

LUC WRITING CENTER - TRANSITIONS, OR “SIGNAL WORDS”

We use transitions in writing to connect ideas and signal to readers that we are moving through our discussion. Transitions help writers organize their papers and help readers understand how ideas and parts of the paper fit together. There are two different types of transitions: **Between Paragraphs** and **Between Sentences**.

Between Paragraphs:

Each of your paragraphs should refer to a previous idea. In order to make sure the ideas flow logically, we use transitions between paragraphs to link ideas and show readers how the paragraphs are connected.

Some example phrases include:

- While ___ suggests ___, ___ suggests ___
- After looking at ___, we move to _____
- In addition, ___ also argues ___

Between Sentences:

We use transitions between sentences to link ideas and help the sentences flow logically and coherently. Some ways to include transitions:

1. **Use transition words** such as *first*, *next*, *however*, and *in addition* to show the relationships among sentences and ideas.
2. **Repeat key words or phrases** to tie related sentences together. (See boldface text below.)

The new black middle class came of age in the 1960s during an unprecedented American **economic boom** and in the hub of a thriving **mass culture**. The **economic boom** made luxury goods and convenient services available to large numbers of hard-working Americans for the first time. American **mass culture** presented models of the good life principally in terms of conspicuous consumption and hedonistic indulgence.
—Cornel West, *Race Matters**

3. **Use parallel phrases**—phrases that begin with the same word or that share the same grammatical structure—to emphasize connections among similar examples or related pieces of information. (See boldface text below.)

I spent my two days at Disneyland taking rides. **I took** a bobsled through the Matterhorn and a submarine under the Polar Ice Cap and a rocket jet to the Cosmic Vapor Curtain. **I took** Peter Pan’s Flight, Mr. Toad’s Wild Ride, Alice’s Scary Adventures, and Pinocchio’s Daring Journey. **I took** a steamboat and a jungle boat. **I took** the Big Thunder Mountain Railroad to Coyote Country and the Splash Mountain roller coaster to Critter Country. [...] More precisely, those rides **took** me: up and down and around sudden corners and over rooftops, and all I had to do was sit back and let whatever conveyance I was sitting in do the driving.
—William Zinsser, *American Places**

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*Examples from Pearson Writer “Common Transition Words and Phrases”

Common Transition Words and Phrases:

To Add: and, again, and then, besides, finally, further, too, in addition, moreover, as equally important, as well, also, furthermore, likewise, moreover, similarly, still, next

To Compare/Contrast: but, yet, on the other hand, however, nevertheless, on the contrary, by comparison, where, compared to, although, conversely, meanwhile, after all, in contrast, nonetheless, rather, instead

To Prove: because, for, since, for the same reason, furthermore, moreover, indeed, in fact, as a result, consequently, accordingly, thus

To Show Exception: yet, still, however, nevertheless, in spite of, despite, of course, aside from, barring, except, excluding, other than, save

To Show Time/Sequence: immediately, thereafter, soon, finally, then, later, previously, formerly, first (second, third, fourth, etc.), next, first of all, to begin with, in turn, meanwhile, afterward, in conclusion, following, subsequently, previously, simultaneously, concurrently, after, before, consequently, previously, hence

To Repeat/Summarize: as I have said, as I have noted, as I have shown, as a result, in brief, in short, finally, to summarize, therefore, after all, in any case, in other words, once again, consequently

To Emphasize: definitely, extremely, surprisingly, without a doubt, certainly, above all, chiefly, especially, particularly

To Give an Example: for example, for instance, to illustrate, in this situation, to demonstrate, in this case, in particular, namely, specifically, such as, including

To Generalize: as a rule, for the most part, generally speaking, usually