

TRANSITIONS



Transitions are words or phrases that provide bridges between sentences, parts of sentences, and paragraphs. They show relationships between ideas. A paragraph without transitions is difficult to read and often seems choppy; it does not “flow” because the reader has to provide the links between individual ideas.

Look at the following example:

☹ *I like autumn. Autumn is a sad time of year. The leaves turn to brilliant yellow and red. The weather is mild. I can't help thinking ahead to the coming of winter. Winter will bring snowstorms, slippery roads, and icy fingers. In winter the wind chill factor can make it dangerous to be outside. I find winter unpleasant. In autumn, I can't help thinking ahead to winter's arrival. I am sad when I think that winter is coming.*

☺ *Although I like autumn, it is a sad time of the year. Of course, the leaves turn to brilliant yellow and red, and the weather is mild. Still, I can't help thinking ahead to the coming of winter with its snowstorms, slippery roads, and icy fingers. Moreover, in winter the wind chill factor can make it dangerous to be outside. Because I find these things unpleasant, I can't help thinking ahead to winter's arrival in autumn. Truly, I am sad when I think that winter is coming.*

There are different ways to provide transitions in your writing. Subordination and coordination work only for individual sentences, but the other two methods link ideas within the same paragraph as well as between different paragraphs.

- **Use subordination and coordination to provide logical connection between ideas.**
Although I like autumn, it is a sad time of the year. ... Because I find these things unpleasant, I can't help thinking ahead to winter's arrival in autumn.
- **Repeat a key term or a key phrase. If repetition gets too tedious, use synonyms (=words or phrases meaning the same thing) to create the same effect.**
The largest ocean liner of its time set sail for New York in April 1912. This now-famous ship, the Titanic, never finished its voyage. It hit an enormous iceberg halfway though the trip and caused 2,227 passengers to head for the lifeboats, then, within hours, the mammoth vessel plunged beneath the icy Atlantic Ocean.
- **Use transitional words and phrases according to the meaning you are trying to convey. Consult the list on the back of this sheet for your options.**

Adding

and, besides, in addition, also, too, moreover, further, furthermore, next, first, second, third, finally, last, again, and then, likewise, similarly

Comparing

similarly, likewise, in like manner, at the same time, in the same way

Contrasting

but, yet, however, still, nevertheless, on the other hand, on the contrary, in contrast, conversely, in another sense, instead, rather, notwithstanding, though, whereas, after all, although

Emphasizing

indeed, in fact, above all, add to this, and also, even more, in any event, in other words, that is, obviously

Ending

after all, finally, in sum, for these reasons

Giving examples

for example, for instance, to illustrate, that is, namely, specifically

Pointing to cause and effect, proof, or conclusions

thus, therefore, consequently, because of this, hence, as a result, then, so, accordingly

Showing place or direction

over, above, inside, next to, underneath, to the left, to the right, just beyond, in the distance

Showing time

meanwhile, soon, later, afterward, now, in the past, then, next, before, during, while finally, after this, at last, since then, presently, temporarily, after a short time, at the same time, in the meantime

Summarizing

to sum up, in brief, on the whole, as has been noted, in conclusion, that is, finally, as has been said, in general, to recapitulate, to conclude, in other words

The above examples and overview come from Muriel Harris, *Prentice Hall Reference Guide*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NY: Prentice Hall, 2006.