



Transition Signals

Transition signals are connecting words or phrases that act like bridges between parts of your writing. They link your sentences and paragraphs together smoothly so that there are no abrupt jumps or breaks between ideas. Transition signals act like signposts to indicate to the reader the order and flow of your writing and ideas. They strengthen the internal cohesion of your writing. Using transitions makes it easier for the reader to follow your ideas. They help carry over a thought from one sentence to another, from one paragraph to another, or from one idea to another.

There are several different transition signals. Some lead your reader forward and imply the building of an idea or thought, while others make your reader compare ideas or draw conclusions from the preceding thoughts. The following words and phrases can be used to indicate transitions and to cur your reader about how ideas are logically connected in your writing.

► To introduce an example:

especially
for example
for instance
frequently

in this case
one example of this is
on this occasion
specifically

take the case of
to demonstrate
to illustrate

► To show agreement:

of course
certainly

admittedly
no doubt

it is true that

► To introduce an additional idea:

additionally
again
also
and
and then
another

as well as
besides
equally important
finally
further
furthermore

in addition
moreover
one could also say
nor
not to mention

► To indicate sequence or order, or logically divide an idea:

after
afterwards
and then
at this point
at this time
before,
concurrently

eventually
finally
first
followed by
last
meanwhile
next

previously
second
simultaneously
subsequently
third
ultimately

► To indicate time:

after,
afterwards
at this point
at this time
before
during

earlier
finally
formerly
immediately
initially
later

previously
prior to
soon
then
thereafter
to this day

► To compare:

another way to view this
balanced against
by comparison

just like
likewise
like

similarly
whereas
while

► To contrast:

a different view is
and
balanced against
but
conversely
differing from

even so
however
in contrast
on the contrary
on the other hand

nevertheless
notwithstanding
still
unlike
yet

► To introduce an opposite idea or show exception:

alternatively
but
despite
even though
however

in contrast
in spite of
instead
nevertheless
one could also say

on the other hand
still
whereas
while
yet

► To show cause and effect:

and so
as a consequence
as a result

consequently
for this reason
hence

therefore
thus

► To summarise or conclude:

as a result
as shown
consequently
finally
hence
in brief

in conclusion
in other words
in summary
on the whole
summing up

therefore
thus
to conclude
to summarise
ultimately

Below is an example of how using transitional words and phrases can improve the quality of a piece of writing. Note how the ideas flow more smoothly, and the logical relationships between the ideas expressed are clearer in the second paragraph.

Nothing is known about Adrian's birth. We know that, during his early years, he was raised by hedgehogs in Birmingham, England. This upbringing would have a lasting effect on him. Adrian is a nocturnal creature who has been known to curl himself into a ball on occasion. The diet on which Adrian likely subsisted when he was young, namely insects, left him with a phobia for anything with more than four legs. Adrian was able to lead a relatively normal life. Mr. and Mrs. Smith rescued him from the Birmingham hedgehogs. The Smiths set about teaching Adrian how to behave in the world of humans. They taught him to speak English. They taught him to read. They sent him to school for the Arts. Adrian quickly became a talented guitar player. He decided that if he could not be a professional musician, he would curl himself into a ball forever. Adrian met some fellow musicians who were as talented as he. They formed a band that became a huge success.

It is true that nothing is known about Adrian's birth, **but** we know that, during his early years, he was raised by hedgehogs in Birmingham, England. This upbringing would have a lasting effect on him; **for example**, Adrian is a nocturnal creature who has been known to curl himself into a ball on occasion. **In addition**, the diet on which Adrian likely subsisted when he was young, namely insects, left him with a phobia for anything with more than four legs. **Nevertheless**, Adrian was able to lead a relatively normal life **after** Mr. and Mrs. Smith rescued him from the Birmingham hedgehogs. The Smiths set about teaching Adrian how to behave in the world of humans. **First**, they taught him to speak English. **Second**, they taught him to read. **Finally**, they sent him to a school for the Arts. **As a result**, Adrian quickly became a talented guitar player, **and** he decided that if he could not be a professional musician, he would curl himself into a ball forever. **Ultimately**, Adrian met some fellow musicians who, **in comparison**, were as talented as he, **and** they **soon** formed a band that became a huge success.