

quicktips

SENTENCE TRANSITIONS

Problem

Transitions are tools to create coherence and consistency (i.e., “flow”) in your paper. Without them, your writing is likely to seem choppy or disorganized, and the relationship between ideas may be unclear to the reader. English relies heavily on these transitional words to clarify relationships among ideas and sentences.

Solutions

USE WORDS FROM THIS CHART to make logical relationships explicit.

LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP	TRANSITION WORDS	COORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS (for definition, see back)	SUBORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS (for definition, see back)
Addition	moreover • furthermore • finally • in addition (to) • besides	and nor	
	EXAMPLE: I love to write research papers for school. Moreover , I really enjoy receiving large amounts of homework from my instructors. EXAMPLE: Besides taking a full courseload, I have a part-time job that keeps me very busy.		
Cause & Effect	therefore • consequently • thus • as a result (of) • for this reason	so for	since • because • if...then • in order to
	EXAMPLE: In order to make my writing very clear, I will learn how to use logical connectors properly. EXAMPLE: Romeo told Juliet that her spaghetti sauce was terrible; as a result , Romeo now cooks for himself.		
Comparison	likewise • similarly • in the same way • in the same manner		
	EXAMPLE: Installments of Charles Dickens’s serial novels were eagerly awaited in England and the U.S.; similarly , each of the novels in J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series has been anticipated (and even pre-ordered) on both sides of the Atlantic ever since readers finished Book One. EXAMPLE: An athlete goes through training drills in order to be agile on the field. Likewise , a musician practices scales so that he or she can perform with ease.		
Contrast	however • nevertheless • in spite of • despite • in contrast • on the other hand • on the contrary	but yet	although • though • even though • unlike • while • whereas • despite • in spite of
	EXAMPLE: While I do enjoy cooking as a hobby, I will not prepare all the food for your wedding. EXAMPLE: I love my dog, but I hate it when he eats the roll of toilet paper.		
Concession	of course • to be sure • granted • naturally • no doubt		given that • granted that
	EXAMPLE: I’ve found qualitative methods to be the most fruitful approach to writing center research. Of course , not every scholar shares this belief. EXAMPLE: The Center for Writing is closed during weekends and holidays. To be sure , many students wish that the Center were open all the time.		

(continued on back)

LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP	TRANSITION WORDS	COORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS	SUBORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS
Conclusion	therefore • in short • in conclusion • to summarize • on the whole • overall • as I have demonstrated • as the data show	so	
	EXAMPLE: As the data show , drivers are more likely to cause accidents when they are talking on their cell phones. EXAMPLE: In conclusion , Minnesota should enact a law banning people from using cell phones while driving.		
Emphasis	in fact • indeed		
	EXAMPLE: The New York Yankees are often derided as being “the best team money can buy.” Indeed , the team’s payroll is the most expensive in all of major league baseball. EXAMPLE: Shark attacks are not the enormous threat that most people imagine. In fact , more beachgoers die from sand holes collapsing on them than from shark bites.		
Example	for example • for instance • in particular • specifically • namely • to illustrate		
	EXAMPLE: Interracial couples have long faced racism in American culture. For example , as recently as 1967, interracial marriage was illegal in seventeen states. EXAMPLE: I am working on becoming healthier. Specifically , I now go to the gym three times per week.		
Clarification or Repetition	to repeat • that is • in other words • again • as explained/mentioned earlier		
	EXAMPLE: Karl Marx argued that class struggle has always existed. In other words , the rich and poor have always been in conflict regardless of cultural context. EXAMPLE: Many critics maintain that after 1939, Salvador Dali’s art was no longer innovative. That is , Dali’s continued use of the same themes and images caused critics to doubt his creativity.		
Time or Sequence	first/second/third • then/next/finally • afterwards • meanwhile • previously • initially • later		when • whenever • while • until • before • after • as soon as • as long as
	EXAMPLE: Previously people believed that the earth was flat. Now we know it is shaped like a giant soccer ball. EXAMPLE: Initially , the people of earth were alarmed by the invaders from Mars. Later , they learned that the Martians were merely seeking inexpensive family vacation spots.		

PAY ATTENTION TO PUNCTUATION PATTERNS.

- Transition words between two complete sentences are typically preceded by a period (.) or a semi-colon (;) and followed by a comma (,).

I respected his intelligence. **However**, I did not hire him.
I respected his intelligence; **however**, I did not hire him.

- Coordinate Conjunctions** (*and, but, yet, so, for, nor, or*) show continuation of an idea between two clauses. Coordinate conjunctions are preceded by a comma when used to join two complete sentences in formal writing.

I respected his intelligence, **but** I did not hire him.

- Subordinate Conjunctions** make one clause dependent on, or subordinate to, the other. Subordinate conjunctions may or may not require a comma, depending where the clause is.

Although I respected his intelligence, I did not hire him. (comma)
I respected his intelligence **although I did not hire him**. (no comma)

For more information:

Anson, Chris M., and Robert A. Schwegler. *The Longman Handbook for Writers and Readers*. 2nd ed. New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 2000. 91-95.

Azar, Betty Schramper. *Understanding and Using English Grammar*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1989. 306-308.