

Transitions

“Transitions are words that establish logical relationships between sentences, between paragraphs, and between whole sections of an essay.”¹ These transitions can be whole sentences, phrases, or single words. **Transitional expressions** are special words used to show logical relationships. Make sure you understand what each expression means. Also, these are idioms, which means that the words are fixed; you can’t change any word or letter. You cannot use more than one of these expressions in the same sentence, e.g.:

Although people associate Calvin with the idea of work, *but* he also emphasized grace.

It is also important to vary the transitional expressions you use. For example, don’t use *however* over and over. You should also vary the position of transitional expressions within the sentence. Don’t always put them at the beginning of a sentence, e.g.:

However, the author of the Song of Songs is not so much concerned with the Law as she/he is with the truths of relationship.

The author of the Song of Songs, however, is not so much concerned with the Law as she/he is with the truths of relationship.

The author of the Song of Songs is not so much concerned with the Law as she/he is with the truths of relationship, however.

Remember that there are other ways to show logical relationships to link sentences and paragraphs. Think about these other ways:

Just as through, so through
This + summary word
In order to + verb,
Repeated words and phrases
Parallel structure
Logical order

If you have trouble finding the right transitional expression, it may be that your ideas are not in the right order and a sentence or paragraph needs to be moved to a different place in your paper. Transitions should serve to point out logical relationships that are already there because you have put your thoughts in logical order.

¹ Leonard J. Rosen and Laurence Behrens, *The Allyn & Bacon Handbook*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1994), 139.

Transitional Expressions:

To show addition	additionally, again, also, as well, besides, equally important, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, then, beyond that, for one thing, what is more
To show similarity	also, in the same way, just as...so too, likewise, similarly, each of, both, neither, like, in like manner
To contrast	in contrast, however, nevertheless, on the other hand, on the contrary, conversely, be that as it may, (but, while, yet, whereas, unlike, although, even though, despite the fact that, in spite of, despite)
To show an exception	but, however, in spite of, on the one hand...on the other hand, nevertheless, notwithstanding, in contrast, on the contrary, still, yet, nonetheless
To indicate sequence	first, second, third, secondly, next, then, finally
To show time	after, afterwards, at last, at present, briefly, before, currently, during, earlier, eventually, finally, gradually, immediately, in the future, later, meanwhile, now, recently, simultaneously, soon, subsequently, suddenly, then
To provide an example	for example, for instance, namely, specifically, to illustrate, another example of, as an illustration, one such, yet another
To emphasize a point, intensify	above all, especially, even, indeed, in fact, of course, truly, in particular, most important, surely on the contrary, as a matter of fact, in fact, indeed
To concede (a point)	certainly, granted that, of course, no doubt, to be sure
To indicate place	above, adjacent, below, beyond, here, in front, in back, nearby, there, outside of
To show cause or reason	as, because, for, since, because of, due to, as a result of
To show a result or effect	accordingly, and so, as a result, because of this, as a consequence, consequently, for this reason, hence, so, therefore, thus
To clarify	in other words, that is, i.e.
To qualify	perhaps
To conclude or repeat	finally, in a word, in brief, in conclusion, in the end, on the whole, thus, to conclude, to summarize, all in all, lastly, to sum up