

Handout Topic: Paragraph Transitions

What is a paragraph transition?

Every paragraph should have a relationship to the previous paragraph. Using key phrases or words from a previous paragraph at the start of the next one can make a natural transition. Transitional words or phrases allow the reader to understand not only the connection between different paragraphs, but also the connection between a particular paragraph and the main point (i.e. the thesis) of your writing.

Transitional Devices:

Transitional devices are words or short phrases that can help link paragraphs to one another. Some of the devices listed below can be used with more than one effect, and some are better suited for informal writing than academic essays. Always keep in mind your intended audience when choosing a transitional word or phrase.

Below are examples of the many different types of transitional expressions.

To signal an addition: and, again, besides, equally important, finally, furthermore, lastly, moreover, in addition, first (second, third, etc.)

To signal a comparison: whereas, yet, on the other hand, however, nevertheless, on the contrary, by comparison, although, meanwhile, in contrast

To signal an exception: yet, still, however, in spite of, despite, of course, once in a while

To signal time or a sequence: immediately, thereafter, finally, later, previously, formerly, first (second, third, etc.), next, and so forth, consequently, subsequently, thus, hence, therefore

To signal repetition: in brief, as has been noted, in essence, in other words, namely, that is, that is to say

To signal emphasis: obviously, in fact, indeed, without a doubt, undeniably, without reservation

To signal an example: for example, for instance, in another case, on this occasion, in this situation, to demonstrate, to illustrate

To signal a conclusion: in brief, to conclude, in conclusion, hence, therefore, accordingly, thus, as a result, consequently

To signal cause or effect: accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, otherwise, therefore, thus

Examples of paragraph transitions:

- 1. Example:** One of Mount Saint Vincent University's best features is its small student population. The average class size is 25-30 students.
Students have many opportunities to meet in one-on-one conferences with their professors. This gives each student the opportunity to discuss class assignments.

Revision: One of Mount Saint Vincent University's best features is its small student population. The average class size is 25-30 students.
As a result, students have many opportunities to meet in one-on-one conferences with their professors. This gives each student the opportunity to discuss class assignments.
- 2. Example:** Napoleon and his navy were no match for the British. In fact, Napoleon lost almost all of his sea battles.
The French army was very strong and powerful. Under Napoleon's orders, it conquered most of continental Europe.

Revision: Napoleon and his navy were no match for the British. In fact, Napoleon lost almost all of his sea battles.
On the other hand, the French army was very strong and powerful. Under Napoleon's orders, it conquered most of continental Europe.
- 3. Example:** In October, the history society had a bake sale, car wash, and book fair. The department chair was very proud of the students' efforts.
The history society does not have enough money to go on a trip to Ottawa. All of the students are extremely disappointed.

Revision: In October, the history society had a bake sale, car wash, and book fair. The department chair was very proud of the students' efforts.
Despite their fundraising efforts, the history society did not raise enough money to go on a trip to Ottawa. All of the students are extremely disappointed.