

# Transitions

## What is the Function of Transitional Words?

Single words can signal levels of importance, connections, and the direction of thoughts. For example, after a friend begins a sentence with "I like you very much," would you prefer that the next word be "and" or "however"? The word "and" signals more of the same, hinting that you could anticipate another pleasant compliment. On the other hand, "however" signals a change of thought, so brace yourself for a negative remark. If the next word were "consequently" or "therefore," you could anticipate a positive result or reward for the positive feelings.

Such words are transitions or signal words that connect parts of the sentences and lead readers to anticipate a continuation or a change in the writer's thoughts. Transitions also reveal organizational patterns.

## Patterns of Organization and Their Signal Words:

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| <b>Addition (providing additional examples):</b><br>furthermore, again, also, further, moreover, besides, likewise, and, indeed, in addition, too, next, first, second  | <b>Cause and Effect (showing one element as producing or causing a result or effect):</b><br><br>because, for this reason, consequently, hence, as a result, thus, due to, therefore, if, so, since |
| <b>Concession (acknowledging the merits of the counter argument before reasserting an opinion):</b><br>whereas, granted that, even though, though, yet, while, although | <b>Illustration (explaining using examples):</b><br><br>that is, for example, to illustrate, for instance, in fact, specifically, as seen in  |
| <b>Comparison (listing similarities among items):</b><br>in a similar way, similarly, parallels, likewise, in alike manner, also, in the same manner                    | <b>Contrast (listing differences among items):</b><br>on the other hand, more than, but, however, conversely, on the contrary, although, nevertheless, still, in contrast, yet, even though         |
| <b>Definition (defining a concept and expanding with examples and restatements):</b><br>can be defined, means, for example, like, in short, specifically                | <b>Description (listing characteristics or details using vivid language):</b><br><br>is, as, like, could be described (using adjectives, adverbs and language that touches on the senses)           |
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beside, around, to the right or left, opposite, meanwhile, then, while, immediately, also, another, several, for example

## **PRACTICE WITH TRANSITIONS:**

### ***What are transitions?***

They are certain words and phrases that signal connections between ideas, connections that might otherwise be missed. Transitions can be coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS: **for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so**); subordinating conjunctions (such as *although, since, and if*); conjunctive adverbs (such as *however, therefore* and *furthermore*); and transitional phrases (such as *in addition, for example* and *on the other hand*). Select from the included list of transitions or some from your own choosing and complete the following exercises; insert the proper punctuation where needed:

### **I. Complete the following sentences with an appropriate transition:**

1. Many people think that heavy fishing of a lake will eventually cause a serious depletion of the stock of fish \_\_\_\_\_ in a lake with a limited food supply, heavy fishing often increases the fish supply.
2. The basic promise of American society is equality of opportunity through education. The typical sub-standard big city school \_\_\_\_\_ is profoundly un-American.
3. The torrential rains in the Los Angeles area were highly destructive to the economy \_\_\_\_\_ the rains brought much needed water to the farmers, the destruction to property and crops was enormous.
4. Today, college women are finding many acceptable alternatives to the "graduate and get married" pattern of the past. Many women \_\_\_\_\_ are pursuing graduate degrees or joining the military.
5. The author argues that advertising is manipulative and devious. \_\_\_\_\_ the author provides convincing examples of the many half-truths used to sell products.

### **II. Make this disjointed argument cohesive and logical by joining sentences with appropriate joining words. You don't need to change the sequence of sentences:**

Obstetricians perform too many cesareans. They can schedule deliveries for their own convenience. They can avoid sleepless nights and canceled parties. They resort to cesareans in any difficult delivery to protect themselves against malpractice suits. Cesareans involve larger fees and hospital bills than normal deliveries. Cesarean patients spend about twice as many days in the hospital as other mothers.

The National Institutes of Health confirmed that doctors were performing many unnecessary cesarean sections. They suggested ways to reduce their use. The recommendation was widely publicized. The obstetricians apparently failed to take note. In 1985, the operation was performed in 16.5 percent of United States' births. In 1992, 24.7 percent of the births were Cesareans.

*Quick Punctuation Review for Joining Words:* put a comma before a coordinating conjunction when it joins two independent clauses; introductory subordinate clauses (clauses that begin with a subordinating conjunction) are usually followed by a comma; transitional words and phrases, because they do not join sentences but only connect ideas, should be preceded by a semicolon or a period when they come between two clauses.