

TRANSITIONS

(from Sheree Baker in Sand Springs, OK)

An essay without effective transitions is like a series of isolated islands. The reader will struggle to get from one point to the next. Use transitions as bridges between your ideas.

What are transitions and how are they used?

Transitions are phrases or words used to connect one idea to the next.

Transitions are used by the author to help the reader progress from one significant idea to the next; in other words, they make an essay coherent.

Transitions also show the relationship between the main idea and the support the author gives for those ideas within a paragraph (or even within a sentence).

Transitions have a variety of specific uses.

1) Transitions within paragraphs

Within a single paragraph, transitions, such as single words or short phrases, help the reader anticipate what will come next. The transition may signal an additional or similar piece of information, or it may prepare the reader for a change or exception to previously stated information.

For example:

Mary Cassatt, one of the few female Impressionist painters, lived in France although she was of American descent. **Unlike** her fellow painters, who chose landscapes as their primary medium, Cassatt's main subjects were her immediate family. **In fact**, her nieces and nephews were captured in many of her most famous works of art.

2) Transitions between paragraphs

Transitions between paragraphs serve as connections between old and new information. A word, a phrase, or a sentence signals to the reader that something different is coming and transitions the reader from old to new information.

For example:

Mary Cassatt, one of the few female Impressionist painters, lived in France although she was of American descent. Unlike her fellow painters who chose landscapes as their primary medium, Cassatt's main subjects were her immediate family. In fact, her nieces and nephews were captured in many of her most famous works of art.

For instance, the painting, *Mother with Child*, shows Cassatt's sister bathing her child. This painting **not only** illustrates Cassatt's use of her family as subjects, **but also** highlights the theme of mother and child. The closeness of the mother with her child remains a constant theme of Cassatt's painting and sketching throughout the Impressionist period.

Note: The first sentence of the second paragraph draws the reader's attention to a new idea, a specific example in this case. The following sentence repeats a familiar theme (family members) from the first paragraph and then introduces a new idea (mother and child).

ADDITIVE TRANSITIONS: These show addition, introduction, or similarity to other ideas.

Words that show *addition* relationships:

additionally, also, moreover, not to mention, in addition, furthermore, further, and, too, either (neither), besides, not only, but also, as well, or, alternatively, nor, on the other hand, in fact, as a matter of fact, to say nothing of, actually, indeed, let alone, much less

Words that *introduce*:

such as, for example, for instance, as, like, especially, particularly, in particular, notably, including, as an illustration, to illustrate

Words that *reference*:

speaking about, as for, considering, concerning, regarding, on the subject of, with regard to, the fact that

Words that show *similarity*:

similarly, likewise, in the same way, in a like manner, by the same token, equally

Words that *identify*:

that is, namely, specifically, thus

Words that show *clarification*:

that is (to say), in other words, put another way

ADVERSATIVE TRANSITIONS: These transitions are used to signal conflict, contradiction, concession, or dismissal.

Conflict:

but, however, in contrast, by way of contrast, (and) yet, when in fact, while, whereas, conversely, on the other hand, though (final position), still

Emphasis:

even more, above all, indeed, more importantly, besides, surely, indeed, in fact, truly

Concession:

but even so, however, still, yet, nevertheless, nonetheless, although, though, even though, on the other hand, despite, in spite of, regardless, notwithstanding, be that as it may, granted, admittedly, albeit

Dismissal:

either way, in either case, in either event, all the same, in any case, in any event, at any rate

Replacement:

(or) at least, (or) rather, instead

CAUSAL TRANSITIONS: These transitions signal cause/effect and reason/result.

Cause/Reason:

seeing that, since, as, inasmuch as, forasmuch as, because, due to, in view of, owing to, for the (simple) reason that, for, in that

Condition:

if, in case, provided, providing, on (the) condition, in the event that, given that, granted, granting, as/so long as, even if, only if, unless

Effect/Result:

so that, so, so much (so) that, for this reason, as a result, because, therefore, consequently, as a consequence, thus, hence, in consequence, accordingly

Purpose:

so, so as to, so that, in order to, in order that, with this in mind, with this intention, in the hope that, for the purpose of, to the end that, for fear that, lest

Consequence:

then, if so, in that case, under those circumstances, if not, otherwise

SEQUENTIAL TRANSITIONS: These transitions are used to signal a chronological or logical sequence.

Numerical:

in the (first, second, etc.) place, initially, secondly, at first, to start with, to begin with, for a start, first of all

Continuation:

previously, afterwards, eventually, subsequently, next, then

Conclusion:

finally, eventually, at last, in the end, at last, last but not least, as a final point, lastly

Summation:

to sum up, given these points, therefore, consequently, thus, hence, on the whole, altogether, in all, all in all, overall, in short, in a word, truly