

Organization Transitions

Transitions connect ideas in writing and show readers why different points make sense together. Without these connections, readers may feel the paper jumps from idea to idea without moving toward a main point or conclusion. Transitions are a simple way to make your paper easier to understand.

TRANSITIONS BETWEEN PHRASES

Transitions should be used whenever you change ideas in a paper. Adding transitions between phrases or sentences can explain how ideas are connected and help the paper flow smoothly.

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. 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.)

TRANSITION WORDS

Sometimes transitions can be as short as one word. If two sentences sound choppy and disconnected, adding a one-word transition often makes them easier to read.

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.

TRANSITIONS BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS

In addition to transitions that connect sentences, using transitions between paragraphs helps your reader understand how they are related to each other. Without such transitions, readers may not understand how ideas build on each other to prove your main point. Using transitions between each of your paragraphs will help readers follow your argument more easily.

OLD/NEW CONSTRUCTION

Since the ideas in your paragraphs are longer than the ideas in your sentences, the transitions between paragraphs will often consist of several words. A good way to create a transition between paragraphs is to use **old and new construction**. While creating the new topic sentence, 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.

COMMON TRANSITIONS

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

ADDITION	CONTRAST	CONCESSION
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

CAUSE AND EFFECT	EXAMPLES	CONCLUSIONS
As a result Because Consequently Since So Therefore	For example For instance In particular Specifically Such as To illustrate	Finally Generally In brief In conclusion In summary On the whole

TIME AND ORDER	
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

NOTE: TRANSITIONS DO NOT FIX BAD ORGANIZATION

All papers need transitions, but your paper may not be perfect just because you've used transitions. If sentences or paragraphs do not make sense in the order you have them, transitions won't help much. 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.