

LBCC Writing Center: Transformative Transitions

Does your writing sometimes seem disorganized? Has an instructor or peer commented that your writing can be “choppy” or that you need to work on the “flow” of your paper? Are you at a point in the revision process where you are starting to paste together separate chunks of ideas? Or, are you working on a group paper written by several other people, and trying to figure out how to stick it all together?

If this sounds like you, it’s time to check out the magic of transitions! **Transitions** are an important part of writing that helps readers follow the flow of your work and understand the connections between your ideas. Transitions can be used within paragraphs, between paragraphs, and between sections of a longer work. Sometimes a transition is simply a transitional word or phrase, but sometimes it is a matter of revising or adding sentences to highlight the connections between ideas.

Let’s take a look at how adding transitions within a paragraph can improve the flow of the writing.

Paragraph without transitions:

“I had been having severe headaches and frequent dizzy spells. I was terrified of doctors. I went to the health clinic. I waited three days. It was the time of finals and I was very busy. I saw a doctor. He prescribed some pills. The problems continued” (Hall 240).

This paragraph might leave the reader with questions because the relationship between the sentences is not clear.

Paragraph with transitions:

“I had been having severe headaches, and frequent dizzy spells, **but** I hesitated to go to the health clinic **because** I was terrified of doctors. It was the time of finals and I was busy studying for them **so** I made the excuse to myself that I didn’t have time and that there was nothing the matter with me, just fatigue. **Finally**, I went, **although** I waited three days before making an appointment. I saw a doctor, and **after** he examined me he prescribed some pills. **But despite** the medication, the problems continued, **even after** I’d been taking the pills for two weeks” (Hall 240).

Here, the writer utilizes **transitional words** and **subordinate clauses** (words such as but, because, so, etc.) to emphasize the connections between ideas, as well as adding information he realized the reader would need.

Still stuck on that one transition?

Sometimes, if it is difficult to write a strong transition between two ideas, it can indicate those ideas need to be rearranged—maybe they just don’t fit together! You may find yourself moving paragraphs around to improve both transitions and the overall organization of your paper.

Hall, Donald. *Writing Well*. 5th ed., Little, Brown and Company, 1985.

“Transitions.” The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016, writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/transitions/

As noted, transitions also occur between paragraphs or, in longer papers, between sections.

Transitions between paragraphs generally consist of a sentence or two.

Transitions between sections might be as long as entire paragraphs to connect the ideas clearly.

These include transition words and orient the reader to order of events, to how ideas relate to each other, and to what to expect or how to react. The following are examples of common transitional words and what type of transition each is.

Examples of Addition transitions are:

- Furthermore
- Also
- In Addition
- Further
- Besides
- Moreover
- In the second place
- And
- Or
- Nor
- Too
- Again
- Next
- Additionally

Examples of Time transitions are:

- While
- After
- Afterwards
- When
- During
- Next
- Then
- Immediately
- Soon
- Never
- Always
- Once
- Later
- Earlier
- Sometimes
- Often
- Following
- At length
- Whenever
- In the meantime
- Now
- Until now
- Simultaneously
- Subsequently
- This time

Examples of Place transitions are:

- Here
- There
- Nearby
- Beyond
- Wherever

- Opposite to
- Adjacent to
- Neighboring on
- Above
- Below

Examples of Exemplification or Illustration transitions are:

- To illustrate
- To demonstrate
- Specifically
- As an illustration
- e.g., (for example)
- For example
- For instance

Examples of Comparison transitions are:

- In the same way
- Similarly
- In like manner
- In similar fashion
- By the same token
- Likewise

Examples of Contrast transitions are:

- Yet
- Nevertheless
- Nonetheless
- At the same time
- On the contrary
- In contrast
- Notwithstanding
- On the other hand
- But
- However
- Though
- Otherwise

Examples of Clarification transitions are:

- i.e., (that is)
- In other words
- To clarify
- To put another way
- To explain
- To rephrase it

Examples of Cause transitions are:

- Because
- Since
- On account of
- For that reason

Examples of Effect transitions are:

- Therefore
- Consequently
- Thus
- Hence
- Accordingly
- As a result

Examples of Purpose transitions are:

- In order that
- To that end
- To this end
- For this purpose

Examples of Qualification transitions are:

- Almost
- Nearly
- Probably
- Perhaps
- Maybe
- Although
- Never
- Always
- Frequently

Examples of Intensification transitions are:

- Indeed
- To repeat
- By all means
- Undoubtedly
- Surely
- Yes
- No
- Of course
- Certainly

Examples of Concession transitions are:

- To be sure
- Of course
- It is true
- Granted

Examples of Summary transitions are:

- To summarize
- In sum
- In short
- In summary
- In brief
- To sum up

Examples of Conclusion transitions are:

- Finally
- Last
- Lastly

Examples of Demonstratives acting as transitions are:

- This
- Those
- These
- That

Examples of Pronouns serving as links to clearly refer to a specific word or phrase are:

- His
- Its
- Theirs
- Her
- They
- Our
- It
- Their
- Your