

Transitions

Note: This document should only be used as a reference and should not replace assignment guidelines.

Transitions connect ideas. A paper without transitions may seem to jump from point to point, while a paper with transitions guides the reader through the argument.

Transitions Between Phrases

Adding transitions between phrases or sentences shows how ideas are connected. They also improve the flow of the paper.

Transitions Show the Relationship Between Ideas

Transitions guide readers through your paper and show them why you put two ideas next to each other. Never assume readers already understand how your ideas connect.

BEFORE: Henry didn't understand his homework. His dad helped him.

AFTER: **Since** Henry didn't understand his homework, his dad helped him.
Henry didn't understand his homework, **so** his dad helped him.

Also, make sure each transition fits the specific situation. A badly selected transition may confuse, rather than help, readers.

CONFUSING: Nobody inquired about the money found outside. **Moreover**, it was given to charity. (The word *moreover* indicates that one action happened in addition to the other.)

HELPFUL: Nobody inquired about the money found outside, **so** it was given to charity. (The word *so* indicates that one action happened as a result of the other.)

Transitions Between Paragraphs

Using transitions between paragraphs helps your reader understand how they relate to each other. Without transitions, readers may not see how ideas build on each other to prove your main point. Since the ideas in your paragraphs are longer than the ideas in your sentences, the transitions between paragraphs can be a sentence or two.

To create an effective transition between paragraphs, mention the main idea of the previous paragraph plus the new paragraph's idea. For example, if you were writing a paper about health, you might transition from a paragraph about exercise to one about diet by emphasizing that both are essential for a healthy lifestyle:

EXAMPLE: . . . Thus, establishing a daily exercise routine is essential for maintaining good health.
In addition to exercise, a well-balanced diet is **essential** to good health. Any well-balanced diet should include. . .

In this example, placing the phrase *in addition to* at the beginning of the second paragraph prepares the reader for a change in ideas or a transition from the old idea to a new one. The use of the word *essential* with *exercise* and *diet* emphasizes the similarity between the two topics. This comparison connects exercise and diet and shows they are both important for health.

Transitions and Organization

Though transitions will strengthen a logical paper, they won't help much if sentences or paragraphs do not make sense in the order you have them. If you have a hard time finding the connection between two ideas, check to see if there is a better place to put one of the ideas. If you cannot find a good place anywhere, check to see if that idea supports your thesis or main idea. If it does not, think about taking it out of your paper or changing it so that it supports your thesis and relates to your other ideas.

Transitions

Note: This document should only be used as a reference and should not replace assignment guidelines.

Common Transitions

The following charts list some common transitions used to indicate relationships between ideas:

| ADDITION | CONTRAST | CONCESSION | CAUSE & EFFECT |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Additionally Also As well as Besides Furthermore In addition Likewise Moreover Not only Similarly | Although But Despite However In contrast Instead On the contrary On the other hand Unlike Yet | Admittedly Certainly Clearly Evidently Granted Naturally Obviously Of course Undeniably Understandably | As a result Because Consequently Since So Therefore |
| EXAMPLES | CONCLUSIONS | TIME & ORDER | TIME & ORDER |
| For example For instance In particular Specifically Such as To illustrate | Finally Generally In brief In conclusion In summary On the whole | After At once Before During First...second...third First...next...then If...then... In the meantime Meanwhile | Often Presently Shortly Soon after Still Temporarily Until When While |