



## Transitions in Writing and Speaking

Transitions between sentences and paragraphs are essential for clarity and readability. Without them, writing can sound choppy and disconnected. When incorporating transition words or phrases, be sure to choose those that best communicate the connection you are trying to make between sentences, paragraphs, and/or ideas.

### Examples

First, we must consider all the applicants; then, we can decide.

In this sentence, the transition words communicate the order in which the events must happen.

It rained this afternoon; therefore, I did not get to finish mowing the lawn.

Here, the transition indicates a cause and effect relationship.

Bob wants to earn his doctorate; however, he hasn't yet been accepted into a program.

This transition indicates a contrast between the two ideas.

In addition to being a dedicated mother, Margaret is a talented professor.

The transition in this sentence adds information about the subject.

Other common transition words and phrases include:

Sequence/ Chronology	First, Initially	Before	Suddenly	Meanwhile	Eventually	Finally
Cause/Effect	Therefore	Consequently	As a result	So	Accordingly	In order to
Contrast	However	Although	Otherwise	Yet	Nevertheless	Even though
Addition/ Comparison	Moreover, Furthermore	In addition, Additionally	Likewise	Similarly	In fact	Also



## Incorporating Transitions into Your Work (after a draft is complete)

Keep in mind: A transition can be a single word, a phrase, or a complete sentence. When transitioning between paragraphs or sections within a text, a sentence is frequently used to move between ideas. Often, keywords (like those above) are still used to show the relationship between the ideas in transition sentences.

To revise your entire work for transitions, try the method below. If you haven't already, consider working through the [Revision Workshop](#) first so that your paper's organization is less likely to change in major ways.

### On paper:

1. Grab a pen—this will be easiest if you choose a color that will stand out on the page.
2. Start at the introduction. Each time you change ideas, **underline** the existing transition. If no transition exists, **circle** the place where a transition should be.
3. Go back to your introduction. For each circle, decide what kind of transition is needed (Sequential? Comparative?). It's up to you whether your transition is short (a word) or longer (a sentence). If you aren't sure, try a couple of options and read them aloud to hear how they sound.
4. Find a reader who can give you feedback on your transitions. If your reader has trouble following along, make a note of the problem areas so that you can return to them later.

### On a computer:

1. Choose a highlighter color in your word processor.
2. Start at the introduction. Each time you change ideas, **underline** the existing transition. If no transition exists, **highlight** the place where a transition should be.
3. Go back to your introduction. Find the highlighted places and decide what kind of transition needed (Sequential? Comparative?). It's up to you whether your transition is short (a word) or longer (a sentence). If you aren't sure, try a couple of options and read them aloud to hear how they sound.
4. If your reader has trouble following along, make a note of the problem areas so that you can return to them later.

**Some final advice:** Revising for transitions can sometimes show places in your work where reorganization is needed. Don't be afraid to move paragraphs around if you think it will help your audience follow along. Revising can (and should!) happen throughout the writing process.

**Want feedback on your transitions? Let the Writing Center help!**

Stop by LIB 362 or visit us online at [mtsu.mywconline.com](https://mtsu.mywconline.com) to schedule an appointment.