

Transitions



What is a transition?

A transition is a word or phrase that connects one idea to another. This connection can occur within a paragraph or between paragraphs.

Functions of Transitions

- In academic and professional writing your goal is to convey your message in a clear and concise
- Transitions help you to achieve these goals by establishing: Logical connections between sentences, paragraphs, and sections of your papers.

In other words, transitions tell readers what to do with the information you present to them.

When Do You Need a Transition?

Think of some of the feedback you might be getting from your instructor or peers:

- Comments like “choppy,” “jumpy,” “abrupt,” “flow,” “need signposts,” or “how is this related?” on your papers.
 - Your readers (instructors, friends, or classmates) tell you that they had trouble following your organization or train of thought.
 - You tend to write the way you think—and your brain often jumps from one idea to another pretty quickly.
 - You wrote your paper in several discrete “chunks” and then pasted them together.
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Transitions: When? What? And How?

Keep in mind when you are using transitions you first want to be aware of your organization throughout your paper, this is why transitions can help —since they create a structure for your paper.

An exercise to help organize your essay before working on your transitions is:

- You may want to evaluate your paper’s organization before you work on transitions.
- In the margins of your draft, summarize in a word or short phrase what each paragraph is about or how it fits into your analysis.

Keep in Mind While Using Transitions...

The organization of your written work includes two elements:

1. The order in which you have chosen to present the different parts of your discussion or argument.
 2. The relationships you construct between these parts.
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Examples Using Transitions

Paragraph A: points that support the view that El Pais’s new government is very democratic.

Transition: **Despite the previous arguments**, there are many reasons to think that El Pais’s new government is not as democratic as typically believed.

In this case, the transition words “**Despite the previous arguments**,” suggest that the reader should not believe paragraph A and instead should consider the writer’s reasons for viewing El Pais’s democracy as suspect.

Types of Transitions

The types of transitions available to you are as diverse as the circumstances in which you need to use them. A transition can be a single word, a phrase, a sentence, or an entire paragraph.

1) Transitions between sections: Particularly in longer works, it may be necessary to include transitional paragraphs that summarize for the reader the information just covered and specify the relevance of this information to the discussion in the following section.

2) Transitions between paragraphs: If you have done a good job of arranging paragraphs so that the content of one leads logically to the next, the transition will highlight a relationship that already exists by summarizing the previous paragraph and suggesting something of the content of the paragraph that follows.

A transition between paragraphs can be a word or two (however, for example, similarly), a phrase, or a sentence. Transitions can be at the end of the first paragraph, at the beginning of the second paragraph, or in both places.

3) Transitions within paragraphs: As with transitions between sections and paragraphs, transitions within paragraphs act as cues by helping readers to anticipate what is coming before they read it. Within paragraphs, transitions tend to be single words or short phrases.

Transitional Expressions Examples

Similarly: Also, in the same way... Just as...

Exception/Contrast: On the other hand... However...

Sequence/Order: First... Second... Third...

Time: Afterwards... At last...

Example: For example... At last...

Cause and Effect: Accordingly... Hence...

Use the UWC website to find some tools: Located under “Writing Help Online” and after clicking on “Writing Process Getting Started”.