

# Transition Words

**Transitions** are words or phrases that show relationships between ideas. Two major types of transitions are words that show addition and words that show time.

## Words that Show Addition

Put a check (✓) beside the item that is easier to read and understand:

\_\_\_\_\_ There are several reasons not to fill babies' bottles with sugary juice. It can rot their teeth.

\_\_\_\_\_ There are several reasons not to fill babies' bottles with sugary juice. First of all, it can rot their teeth.

**Addition words** signal added ideas. These words tell you a writer is presenting on or more ideas that continue along the same line of thought as a previous idea. Here are some common words that show addition:

One	To begin with	Also	Further
First (of all)	For one thing	In addition	Furthermore
Second (ly)	Other	Next	Last (of all)
Third (ly)	Another	Moreover	Final (ly)

### **Examples:**

- Depression can be eased through therapy and medication. Physical exercise has *also* been shown to help.
- Most people choose a partner about as attractive as themselves. *Moreover*, personality and intelligence affect their choice.
- Bananas are the most frequently purchased fruit in the US. Why are they so popular? *To begin with*, they are convenient to carry around and to eat.

## Words that Show Time

Put a check (✓) beside the item that is easier to read and understand:

\_\_\_\_\_ The dog begins to tremble and hide under the couch. A thunderstorm approaches.

\_\_\_\_\_ The dog begins to tremble and hide under the couch when a thunderstorm approaches.

**Time words** tell us at what point something happened in relation to when something else happened. Here are some common words that show time:

Before	Immediately	When	Until
Previously	Next	Whenever	Often
First (of all)	Then	While	Frequently
Second (ly)	Following	During	Eventually
Third (ly)	Later	As (soon as)	Final (ly)
Now	After	By	Last (of all)

*Note:* Some additional ways of showing time are dates (In 1890, By 2012), and other time references (Within a week, In two years).

### **Examples:**

- The old woman on the park bench opened a paper bag, and a flock of pigeons *immediately* landed all around her.
- *After* completing medical school, a future doctor continues her training as a "resident" in a hospital.
- *In August 2005*, Hurricane Katrina caused tremendous devastation in New Orleans.

### List of Items Pattern

Arrange the following sentences in a logical order. Put a 1 in front of the sentence that should go first, a 2 in front of the sentence that should come next, and so on. The result will be a short paragraph.

- \_\_\_ Next is moderate poverty, defined as living on \$1 to \$2 a day, which refers to conditions in which basic needs are met, but just barely.
- \_\_\_ Nearly half of the six billion people in the world experience one of three degrees of poverty.
- \_\_\_ Last, relative poverty, defined by a household income level below a given proportion of the national average, means lacking things that the middle class now takes for granted.
- \_\_\_ First is extreme poverty, defined by the World Bank as getting by on an income of less than \$1 a day, which means that households cannot meet such basic needs for survival as food, clothing, and shelter.

A **list of items** refers to a series of reasons, examples, facts, or other supporting details that support an idea. The items have no time order, but are listed in whatever order the author prefers.

### Time Order Pattern

Arrange the following sentences in a logical order. Put a 1 in front of the sentence that should go first, a 2 in front of the sentence that should come next, and so on. The result will be a short paragraph.

- \_\_\_ Then, in 1638, a press in Cambridge, Massachusetts printed a book of psalms that became an instant bestseller.
- \_\_\_ Eventually, in 1731, Benjamin Franklin asked fifty subscribers to help him start America's first circulating library.
- \_\_\_ The first books in the US were imports, brought by the new settlers.
- \_\_\_ During the years that followed, booksellers emerged in the Boston area, and by 1685 the leading bookseller offered over three thousand books.

The **time order** pattern is used frequently. Textbooks in all fields describe events and processes in the order in which they occurred. In addition, most fiction and biography uses time order. The two most common kinds of time order are 1) a series of events or stages, and 2) a series of steps.

## Words that Involve Illustration

Put a check (✓) beside the item that is easier to read and understand:

\_\_\_\_\_ Some common beliefs are really myths. Getting a chill will not give you a cold.

\_\_\_\_\_ Some common beliefs are really myths. For instance, getting a chill will not give you a cold.

**Illustration words** indicate that an author will provide one or more examples to develop and clarify a given idea. Here are some common words that show illustration:

(For) example	Such as	Specifically	(As an) illustration	One
(For) instance	Including	To be specific	To illustrate	Once

### **Examples:**

- A number of famous historical figures, *including* Beethoven, Charles Dickens, and Winston Churchill, suffered from depression.
- Although they are children's stories, famous fairy tales, *such as* "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Snow White" are clearly filled with dark symbolic meaning.

## Words that Show Comparison

Put a check (✓) beside the item that is easier to read and understand:

\_\_\_\_\_ As a fish swims, it moves its tail to propel the fish forward, applying force against the water. In a rocket motor, forces are exerted by hot gases from the tail end, propelling the rocket forward.

\_\_\_\_\_ As a fish swims, it moves its tail to propel the fish forward, applying force against the water. Similarly, in a rocket motor, forces are exerted by hot gases from the tail end, propelling the rocket forward

**Comparison words** signal similarities. Authors use a comparison transition to show that a second idea is like the first one in some way. Here are some common words that show Comparison:

(Just) as	Same	Resemble	Similarity
(Just) like	Both	Likewise	(In) common
Alike	Equal (ly)	Similar (ly)	The same way

### **Examples:**

- Very young and very old people *resemble* one another in their dependence upon those around them.
- Car manufacturers often show beautiful women with their products, as if to suggest that owning the car will bring social rewards. *In the same way*, alcohol ads typically show people in fun or romantic settings.

### Words that Show Contrast

Put a check (✓) beside the item that is easier to read and understand:

- \_\_\_\_\_ The movie was boring and pointless. It featured a talented cast and an award-winning screenwriter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The movie was boring and pointless even though it featured a talented cast and an award-winning screenwriter.

**Contrast words** signal that an author is pointing out differences between subjects. A contrast word shows that two things differ in one or more ways. They also inform us that something is going to differ from what we might expect.

But	Instead (of)	Even though	Different (ly)
Yet	In contrast	As opposed to	Differ (from)
However	On the other hand	In spite of	Unlike
Although	(On the) contrary	Despite	While
Nevertheless	Converse (ly)	Rather than	
Still	Opposite	Difference	

#### **Examples:**

- *While* mammals have internal mechanisms that regulate body temperature, cold-blooded animals such as lizards must regulate their temperature by external means, such as lying in the sun.
- Corporate executives urged employees to buy the company's stock *despite* the fact that they were selling it themselves.

### Words that Show Cause and Effect

Put a check (✓) beside the item that is easier to read and understand:

- \_\_\_\_\_ The best time to buy a car is near the end of the month. Car dealers often have a monthly quota of cars to sell.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The best time to buy a car is near the end of the month because car dealers often have a monthly quota of cars to sell.

**Cause and effect words** signal that the author is explaining the reason that something happened or the result of something happening.

Therefore	So	Owing to	Because (of)
Thus	(As a) result	Effect	Reason
(As a) consequence	Results in	Cause	Explanation
Consequently	Leads (led) to	If... then	Accordingly
Due to	Since	Affect	Depend(s) on

#### **Examples:**

- The student wanted to concentrate on studying for exams. *Therefore*, he locked his television in the closet.
- Do not refrigerate potatoes. The *reason* is that a potato's starch will turn to sugar at low temperatures, making the vegetables taste odd.