



What are Transitions and Why Do They Matter?

A-State Online Writing Center

Does your professor, tutor, or peer reader continually tell you that your paper seems disorganized or choppy? Consider how you are using transitions. Transition words and phrases connect ideas together. They can be used between sentences and between paragraphs to create cohesive threads between statements.

Furthermore, transitions can signify emphasis, similarity, a contrasting statement, a change in time, cause and effect, a conclusion statement, and much more. Without including transitions, the reader can become confused as to which ideas the author is attempting to connect.

Example

She wanted to bake a chocolate cake for her mother's birthday. She was out of eggs, which the recipe requires.

Do these statements seem connected? Does it make you do a double take and have to read them again?

Revision: *She wanted to bake a chocolate cake for her mother's birthday. **However**, she was out of eggs, which the recipe requires.*

By adding the transition word "however", the statements are easily connected to create a cohesive narrative/idea.

Transitions Between Paragraphs

When writing papers, you should consider and address each side of an argument. Your introduction paragraph should assert your thesis and how you will address your argument. Next, the body of your paper needs to identify supporting evidence to boost your argument as well as tackling counterarguments and/or evidence that does not support it. When switching

gears, you need to use transitional phrases so the reader understands this next section will grapple with divergent ideas.

Common Transition Words & Phrases

Dozens of transition words and phrases exist, and referring to a guide can greatly help when trying to find the right word or phrase: <https://www.smart-words.org/linking-words/transition-words.html>

Sources & More Resources

- <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/transitions/>
- <https://www.monmouth.edu/resources-for-writers/documents/transitions.pdf/>
- https://owl.purdue.edu/engagement/ged_preparation/part_1_lessons_1_4/transitions.html
- <http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/trans1.html>