Transitions

Student Name:

Instructor:

Date:

Course:

## Important Note

All the activities (5) in the DLA must be completed in their entirety before receiving credit for completion. Students are welcome to meet with a tutor if they need help, but please be aware that students might need a second appointment for review and Tutoring Session Response (TSR) in that case. If your instructor wants evidence of this completed DLA, return the TSR that indicates a checked “completed the DLA” box.

## Learning Outcomes

Through exercises and other independent work, this activity will help you learn different techniques to effectively transition between points within a paragraph and between paragraphs.

## Activities (approximately 1 hour)

Read the information, complete the activities that follow, and be prepared to discuss your answers when you meet with a tutor.

# Understanding Transitions

The function of a transition is to guide the reader from one topic to the next. Writers may choose to transition within paragraphs or between them. In fact, it is usually important to use transitions between both. Transitions offer your reader valuable information about how ideas, thoughts, and paragraphs are connected, and they serve as “road maps” to how everything is connected in a paper. Without transitions, you could confuse your reader.

## Connecting Ideas within a Paragraph Using Transition Words

The following list shows some of the most common transitions used when moving from point to point *within* a paragraph. However, you can’t just plop the word in. Instead, you have to punctuate it properly. Please read the following rules on how to correctly punctuate transition words:

1. If you *begin* a sentence with a transition word, place a comma after it.

* **Of course,** Teri was not really surprised.
* **However,** the others had simply not expected it.

1. If you place the transition word in the *middle* of your sentence, place a comma before and after the transition word.

* Sabrina and Barbie were**, of course,** happy to be in class.
* David**, however,** was not so sure.
* JoJo**, on the other hand,** was already at Happy Hour.

1. If you place the transition word in the *middle of two complete sentences*, make sure to use a semi-colon, transition word, and a comma.

* Jenn won the chemistry award**; of course,** she deserved it.
* Kim wanted to go to the party**; however,** she knew she should study.

Words used to show **time:** first, meanwhile, soon, then, second, today, later, next, at, third, tomorrow, afterward, as soon as, now, next week, about, suddenly, during, until, yesterday, finally, subsequently

Words that show **location:** above, behind, by, near, throughout, across, below, down, off, to the right (or left), against, beneath, in back of, onto, under, along, beside, in front of, on top of, among, between, inside, outside, around, beyond, into, over

Words used to **compare** two things: likewise, also, in the same way, like, as, similarly

Words used to **contrast** two things: still, on the other hand, however, yet, otherwise, even though, nevertheless, in contrast, instead, otherwise

Words used to **emphasize a point:** again, especially, for this reason, to repeat, to emphasize, in fact

Words that **conclude or summarize:** finally, as a result, to sum up, in conclusion, lastly, therefore, all in all

Words used to **add information:** additionally, another, finally, moreover, again, and, for instance, next, also, along, with, for example, other, as well, besides, in addition, furthermore

Words used to **clarify:** that is, for instance, in other words

Words used to show **cause and effect:** therefore, thus, hence, as a result, consequently

## Connecting Ideas within a Paragraph Using Coordinators and Subordinators

The following chart shows coordinators and common subordinators used when moving from point to point *within* a paragraph. Like transition words, you can’t just plop the subordinators and coordinators in. Instead, you have to punctuate them properly. Please read the following rules on how to correctly punctuate coordinators and subordinators:

| **Relationship** | **Coordinators** | **Subordinators** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Addition* | and, nor |  |
| *Cause/Effect* | so | because, since, in order that, in order for |
| *Effect/Cause* | for | because, since, in order that, in order for |
| *Compare* |  | as, as if, as though |
| *Contrast* | but, yet | although, though, even though, while, whereas |
| *Concession* |  | although, though, even though, while, whereas |
| *Alternative* | or |  |
| *Condition* |  | if, unless, whether, until, as long as, as much as, even if |
| *Time* |  | after, before, since, until, while, when, whenever, as soon as |

**Using Coordinators:** When using coordinators to join two sentences, always make sure to place a comma before the coordinator. This comma rule is also known as FANBOYS.

* Elaine needed someone to proofread her paper**, so**  Stephanie volunteered.
* Juan has almost finished his draft**, but**  Brian is still working on his.

**Using Subordinators:** When using subordinators to transition between ideas, make sure to put a comma in the correct place. If the subordinator comes first in the sentence, there will most likely be a comma at the end of the clause (#1). If the subordinator comes in the middle of the sentence (#2), you will most likely NOT need a comma.

* **When the students left,** the room was suddenly silent.
* The room was suddenly silent **when the students left**.

## Connecting Paragraphs

Although *however* and other transitional words can help writers make clear connections between ideas and paragraphs, they are not the only way to do so. When a writer needs to move to a new paragraph, they can use a transition or transitional phrase that is stronger and clearer than what we discussed earlier in the DLA. In this situation, a writer can use a clause or phrase to connect paragraphs.

In this example, notice how the ending of the first paragraph flows into the beginning of the next paragraph rather than becoming separate ideas that have no relation:

**Ultimately**, Auster’s character must blur reality with fiction in order to explain the nature of his traumatic experience.

**To highlight this**, in one example from Auster’s story, Bowen visits a hotel where a traumatic incident occurred due to ceilings collapsing and killing innocent people.

Sometimes paragraphs will be about two contrasting ideas. The example below uses a transitional phrase to indicate the contrasting relationship between the two:

…highlighting Caruth’s ideas on the temporal delay involved in processing trauma.

**On the other hand**, Sidney unconsciously displays his own feelings about his traumatic event through the writing of his character as he attempts to move past the trauma he experienced.

Lastly, if you want to show similarities between ideas in your paragraphs, that could look something like this:

When an unexpected and overwhelming event occurs, one’s consciousness does not have the time to filter it and block the impact of the event.

**In a similar fashion**, people who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, find it difficult to have control over the memory of the traumatic event.

All the examples so far have been simple word or phrase transitions. Another variation of the paragraph transition is the “idea transition.” The principle is the same; you use something from the previous paragraph, but instead of repeating an exact word or phrase, you refer to the idea just expressed, compressing it into a single phrase:

Sidney Orr’s character continues to be viewed as an interesting form of processing trauma beyond what Caruth argues.

**This view** of Orr’s character could be a way of looking at trauma and how to move on from it through an artistic mode, such as writing.

In the examples above, no exact words or phrases are repeated from the first paragraphs. However, the transitions are clearly there; the referential *this view* nicely brings the paragraphs together.

# Activities

Check off each box once you have completed the activity.

## 1. Transitions Review

In your own words, explain why writers need to use transitions.

| Write the answer |
| --- |
|  |
|  |
| What are some examples of common transition words or phrases? |

## 2. Identify Transitional Words

Using the lists of transitions from this DLA, find and underline all the transitional words in the following paragraph. The first sentence is marked as an example.

Another reason why people might disagree with homeschooling is that it could not allow for proper social development. For example, extra-curricular activities and passing periods are some of the many ways that students get to interact with one another. Also, it puts a lot of pressure on the parents to ensure that they are qualified to effectively teach each subject, and while parents sometimes decide on this route to offset overcrowded classroom and underfunded school districts, it can, unfortunately, have drawbacks for both student and parents. Finally, because parents have authority over their child’s education, a lot of research must be done by parents before making such a decision.

## 3. Insert Transition Words

Add transitions in the following paragraph.

In recent years, there has been a significant shift in public opinion; \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, people are becoming more aware of the consequences their actions have on the planet. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, there has been a growing demand for sustainable products and eco-friendly practices, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ governments worldwide are implementing stricter regulation in an attempt to combat climate change. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the global perspective on environmental responsibility is evolving, and this shift is shaping the way we live, work, and interact with our environment.

## 4a. Revise Your Own Work

Collect some of your written work. Identify areas where you have transitioned between ideas or places where you could compose a transition. Bring this revised work with you to the DLA tutoring session.

**If you do not have your own writing to work with, please complete the supplemental activity below (4b).**

## 4b. Write Sentences with Transitions

Fix these sentences by adding a transition. You can choose to either combine the sentences with a transition or keep them separate but add a transition where appropriate.

Ex: Use a cause/effect transition word.

I forgot to charge my phone. It died during a phone call with my mom.

Option 1: I forgot to charge my phone**, so** it died during a phone call with my mom.

Option 2: I forgot to charge my phone. **Therefore**, it died during a phone call with my mom.

| Write the answer. |
| --- |
| 1. Use a transition word to add information. |
| We found that the medicine was effective. It appeared to have additional effects we had not predicted. |
|  |
| 1. Use a transition word of time/sequence. |
| We made sure to get to the airport early. We stopped for coffee since it was a morning flight. |
|  |
|  |
| 1. Use a cause/effect transition word. |
| Inflation drives up the everyday prices of living. Gas has become even more expensive for drivers. |
|  |
|  |
| 1. Use a transition word to contrast. |
| The novel does deal with the theme of family. Its central theme is more broadly political. |
|  |
|  |
| 1. Use a different transition word to contrast. |
| It rained for the first time in months this morning. I drove carefully on my way to work this morning. |
|  |
|  |

## 5. Review the DLA

Go to https://mtsac.edu/writingcenter and use the [EAB Navigate Appointment System](https://mtsac.campus.eab.com/) to make a DLA appointment either online or in-person in the Writing Center. During your session with a tutor, explain your understanding of transitioning between points and paragraphs. Consider the main concept you learned in this DLA. Explain to the tutor the benefits and challenges of transitioning.

**Sign-off procedure:**

* **Attach TSR (Tutoring Session Response) to your DLA. There will be a check box that the tutor will select to indicate that you have completed the DLA or that the DLA is still in-progress.**

If you are an individual with a disability and need a greater level of accessibility for any document in The Writing Center or on The Writing Center’s website, please contact the Mt. SAC Accessible Resource Centers for Students, [access@mtsac.edu](mailto:access@mtsac.edu), (909) 274-4290.

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