

## COM 9: Transitions

Transitions serve as signals to your readers to help navigate between ideas in your paper. Transitions between sentences and paragraphs are essential for clarity and readability. Without them, writing can sound choppy and disconnected. When incorporating transitions, be sure to choose those that best communicate the connection you are trying to make between sentences, paragraphs, and/or ideas. **Keep in mind: A transition can be a single word, a phrase, or a complete sentence.**

Here are some examples of **transitions** in practice:

First, we must consider all the applicants; then, we can decide.

*In this sentence, the transition words communicate the order in which the events must happen.*

It rained this afternoon; therefore, I did not get to finish mowing the lawn.

*Here, the transition indicates a cause and effect relationship.*

Bob wants to earn his doctorate; however, he hasn't yet been accepted into a program.

*This transition indicates a contrast between the two ideas.*

There are different kinds of transitions for different relationships between ideas. Transitions can signify **sequence/chronology**, **cause/effect**, **contrast**, **comparison**, and **so on**. Here are some suggestions for transition words and phrases to indicate these types of relationships:

Sequence/Chronology	Cause/Effect	Contrast	Comparison
First, initially	Therefore	However	Moreover, furthermore
Before	Consequently	Although	In addition, additionally
Suddenly	As a result	Otherwise	Likewise
Meanwhile	So	Yet	Similarly
Eventually	Accordingly	Nevertheless	In fact
Finally, lastly	In order to	Even though	Also

When transitioning between paragraphs or sections within a text, a sentence is frequently used to move between ideas. Often, keywords (like those above) are still used to show the relationship between the ideas in transition sentences.

Avoid overusing or repeating the same transitional phrases in your paper — keep it interesting for your reader!

Use the following method to revise your entire work for transitions:



## Revising for Better Transitions

1. Grab a pen—this will be easiest if you choose a color that will stand out on the page.
2. Start at the introduction. Each time you change ideas, **underline** the existing transition. If no transition exists, **circle** the place where a transition should be.
3. Go back to the beginning of your paper. For each circle, decide what kind of transition is needed. Ask yourself how these two ideas are related — Chronologically? Causally? In contrast? It's up to you whether your transition is short (a word) or longer (a sentence). If you aren't sure, try a couple of options and read them aloud to hear how they sound.
4. If you're starting to feel comfortable with transitions, try going back over places where you used single transition words and ask how you could make those transitions more in-depth and interesting.
5. Find a reader who can give you feedback on your transitions. If your reader has trouble following along, make a note of the problem areas so that you can return to them later.

Revising for transitions can sometimes show places in your work where reorganization is needed. Don't be afraid to move paragraphs around if you think it will help your audience follow along. Revising can (and should!) happen throughout the writing process.

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