

The Writing Lab

Transitions

Handout courtesy of Angela Gulick

One critical skill in writing is the ability to connect one idea to the next idea. Certain kinds of words allow readers to see those connections clearly, and these words are called **transitions**. The following handout outlines a variety of transitions that can be used.

Transitions to compare two similar ideas	likewise, similarly, also, as well, too, the same
Transitions to contrast two different ideas	although, and, yet, but, despite, even so, even though, however, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the other hand, regardless, still, though
Transitions that add or show a sequence	again, also, and, then, and then, besides, finally, first, second, third, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, still, too
Transitions to give examples or illustrations	after all, for example, an illustration of, even, for instance, indeed, in fact, of course, specifically, especially, that is, to illustrate
Transitions to indicate a specific place	above, adjacent to, below, beneath, elsewhere, farther on, here, near, nearby, on the other side, there, around, inside, outside
Transitions to indicate a specific time	after a while, afterward, as long as, as soon as, at last, at length, at that time, before, earlier, formerly, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, lately later, meanwhile, now, presently, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, subsequently, then, thereafter, until, when
Transitions to repeat, summarize, or conclude	all in all, altogether, as has been said, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, in simpler terms, in summary, on the whole, that is, therefore, to put it differently, to summarize, to restate
Transitions to show cause or effect	accordingly, as a result, because, thus, consequently, for this purpose, hence, otherwise, since, then, therefore, thereupon, thus,

Old → New Transitions

Another strategy to use when creating transitions is to connect the concept of the old paragraph as you move into the new paragraph. Here is an example for an essay about why college students should do volunteer work in their communities. Listed below are four possible body paragraphs as well as transitional sentences that connect the old paragraphs to the new paragraphs.

Body Paragraph 1
Topic Sentence

One benefit to volunteering in the community is that student volunteers can learn about different cultures, beliefs, and possibly even languages.

Body Paragraph 2
Transition/Topic Sentence

Not only do student volunteers acquire knowledge about how other people live, students can also develop a number of “soft skills” that will help them professionally, such as leadership, time management, and communication skills.

Body Paragraph 3
Transition/Topic Sentence

Often, these professional “soft skills” help student volunteers make important community, business, academic, and religious contacts that could someday be very useful.

Body Paragraph 4
Transition/Topic Sentence

While student volunteers can gain a number of personal benefits, volunteer work also gives students a chance to give something back to their communities which helps build a sense of personal responsibility and empathy.