

WCU Writing and Learning Commons
Transitions – Useful Words

Transitional words serve as signposts to readers, indicating where the writer is going next. Note the categories of transitional words below, and try to incorporate the occasional and strategic word or phrase that will help you communicate more effectively. Remember to choose words and phrases that fit your tone and thinking in a particular assignment or project, and not simply the longest word or the hardest to pronounce. Remember too, transitions do not always come at the beginning of sentences.

TO ADD OR SHOW SEQUENCE

Transitions include ... again, also, and, and then, besides, equally important, finally, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, second, too

Example: “**Moreover**, Livia used to say that to a good woman a naked man is no more than a statue.” Michel de Montaigne in “On Some Verses of Virgil”

TO COMPARE

Transitions include ... in the same way, likewise, similarly

Example: “The most perfect ape cannot draw an ape; only man can do that; but, **likewise**, only man regards the ability to do this as a sign of superiority.” G. C. Lichtenberg in “Notebook J.”

TO CONTRAST

Transitions include ... although, and yet, but, but at the same time, despite, even so, even though, for all that, however, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the other hand, regardless, still, though, yet

Example: “I was standing a little behind the rest and, I remember, screwed up my eyes involuntarily; **however**, I saw at once, diagonally opposite from me, a young, black-haired face, which, moving slowly from the left to the right, gazed at us all with huge round eyes.” Ivan Turgenev in “The Execution of Tropmann”

TO GIVE EXAMPLES OR INTENSIFY

Transitions include ... after all, an illustration of, for example, for instance, indeed, in fact, it is true, of course, specifically, that is, to illustrate, truly

Example: “I suppose every one must have reflected how primeval and how poetical are the things that one carries in one’s pocket; the pocket knife, **for instance**, the type of all human tools, the infant of the sword.” G.K. Chesterton in “A Piece of Chalk”

TO INDICATE PLACE

Transitions include ... above, adjacent to, below, elsewhere, farther on, here, near, nearby, on the other side, opposite to, there, to the east, to the left

Example: “We went out into the large prison courtyard; and **there**, in the corner on the right before a half-closed door, a sort of roll-call took place; then we were shown into a tall, narrow and entirely empty room with a leather stool in the centre.” Ivan Turgenev in “The Execution of Tropmann”

TO INDICATE TIME

Transitions include ... 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, until now, when

Example: “**At any moment**, the sleeping army may stir itself and wake in us a thousand violins and trumpets in response; the army of human beings may rouse itself and assert all its oddities and sufferings and sordidities.” Virginia Woolf in “Street Haunting”

TO REPEAT, SUMMARIZE, OR CONCLUDE

Transitions include ... 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, to put it differently, to summarize

Example: “**In short**, all good things are wild and free.” Henry David Thoreau in “Walking”

TO SHOW CAUSE OR EFFECT

Transitions include ... accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this purpose, hence, otherwise, since, then, therefore, thereupon, thus, to this end, with this object

Example: “Whenever, **therefore**, people are deceived and form opinions wide of the truth; it is clear that the error has slid into their minds through the medium of certain resemblances to that truth.” Socrates, quoted in Plato’s Phaedrus.

References

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Lopate, Phillip, Ed. The Art of the Personal Essay. New York: Anchor Books Doubleday, 1994.