

quicktips

SENTENCE TRANSITIONS

Problem

Transitions are tools to create coherence and consistency (i.e., “flow”) in your paper. Without them, the relationship between ideas may be unclear to the reader. Academic 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 & CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS (for definition, see back)	SUBORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS (for definition, see back)
Addition	moreover • furthermore • finally • in addition (to) • besides	and • nor • <i>not only...but also</i> • <i>both...and</i>	
	EXAMPLE: I love to write research papers for school. Moreover , I really enjoy receiving large amounts of homework from my instructors. EXAMPLE: Not only am I taking a full courseload, but I also have a job that keeps me busy.		
Cause & Effect	therefore • consequently • thus • as a result (of) • for this reason • accordingly	so • for	since • because • if...then • in order to
	EXAMPLE: Romeo told Juliet that her spaghetti sauce was terrible; as a result , Romeo now cooks for himself. EXAMPLE: In order to make my writing very clear, I will learn how to use logical connectors properly.		
Comparison	likewise • similarly • in the same way • in the same manner	<i>just as...so</i> • <i>the more...the more</i> • <i>whether...or</i> • <i>either...or</i> • <i>neither...nor</i>	
	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. EXAMPLE: Just as athletes go through training drills in order to be agile on the field, so do musicians practice scales so that they can perform with ease.		
Contrast	however • nevertheless • in spite of • despite • in contrast • on the other hand • on the contrary	but • yet • <i>the more...the less</i>	although • though • even though • unlike • while • whereas • despite • in spite of
	EXAMPLE: I love my dog, but I hate it when he eats the roll of toilet paper. EXAMPLE: The more my dog misbehaves, the less likely I am to leave him home alone. EXAMPLE: While I do enjoy cooking as a hobby, I will not prepare all the food for your wedding.		
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: Given that graduate students work on their dissertations all year long, it is understandable that many writers wish the Center for Writing were open during weekends and holidays.		

(continued on back)

LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP	TRANSITION WORDS	COORDINATE & CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS	SUBORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS
Conclusion	therefore • in short • in conclusion • to summarize • on the whole • overall • as the data show • as I have demonstrated • ultimately	so	
	EXAMPLE: As the data show , drivers are more likely to cause accidents when they are talking on their cell phones. EXAMPLE: Therefore , Minnesota should enact a law banning drivers from using cell phones.		
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: The frequency of perfect games in baseball has been increasing. In fact , of the 22 perfect games in Major League history, four occurred in just the last two years.		
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 daily.		
Clarification or Repetition	to repeat • that is • in other words • again • as explained/mentioned earlier	and	
	EXAMPLE: Karl Marx argued that class struggle has always existed. In other words , the rich and poor have always been in conflict regardless of historical moment. EXAMPLE: During midterms and finals, Student Writing Support gets especially busy, and it is not uncommon for students to wait for over an hour to see a consultant.		
Time or Sequence	first/second/third • then/next/finally • afterwards • meanwhile • previously • initially • later • subsequently	<i>no sooner...than</i>	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 spherical. EXAMPLE: After the Stonewall Uprising of 1969, the movement to protect LGBT civil rights in New York and around the nation became both more visible and more powerful.		

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 and qualifications. **However**, I did not hire him.
I respected his intelligence and qualifications; **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 and qualifications, **but** I did not hire him. (comma)
I respected his intelligence and qualifications **but** did not hire him. (no comma)

- **Correlative Conjunctions** (*both...and; not only...but also; just as...so*) operate in pairs to connect two parallel phrases or clauses. Correlative conjunctions are separated by a comma when used to join two complete sentences; however, they do not need any punctuation when they join two phrases (incomplete sentences).

Not only did I respect his intelligence, **but** I **also** admired his qualifications. (comma)
I respected **both** his intelligence **and** his qualifications. (no comma)

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