

Transitional words and phrases

As a "part of speech," **transitional words** are used to link words, phrases, or sentences. They help the reader to progress from one idea (expressed by the author) to the next idea. Thus, they help to build up coherent relationships within the text.

Transitional Words

English transitional words and phrases are essential, since they not only connect ideas, but also can introduce a certain shift, contrast or opposition, emphasis or agreement, purpose, or result or conclusion, in the line of argument.

(The transitional words and phrases below have been assigned only once to somewhat artificial categories, although some words belong to more than one category.)

Agreement / Addition / Similarity

The transitional words like **also, in addition, and likewise, add information, reinforce ideas, and express agreement with preceding material.**

in the first place	not only ... but also
as a matter of fact	in like manner
in addition	coupled with
in the same fashion / way	first, second, third
in the light of	not to mention
to say nothing of	equally important
equally	by the same token
identically	uniquely
moreover	as well as
together with	of course
likewise	comparatively
correspondingly	similarly
furthermore	additionally

Opposition / Limitation / Contradiction

Transitional phrases like **but**, **rather**, and **or**, express that there is evidence to the **contrary** or point out **alternatives**, and thus introduce a change in the line of reasoning (**contrast**).

although this may be true	in contrast
different from	of course ..., but
on the other hand	on the contrary
at the same time	in spite of
even so / though	be that as it may
then again	above all
in reality	after all
unlike	(and) still
(and) yet	while
albeit	besides
as much as	even though
although	instead
whereas	despite
conversely	otherwise
nevertheless	nonetheless
regardless	notwithstanding
however	rather

Cause / Condition / Purpose

These transitional phrases present specific **conditions** or **intentions**.

in the event that	granted (that)
as / so long as	on (the) condition (that)
for the purpose of	with this intention
with this in mind	in the hope that
to the end that	for fear that
in order to	seeing / being that
in view of	If ..., then
unless	whenever
while	because of
since	in case
provided that	given that
only / even if	so that
so as to	owing to
inasmuch as	due to / thanks to

Examples / Support / Emphasis

These transitional devices (like **especially**) are used to introduce examples as **support**, to indicate **importance** or as an **illustration** so that an idea is cued to the reader.

in other words	to put it differently
for one thing	as an illustration
in this case	for this reason
to put it another way	that is to say
with attention to	by all means
important to realize	another key point

first thing to remember	most compelling evidence
must be remembered	point often overlooked
to point out	on the positive side
with this in mind	on the negative side
notably	including
to be sure	namely
chiefly	truly
indeed	certainly
surely	markedly
such as	especially
explicitly	specifically
expressly	surprisingly
particularly	in fact
in general	in particular
in detail	for example
for instance	to demonstrate
to emphasize	to repeat
to clarify	to explain
to enumerate	significantly

Effect / Consequence / Result

Some of these transition words (**thus, then, accordingly, consequently, therefore, henceforth**) are time words that are used to show that **after** a particular time there was a **consequence** or an **effect**.

as a result	under those circumstances
in that case	for this reason
because the	hence
consequently	therefore

thereupon	forthwith
accordingly	henceforth
in effect	thus

Conclusion / Summary / Restatement

These transitional words and phrases **conclude**, **summarize** and / or **restate** ideas, or indicate a final **general statement**. Also, some words (like **therefore**) from the **Effect / Consequence** category can be used to summarize.

as can be seen	generally speaking
in the final analysis	all things considered
as shown above	in the long run
given these points	as has been noted
in a word	for the most part
after all	in fact
in summary	in conclusion
in short	in brief
in essence	to summarize
on balance	altogether
overall	ordinarily
usually	by and large
to sum up	on the whole
in any event	in either case
all in all	obviously
ultimately	definitely

Time / Chronology / Sequence

These transitional words (like **finally**) have the function of limiting, restricting, and defining **time**. They can be used either alone or as part of **adverbial expressions**.

at the present time	from time to time
sooner or later	at the same time
up to the present time	to begin with
in due time	as soon as
as long as	in the meantime
in a moment	without delay
in the first place	all of a sudden
at this instant	first, second
formerly	henceforth
eventually	meanwhile
prior to	presently

Many transitional words in the time category (**consequently; first, second, third; further; hence; henceforth; since; then, when; and whenever**) have other uses.

Except for the numbers (**first, second, third**) and **further**, they add a meaning of **time** in expressing conditions, qualifications, or reasons. The numbers are also used to **add information** or **list examples**.

List of Transitional Words

Transition Words and Phrases		
in the first place	again	moreover
not only ... but also	to	as well as
as a matter of fact	and	together with
in like manner	also	of course
in addition	then	likewise
coupled with	equally	comparatively
in the same fashion / way	identically	correspondingly
first, second, third	uniquely	similarly
in the light of	like	furthermore
not to mention	as	additionally
to say nothing of	too	
equally important		
by the same token		
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as can be seen	after all	overall
generally speaking	in fact	ordinarily
in the final analysis	in summary	usually
all things considered	in conclusion	by and large
as shown above	in short	to sum up
in the long run	in brief	on the whole
given these points	in essence	in any event
as has been noted	to summarize	in either case
in a word	on balance	all in all
for the most part	altogether	

Usage of Transition Words in Essays

Transitional words and phrases are vital devices for **essays**, papers or other literary compositions. They improve the connections and transitions between sentences and paragraphs. They thus give the text a logical organization and structure.

All English **transitional words** and **phrases** (sometimes also called 'conjunctive adverbs') do the same work as **coordinating conjunctions**: they connect two words, phrases, or clauses together and, thus, the text is easier to read and the coherence is improved.

Usage: Transitional words are used with a special rule for **punctuation**: a semicolon or a period is used after the first 'sentence,' and a comma is almost always used to set off the transition word from the second 'sentence.'

Example 1:

People use 43 muscles when they frown; however, they use only 28 muscles when they smile.

Example 2:

However, transitional words can also be placed at the beginning of a new paragraph or sentence - not only to indicate a step forward in the reasoning, but also to relate the new material to the preceding thoughts.

Use a semicolon to connect sentences, only if the group of words on either side of the semicolon is a complete sentence (both must have a subject and a verb, and could thus stand alone as a complete thought).