

# transitions

*A transition is a stylistic technique that creates cohesion in your writing. Using transitions between your ideas helps your reader navigate your argument. This handout will help you identify and use different types of transitions.*

## General Info

Transitions indicate logical relationships between the ideas in your sentences, paragraphs, or sections. This section will explore different strategies for creating strong transitions.

### Transition Words and Phrases

Transition words and phrases are the easiest and most obvious transition devices. They act as signposts for your readers, guiding them along the path of your ideas. The remaining sections of this handout discuss words and phrases you can use to achieve specific connections between your thoughts.

However, you should be wary of overusing this type of transition. These words and phrases can't replace the cohesion achieved by using the other techniques described in this section. Remember, transitions are the glue that holds sentences and paragraphs together—you don't want large globs of it on your finished product.

### Demonstratives

Demonstratives are words based on a point of reference understood by the writer and the audience. Those things that are in close proximity to the point of reference are called **proximal** and those that are distant from it are called **distal**. Demonstratives have both adjective and pronoun forms.

Demonstratives				
	Adjective Form		Pronoun Form	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Proximal	This X	These X	This	These
Distal	That X	Those X	That	Those

Once you have introduced an idea or concept, using demonstratives is an easy way to connect it to following sentences. To increase the strength of the connection between sentences, favor demonstrative adjectives over pronouns.

**Pronouns (Weaker):** A recent study showed that pedestrian accidents have increased by 156%. This demonstrates the importance of the new legislation.

**Adjectives (Stronger):** A recent study showed that pedestrian accidents have increased by 156%. This finding demonstrates the importance of the new legislation.

*Note:* For more information on demonstratives, please see our “Pronouns” [handout](#).

## Articles

Generally, use indefinite articles (i.e., “a,” “an,” and “some”) when introducing nouns to the reader. In subsequent references, use the definite article (i.e., “the”).

**Example:** I read some blog posts and watched a movie last night. The posts were exciting, but the movie was boring.

*Note:* For more information on articles, please see our [handout](#) on this topic.

## Repetition of Key Terms

Repeating key terms across sentences helps your readers identify the most important information in your paragraph. Be consistent with your key terms—repeat them as exactly as possible.

**Different Terms (Weaker):** Another important concept for interpreting science fiction and fantasy is retroactive continuity or retcon. Simply defined, revisions in chronology occur when an element in a later installment of a series alters the established facts of previous episodes. When Darth Vader reveals to Luke Skywalker that he is his father in *The Empire Strikes Back*, this statement rewrites the continuity of the original Star Wars, retroactively changing the previously established fact that Luke’s father was, as Obi-wan Kenobi had explained, killed by Vader. In this way, changes in the timeline force the audience to return to the past and reread, rethinking established knowledge and reconsidering what is real—it is an epistemology of revision, an ontology of second glances.

**Exact Terms (Stronger):** Another important concept for interpreting science fiction and fantasy is retroactive continuity or retcon. Simply defined, retcon occurs when an element in a later installment of a series alters the established facts of previous episodes. When Darth Vader reveals to Luke Skywalker that he is his father in *The Empire Strikes Back*, this statement retcons the original *Star Wars*, retroactively changing the previously established fact that Luke’s father was, as Obi-wan Kenobi had explained, killed by Vader. In this way, retcon forces the audience to return to the past and reread, rethinking established knowledge and reconsidering what is real—it is an epistemology of revision, an ontology of second glances.

## Something Old, Something New

Place information that your readers are familiar with toward the beginning of your sentence. Introduce new information toward the end. In this pattern, the new information of your first sentence becomes the old information of your second.

**Example (Old information/New information):** One of the most important achievements of the past century was the moon landing. This feat is impressive in its own right, but possibly more impressive is the list of inventions and discoveries produced along the way. Surprisingly, one invention that is not on this list is Velcro. Though many people associate Velcro with the space race, it was first patented in 1955 by George de Mestral.

## The Ultimate Test

If you are not confident that your sentences or paragraphs have strong transitions, try the following activity. First, place each sentence or paragraph on its own PowerPoint slide. Rearrange these slides in a random order. Then, have friends or family members try to put your sentences or paragraphs back into their proper order. If they are easily able to put everything in its correct

sequence, your transitions are strong.

## Examples & Illustrations

Use these transitions to support your arguments with evidence.

Examples and Illustrations			
An example of	For example	For instance	In fact
In particular	In this case	In this situation	Like
Namely	Notably	Specifically	Such as
Take the case of	To demonstrate	To illustrate	

**Example:** We can tell what people care about by observing their habits. For instance, we can infer that Crystal is invested in her health because she eats right and exercises daily.

**Example:** Men, women, and children living on government-sponsored public assistance have struggles unique to their economic situation. To illustrate the challenges those on welfare face, let's consider a day in their lives.

## Sequences or Time

Use these transitions to show chronological relationships or to order the steps of a sequence.

Sequences or Time			
After	After a while	Afterwards	At the present time
At the same time	Before	Concurrently	Currently
During	Earlier	Eventually	Finally
First	Following	For the time being	Formerly
Immediately	In the beginning	In the end	In the future
In the meantime	In the past	Last	Lately
Later	Meanwhile	Next	Now
Once	Over	Previously	Recently
Simultaneously	Soon	Subsequently	Then
Thereafter	To start with	Until	While

**Example:** First, fill the beaker with water. Next, add two packets of sugar.

**Example:** Previously, the majority of participants experienced fatigue during the sessions. Now, thanks to a streamlined itinerary, participants report drastically lower levels of exhaustion.

## Spatial Relationships

Use these transitions to illustrate where your subject is in relation to other objects.

Spatial Relationships			
Above	Across	Across from	Adjacent to
Against	Ahead of	Along	Alongside
Among	Around	Behind	Below
Beside	Between	Beyond	Farther
Here	In front of	Inside	Left
Near	Nearby	Nearly	Next to
Off	On	On the opposite side	On top of
Opposite	Outside	Right	Straight ahead
There	To the left	To the right	Toward
Under	Underneath	Within	

**Example:** Park your car at the intersection of Hamilton and Cathedral. Then walk down the street toward the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Once there, go inside, and ask for the head librarian.

**Example:** On the opposite side of the forest is a clear patch of grass where the deer roam freely without fear of being hit by oncoming traffic.

## Comparisons

Use these transitions to highlight the similarities between two pieces of information.

Comparisons			
Also	As well	Both	Equally
In a like manner	In a similar fashion	In the same way	Like
Likewise	Same as	Similarly	Too

**Example:** The way young children eat reveals their temperament. The way in which toddlers walk also helps to distinguish their personalities.

**Example:** Seagulls are known to fly south for the winter to escape the cold. In a similar fashion, sea turtles migrate seasonally to warmer waters.

## Contrasts

Use these transitions to highlight the differences between two pieces of information.

Contrasts			
But	By way of contrast	Conversely	Differs
Despite	However	In contrast to	Instead
Nevertheless	On the contrary	On the other hand	Still
When in fact	Whereas	While	Yet

**Example:** Staying married can be worth it for the sake of the kids if couples are able to create an environment of stability despite their differences. However, if parents can't get along civilly, divorce might be the best option for everyone.

**Example:** In contrast to prior research, the study revealed white blood cell count was not a determinant.

## Causes or Reasons

Use these transitions to explain the conditions leading to specific results or effects.

Causes or Reasons			
As	As a result of	Because	Being that
Due to	Due to the fact that	For	In view of
Inasmuch as	On account of	Owing to	Seeing that
Since			

**Example:** We have decided to extend the number of awards given due to the large number of qualified applicants.

**Example:** As a result of global warming, we are now facing inconsistent weather patterns..

## Effects or Results

Use these transitions to draw logical conclusions from reasons and causes.

Effects or Results			
Accordingly	Analysis showed	As a result	Consequently
For this reason	Hence	In order to	It follows that
Resulted in	So	So that	Then
Therefore	Thus		

**Example:** We were unable to conclude whether or not our hypothesis was correct. Therefore, further investigation of the topic is necessary.

**Example:** Globally, women still do not have equal rights with men. For this reason, many are forced to marry in order to survive.

## Additions

Use these transitions to expand upon information previously stated.

Additions			
Additional	Additionally	Again	Also
And then	Another	As well as	Equally important
Further	Furthermore	In addition	In fact
Moreover	Not only...but also	Not to mention	On top of this
Too			

**Example:** The experiment yielded the expected results. Furthermore, it confirmed the additional suspicion stated in our hypothesis.

**Example:** Study groups are helpful in ensuring all the necessary information is reviewed. Equally important is the sense of class camaraderie they help build.

## Concessions

Use these transitions to bring attention to facts seemingly in conflict with the information you're presenting.

Concessions			
Admittedly	Albeit	Although	Be that as it may
But even so	Clearly	Evidently	Further
Granted that	Nevertheless	Nonetheless	Regardless
Still			

**Example:** Most people like *Star Wars*. Granted, there may be some individuals who find the movies to be morally simplistic, artistically bankrupt, and more than a little boring—but those people are in the minority.

**Example:** Humanity needs to colonize other planets if it hopes to survive. Admittedly, this is a technological impossibility at the current moment.

## Emphasis

Use these transitions to bring attention to an idea.

Emphasis			
Above all	Absolutely	Always	Certainly
Emphatically	Extremely	Forever	In any case
In fact	Indeed	Never	Notably
Obviously	Of course	Positively	Surely
Surprisingly	Truly	Undeniably	Without a doubt

**Example:** Few fans enjoyed the finale of *How I Met Your Mother*. Obviously, no one wanted to learn that the mother was dead.

**Example:** Above all, it is important to keep in mind that safety is the University's top priority. No measure costs too much to ensure your protection.

## Generalizations

Use these transitions to state overarching guidelines that are true more often than they are not.

Generalizations			
As a rule	As per usual	By and large	Commonly
For the most part	Generally	In general	Normally
Ordinarily	Regularly	Typically	Usually

**Example:** For the most part, teenagers rebel against their parents, but there are a few who form stronger bonds with them at this age.

**Example:** Normally, we would wait to perform surgery, but since the site is causing you pain, I think it would be best to act immediately.

## Classifications

Use these transitions to organize information in an easily distinguishable fashion.

Classifications			
Class	Division	Genus	Kind
Species	Sort	Type	Variety

**Example:** There are two main types of articles. The first type is the definite article, which marks a noun as definite. The second type, the indefinite article, marks a noun as indefinite.

**Example:** There are many different kinds of fruit that grow on our farm. These kinds include apples, oranges and bananas.

## Definitions

Use these transitions to introduce and explain new terms.

Definitions			
Consists of	Entails	Exists when	Is
Is a term that	Is called	Is characterized by	Is defined as
Is known as	Means	Occurs when	Refers to

**Example:** Many immigrants go through a process of acculturation. Acculturation is defined as “cultural change and psychological change that results following meeting between cultures.”

**Example:** Urinary tract infections are characterized by pain or burning during urination and the frequent need to urinate.

## Digressions and Tangents

Use these transitions to stray slightly from your current topic before returning to it or moving on to a new topic altogether.

Digressions and Tangents			
By the way	On a side note	On an unrelated note	Setting this aside
Speaking off topic			

**Example:** By the way, did you know that May used to be considered an unlucky month to get married?

**Example:** Setting the topic of friendship aside for a moment, let’s talk briefly about enemies.

## Returns



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Use these transitions to go back to your topic after straying momentarily.

Returns			
Anyhow	Anyway	At any rate	Back to
Getting back to	Picking up where	Returning to	To resume

**Example:** To resume our discussion, let's review what the experts had to say.

**Example:** Picking up where I left off, regular dental check-ups help guard against cavities.

## Summaries and Conclusions

Use these transitions to wrap-up your information succinctly for your reader.

Generalizations			
Again	All in all	Altogether	As mentioned
As stated previously	Generally	In a word	In brief
In other words	In short	In the end	On the whole
So	That is	To conclude	To repeat
To summarize	Ultimately		

**Example:** Those who study longer tend to do better on tests, while those who study less tend to do worse. In other words, the amount of time spent studying is directly related to exam performance.

**Example:** A summary of the information covered so far reveals that happiness is largely dependent upon individual expectations.

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