

Transitions

Transitions in English, sometimes called connectors, have different grammatical uses. The list below indicates how transitional words or phrases are usually used:

1. **Introductory words:** (most common; notice comma)
At first, we did not understand.
Similarly, Carol's hair was curly.
Furthermore, we need to study.
2. **Subordinate Conjunctions:** (note sentence structure)*
We went because we were excited.
When Ali arrived, the party was over.
Although we were late, we were still happy.
3. **Coordinate Conjunctions:** (note sentence structure)*
Maria likes pizza, and Jose does too.
They are going to the mountains, so they are taking warm clothing.
Siti and Saffiyah write very well, but their friend does not.

Below is a list of some of the transitions available to the writer. These transitions are arranged according to how the writer might use them.

1. To signal relationship in time, use **chronological transitions** (see process paragraphs in Chapter 2).

Introductory Words

presently,	the next day,
at length,	soon afterward,
afterward,	by that time,
meanwhile,	at that moment,
next,	from then on,
first,	within an hour,
soon,	at last,
later,	earlier,
second,	then

Subordinate Conjunctions

before ...	during ...
after ...	when ...
since ...	while ...

2. To signal relationship in space, use **spatial transitions** (see physical description paragraphs in Chapter 2).

Introductory Words

a little farther on,	next to X,
in the next room,	at the center of the circle,
at that altitude,	across the way,
between those cities,	about a foot to the left,
beyond this point,	just to the right,

3. To signal that what follows is similar to what precedes, use **comparison transitions** (see comparison paragraphs in Chapter 2).

Introductory Words

likewise,	once again,
similarly,	in much the same way,
at the same time,	once more,
in like manner,	compared to X,

4. To signal a contradiction or contrast, use **contrast transitions** (see contrast paragraph, Chapter 2).

Introductory Words

however,	nevertheless,
conversely,	on the other hand,
even so,	in spite of this/that,
unlike X,	on the contrary,
nonetheless,	in contrast,
instead,	

Subordinate Conjunctions

although ...
even though ...
whereas ...

Coordinate Conjunctions

, but
, yet

5. To signal that what follows is an illustration or an example, use **middle paragraph transitions** (see example paragraphs in Chapter 2).

Introductory Words

for example,	for instance,
frequently,	specifically,
similarly,	in particular,
in general,	to illustrate,
in order to X,	that is,
generally,	occasionally,
usually,	especially,

6. To signal that what follows is a result of what precedes, use **cause-effect transitions** (see cause-effect paragraphs, Chapter 2).

Introductory Words

therefore,	as a result,
consequently,	as a consequence,
finally,	for this reason,
thus,	on the whole,
then,	in other words,
due to X,	accordingly,

Subordinate Conjunctions

since ...
because ...

Coordinate Conjunctions

, so
, and that is why
, and so

Source: Reid, J.
The Process of Composition

7. To signal that what follows is additional or supplementary, use middle paragraph transitions (see classification paragraphs in Chapter 2).

Introductory Words

Coordinate Conjunction

in fact,	furthermore,
then, too,	moreover,
again,	in addition,
first,	besides that,
naturally,	for that matter,
surely,	of course,
indeed,	to be sure,
in fact,	as a matter of fact,
to repeat,	in other words,
besides,	as noted earlier,

, and

8. For concession, use counterargument transitions (see the argumentative essays in Chapter 5).

Introductory Words

Subordinate Conjunctions

Other

of course,	after all,	although . . .	although X may be
certainly,	to be sure,	even though . . .	true,

9. To signal that what follows is a summary, use conclusion transitions (see introduction and conclusion exercises, Chapter 4).

Introductory Words

therefore,	in a word,
in short,	in conclusion,
on the whole,	in summary,
to summarize,	finally,
in brief,	
to conclude,	

I

Shopping at K-Mart enriches my vocabulary. _____ I don't like spending money, I like shopping _____ it gives me a chance to practice my English. K-Mart is the best place to practice. It is a large store, _____ there are many customer assistants who speak English fluently. I look for many items in many parts of the store, _____ in each area I find a different customer assistant who is eager to help me practice English. _____, I am careful to read the section names; _____, I also read the information on the packages of the items I wish to buy. _____, everytime I shop at K-Mart, I leave the store with some new words that increase my English vocabulary.

Hamad Omar
(Saudi Arabia)

Transitions: although because
, and , so
in addition, in conclusion,
moreover,

II

MY DRIVING TEST

I had many difficulties during my first driving test. _____, when my instructor wanted me to drive on a road where I had never driven, I was very nervous and worried. _____, I drove very slowly and cautiously. Unfortunately, that caused the engine to stall in the middle of the road. I panicked and tried to start the engine, _____ no matter how hard I tried, the engine would not start. _____, my instructor had to start the engine for me. _____, just a minute later, I was very embarrassed _____ the engine stalled a second time. My instructor became impatient; he started the engine again. _____ the engine stalled a third time, I could feel the anger of my instructor. I tried to prepare myself for the scolding. _____, the cars behind me were so angry that they honked for quite a long time. _____, my instructor gave up and took over my place to drive. _____ this incident did not cause any accidents, it was such a terrible and embarrassing incident in my life.

Ngai Peng Ng
(Singapore)

Transitions: , but instead,
first, although
therefore, as a result,
finally, , so
then because

Source: Reid, J.
The Process of Composition

Note that, while the list of coordinating conjunctions is complete, the other two lists are partial, featuring only the most commonly used words from both categories.

JOINING CHART

Logical relationship	Coordinating conjunctions	Subordinating conjunctions	Major transitions
Addition	and		also, moreover
Contrast and Concession	but yet	while whereas although though even though	however on the other hand
Cause	for	because since as	
Result Effect	so and so	so that in that in order that	therefore thus hence consequently
Condition		if unless provided that	

I love foreign films, *but* I have difficulty with subtitles.

I love foreign films *although* I have difficulty with subtitles.

I love foreign films; *however*, I have difficulty with subtitles.

Many of these words mean almost the same thing; they express the same logical connections between the ideas they join. For example, “but,” “although,” and “however” all express contrast, so we can join the following two ideas with any one of the three, and arrive at a similar, if not identical, meaning.