

## Transitions

A transition is a word, a few words (a phrase), or even a sentence (or two) that connects two ideas together. Just as a well-built bridge allows people to travel smoothly from their current location to their destination, a transition allows readers to effortlessly move from one idea to the next. In the example below, *therefore* is a bridge that communicates how sentence one is related to sentence two—and vice versa. Better transitions (i.e. “sophisticated” transitions), however, do more than show the relationship between two ideas. They summarize or allude to the previous thought (the current location or old idea) and indicate what will be covered next (the destination or new idea). In short, they seamlessly connect the old with the new. The six guidelines below can help you “bridge the gaps.”

I love to write about my life. **Therefore,** I think that I will enjoy Written Communication.

### Guidelines for Using Transitions

1. Avoid using the same transitions repeatedly; vary your “bridges.”
2. The transition must also be appropriate for writing. The following example would be perfectly fine to state in a speech, but it is inappropriate in writing since, technically speaking, the writer is not “talking.”

#### Example of a “Speechy” Transition:

A. No writer can achieve the “perfect” paper. *I can tell you from my experiences with writing that* doing one’s best is a more realistic goal.

3. For the bridge to be built, the transition must make sense. Without a logical connection between ideas, a bridge cannot be erected. For help with writing transitions that make sense, the typical transitions on the back side are categorized by meaning.

#### Examples of Transitions that Don’t Make Sense:

- A. No writer can achieve the “perfect” paper. *For instance,* doing one’s best is a more realistic goal.
- B. It seems a lot easier to write well if I can “get into it.” *Therefore,* in fifth grade, I got to create and publish my own book, which I found easy to write.

4. When there is a clear relationship and/or logical connection between the old idea and the new idea, using a typical transition, such as those listed below, is acceptable.

**Examples of Typical Transitions that Work Effectively:**

- A. No writer can achieve the “perfect” paper. *As a result*, doing one’s best is a more realistic goal.
- B. It seems a lot easier to write well if I can “get into it.” *For example*, in fifth grade, I got to create and publish my own book, which I found easy to write.

However, the bridge will be better anchored if overused typical transitions, such as *and*, *also*, *next*, *finally*, *in conclusion*, *first*, *second*, and *third*, are avoided. In fact, many of these transitions merely introduce a new idea (i.e. they wave a red flag at the reader and forewarn the reader that he/she is about to embark on a new bridge); they don’t show the relationship between two ideas nor do they connect the old with the new.

5. To better show that relationship, a typical transition can be used along with additional words to create a “sophisticated” transition that anchors the old idea with the new idea.

**Examples of “Sophisticated” Transitions that Work Effectively:**

- A. No writer can achieve the “perfect” paper. *Since perfection is unattainable*, doing one’s best is a more realistic goal.
- B. It seems a lot easier to write well if I can “get into it.” *If I’m motivated to write, as I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade* when I got to create and publish my own book, I found it easy to write.

6. The better organized your writing is, the fewer transitions that will be needed. In addition, combining sentences or omitting disruptive thoughts can create invisible transitions. These are the best transitions because they are so subtle that the reader doesn’t even recognize that you have “bridged the gap.”

**Examples of “Invisible” Transitions that Seamlessly Connect Ideas:**

- A. Trying to achieve the perfect paper is less realistic than doing one’s best when writing.
- B. It seems a lot easier to write well if I can “get into it” as was the case when I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and created and published my own book. I felt motivated and found writing to be easy.

## List of Transitions

**Transitions Showing Addition:** again, besides, besides that, another, further, furthermore, not only. . . but also, on top of that, added to that, even more crucial, more importantly, even more common, even more interesting, equally, in addition, additionally, too, along with, beyond that, as well as, moreover, in the same way, while not so obvious, while not as serious, to make matters worse, next, secondly, thirdly

**Transitions Showing Results:** consequently, a consequence of, an effect is that, for this (that) reason, accordingly, therefore, as a result, because, because of that, since, so, so that, in this way, on account of

**Transitions Showing Contrast:** however, despite of, in spite of, rather than, instead of, even though, although, though, although this may be the case, in contrast, on the other hand, whereas, otherwise, regardless, on the contrary, surprisingly, in opposition to this, in disagreement with this, still, yet, not only, but, except, except for

**Transitions Showing Similarity:** likewise, similarly, relatedly, at the same time, as well as, equally, in the same way

**Transitions Clarifying Ideas:** apparently, in other words, in particular, in essence, namely, essentially, indeed, put another way, of course, surely, in short, in fact, in brief, clearly, actually, as a matter of fact, basically, without a doubt

**Transitions Showing Emphasis:** again, for this reason, to emphasize, above all, most importantly, more importantly, certainly, especially, in particular, not surprisingly, in fact, indeed, obviously, primarily, ultimately, of course, surely, of major importance, without a doubt, equally important, in other words

**Transitions Indicating that Examples will Follow:** for example, for instance, to illustrate, as an illustration, in particular, to enumerate, especially, such as, specifically, incidentally, in other words, this can be seen by . . .

**Transitions Indicating the Start:** to begin, to start with, at the outset, initially, the most significant, my most favorite, one of the most, of the three (or four), at the top, of the greatest importance, initially, the most crucial

**Transitions Indicating the End:** for these reasons, in conclusion, on the whole, to summarize, in short, in brief, all in all, finally, basically, as can be seen, in essence, so far, overall, clearly, without a doubt, ultimately, to sum up, on the whole, in other words

**Transitions Expressing Location:** beyond, opposite, opposite of, on the other side, near, nearby, throughout, among, beneath, behind, beside, between, under, to the left, within view

**Transitions Expressing Time:** then, next, finally, now, once, after, while, when, whenever, earlier, at the same time, meanwhile, afterwards, before, eventually, during, throughout, prior to, in the past, later, previously, subsequently, simultaneously, soon, as soon as, until, as long as, up to the present, at the outset

**Transitions Showing Purpose:** for this purpose, to do this, with this in mind, so that, to bring about, for this reason

**Transitions Indicating Concession** (or “giving in to an opponent”): at any rate, at least, granted, although, even though, providing that, while that may be true, of course, still, naturally, to a certain extent, to a degree, yet, however, notwithstanding, although this may be true, regardless, nevertheless, nonetheless

### **Links to Additional Information**

["Coherence: Transitions Between Ideas,"](#) from Capital Community College