrast Transition Words

Compare and contrast words show similarities and differences between objects, people, places, and concepts. The following list contains commonly used compare and contrast transition words and phrases.

Comparison Transitions	Contrast Transitions
Similarly, Likewise, In the same way Similar to Also, Along the same lines, Comparable Comparatively, Consistent with Correspondingly, Equally, Equivalent Resembling Relative to	In contrast, On the contrary, On the other hand, Unlike Conversely, Alternatively, An opposing view In opposition to A distinction between Whereas

The two examples below demonstrate compare and contrast relationships. The first example shows a difference between two types of dog breeds and indicates that a contrast transition should be used. The second example points out a similarity between two ethnic groups, which indicates that a comparison transition should be used.

Examples

Huskies are very energetic. In contrast, pugs tend to be calmer.

Similar to Angolans, Brazilians also speak Portuguese.

Concession Transition Words

Concession transition words introduce a contradictory idea while admitting that the first idea has validity. The second idea does not directly contrast the first idea but rather presents an unexpected idea based on the information stated in the first idea. The following list contains commonly used concession transition words and phrases.

Concession Transitions		
Nevertheless, Nonetheless, Although Even though	Notwithstanding Under those circumstances, Despite Otherwise,	Fortunately, Unfortunately, Albeit Admittedly,

The example below shows how the second idea concedes a point made in the first idea or presents an unexpected result when considering the first idea.

Example

Learning Spanish was difficult for me even though I studied Latin in high school.

Cause and Effect Transition Words

Cause and effect transition words show how events lead to a specific outcome. The list below contains a variety of cause-and-effect transition words and phrases that are commonly used.

Effects Transitions	Cause Transitions
Accordingly, Consequently, As a consequence, The outcome As a result, Therefore, Thus, Hence, So In effect, For this reason,	Because of Since Due to As a result of On account of The ramifications of

The two examples shown below display a cause-and-effect relationship. The first example demonstrates a cause, so a cause transition should be used. The second example demonstrates an effect, so an effect transition should be used.

Examples

Due to traffic, I was late to work.

Some students cram all their studying into one day. As a result, they tend to perform poorly on their exams.

Process Transition Words

Process transition words signal the steps to completing a task or to illustrate how something occurs through a sequence of steps and procedures. The list below provides process transition words and phrases.

Process Transitions		
At the beginning	After that	Last of all,
Commencing with	Following that	Third,
Earlier	Immediately following	Lastly,
First,	Later on	In the end,
From this point,	Next,	Finally,
In the first place,	Second /secondly,	The final point
Initially,	So far,	To conclude,
Once	Subsequently,	In conclusion,
Starting with	Beforehand,	
To begin with,	Afterwards,	

The example below discusses the writing process for a student; therefore, a process transition should be used before describing the second step.

Example

Before I write essays, I like to brainstorm my ideas. Following that, I create an outline.

Common Transition Words

Transition words that indicate example information, additional information, emphasis, or a conclusion are used frequently in various types of essays and paragraphs. The tables below provide examples of each type of these transition words and phrases.

Example Transitions		
As an example	In other words,	To exemplify
As an illustration	In this case,	To explain
For example,	In this situation,	To put another way,
To illustrate,	In this specific instance,	To show
For instance,	More exactly	
For one thing,	Such as	
In another case,	Suppose that	
In one example,	To demonstrate,	
In order to clarify		

The following example discusses the occupations of many fiction writers. Since an example is provided to support this claim, an example transition should be used.

Example

Many fiction authors had occupations in the STEM fields. For example, Lewis Carroll was a mathematician.

Addition Transitions		
Additionally,	Following this	Therefore
Also,	Furthermore,	Thus
And	Hence	
And then	In addition,	
Concurrently,	Moreover,	
Consequently	Next,	
Equally important	Nor	
Simultaneously	Now	
Subsequently		

The following example provides additional reasoning that supports the claim that eating healthy is beneficial. Therefore, an addition transition should be used.

Example

Eating healthy is beneficial because it increases a person’s energy. Furthermore, it reduces the risk of developing chronic diseases.

Emphasis Transitions		
In fact, Indeed, Namely Specifically Notably Chiefly	In detail, To emphasize, To repeat, To clarify, Primarily Particularly	Therefore, Thus, In particular, To enumerate

The following example shows how an emphasis transition draws attention to the first idea stated and provides more detailed information to support the first idea.

Example

Squid are one of the most intelligent ocean-dwelling creatures. In fact, they can count, solve problems, and communicate in a variety of ways.

Conclusion Transitions		
As can be seen Generally speaking, In the final analysis, All things considered, As shown above, In the long run, Given these points, As has been noted In a word, For the most part,	After all, In fact, In summary, In conclusion, In short, In brief, In essence, To summarize, On balance, Altogether,	Overall, Usually By and large, To sum up, In any event, In either case, All in all, Regardless, Under those circumstances, In general,

The following example is the first sentence of a conclusion to a literary analysis of *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. Therefore, a conclusion transition should be used.

Example

In summary, through his use of imagery, symbolism, and characterization of Macbeth, Shakespeare demonstrates how ambition unchecked often leads to destruction.

Additional Resources

For further information about transition words, please see the following module: "[Make Connections with Transitions.](#)"

This video by 7ESL Learning Channel also provides a graphic presentation of transition words by category: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STiQ4BEV8ug>

Transition Practice:

Choose the appropriate transition word or phrase for each of the sentences below.

1. My mom has a peanut allergy. (As a result, Furthermore) _____, she is allergic to shellfish and pollen.
2. I enjoyed reading the Harry Potter series. (For example, However), _____ I was not very fond of the movies.
3. I like to drink a cup of coffee every morning. (Consequently, Following that), _____ I feed my dog and cat their breakfast.
4. (Although, Since) _____ I exercise every day, I decided it would be beneficial to purchase a gym membership.
5. (Due to, Overall) _____ my sister's clumsiness, she tripped over her feet and dropped her laptop.

Answer Key:

1. Furthermore
2. However
3. Following that
4. Since
5. Due to