

Relationships Implied by Transitional Words

(adapted from a handout by Paula Smith)

Narrative or **Sequential** transitions express time relationships: *first, second, finally, then, while, before, during, after, every time.*

Additive transitions introduce parallel items of roughly the same importance: *also, and, furthermore, moreover.*

Comparative transitions express relationships of likeness or similarity: *also, comparably, likewise, similarly, either/or, neither/nor.*

Contrasting transitions express relationships of opposition or dissimilarity: *but, however, in contrast, on the other hand, rather, although, nevertheless, instead, unlike, less.*

Causal or **Concluding** transitions express cause-effect relationships or draw conclusions: *therefore, thus, as a result, for this reason, consequently, because, hence.*

Clarifying transitions re-state previous ideas more clearly: *in other words, more simply, more specifically, that is.*

Exemplifying transitions signal an example or illustration to follow a previous assertion: *for example, for instance, to illustrate, as, such as.*

Intensifying transitions add emphasis and significance to the previous statement: *in fact, indeed, even, as a matter of fact.*

Other ways to make transitions: putting the old information first

1. Repeat an earlier key word in the sentence, often coupled with “this.” NEVER use “this” all by itself; the reader won’t know what you’re talking about. If you use this method too often, however, it becomes monotonous.
2. Repeat a key idea, but use a synonym instead of the same word. This also a good way to implicitly define new terms.
3. Orient the reader by using a term often associated with the key word in your last sentence. If you have been discussing work, a sentence about salaries will seem to follow smoothly because the reader associates these two ideas.
4. Repeat a phrase, sentence structure, or some other grammatical pattern you’ve already used.

¹ Department of English, Cornell University. *Sourcebook for New Instructors*. Ed. Alice Maurice. June, 1998: 395.