**Transitional Words and Phrases**

Transitional words and phrases provide the glue that holds ideas together in writing. They provide coherence (that hanging together, making sense as a whole) by helping the reader to understand the relationship between ideas, and they act as signposts that help the reader follow the movement of the discussion. Transitional expressions, then, can be used between sentences, between paragraphs, or between entire sections of a work. The two kinds of transitions are those of logic and those of thought. Each of these kinds is discussed here.

**Transitions of Logic**

Transitions of logic consist of words or phrases that convey "logical intent": that is, they show the logical connection between two ideas. Since there are several possible logical connections (such as time, purpose, contrast, and so on), there are several categories of transitions of logic. The table below lists many of these transitions, arranged by category and listed as milder or stronger. (Note that there is some double listing, because of the different ways words can be used.) Some hints for use:

* When you write, think about the relationship between your ideas and use an appropriate transition to let your reader know what you are thinking.
* be careful not to use too many strong transitions
* transitions become stronger when they are the first word in a sentence, milder when they are moved a few words into the sentence
* keep this list handy while you write, until the words come automatically

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| **Transitions of Logic** | | |
|  | **Milder** | **Stronger** |
| **Addition** | a further x  and  and then  then  also  too  next  another  other  nor | further  furthermore  moreover  in addition  additionally  besides  again  equally important  first, second  finally, last |
| **Comparison** | just as ... so too  a similar x  another x like | similarly  comparable  in the same way  likewise |
| **Contrast** | but  yet  and yet  still  otherwise  or  though  but another  rather | however  still  nevertheless  on the other hand  on the contrary  even so  notwithstanding  for all that  in contrast  alternatively  at the same time  though this may be  otherwise  instead  nonetheless  conversely |
| **Time** | then  now  soon  afterward  later  shortly  earlier  recently  first, second, third  next  before  after  today  tomorrow | meanwhile  at length  presently  at last  finally  immediately  thereafter  at that time  subsequently  eventually  currently  in the meantime  in the past  in the future |
| **Purpose** | to do this  so that | to this end  with this object  for this purpose  for that reason  because of this x |
| **Place** | there  here  beyond  nearby  next to | at that point  opposite to  adjacent to  on the other side  in the front  in the back |
| **Result** | so  and so  then | hence  therefore  accordingly  consequently  thus  thereupon  as a result  in consequence |
| **Example** | that is  specifically  in particular  for one thing | for example  for instance  an instance of this  this can be seen in |
| **Summary and Emphasis** | in sum  generally  after all  by the way  in general  incidentally  naturally  I hope  at least  it seems  in brief  I suppose | in short  on the whole  as I said  in other words  to be sure  in fact  indeed  clearly  of course  anyway  remarkably  I think  assuredly  definitely  without doubt  for all that  on the whole  in any event  importantly  certainly |

**Transitions of Thought**

Transitions of thought consist of words that help maintain the continuity of thought from one sentence or paragraph to the next. Transitions of thought are produced by the following techniques: **Pronouns and Possessive Pronouns.** Follow a noun with a pronoun (to continue the same subject) or a possessive pronoun (to move to something related to the original subject). 

* *Fido is asleep. He is a good dog. His house is near the tree.*
* *The oranges are in the kitchen bowl. Eat all you want, but check them for ripeness first.*
* *The Castells must be home from the beach. I see their car in the driveway.*

 Pronouns include he, she, it, we, they, us, them, him, her, I, me, and you   
Possessive pronouns include his, her, hers, its, their, theirs, ours, our, my, mine, your, yours

**Keyword Repetition.**Repeat the word around which the discussion is focusing. Note that many sentences have two or more nouns, any of which might be the subject of interest in the following sentence. To help keep your reader focused, repeat the noun that represents the topic you want to continue:

* *Many cities are overcrowded. But now there is help for the city. OR But overcrowding is being addressed by additional trasit lines, which will allow more people to live in the suburbs.*
* *Your gardener can apply this fertilizer to your lawn monthly. Just read the fertilizer label. OR Just ask your gardener about it. OR Your lawn will become greener and juicier. OR The monthly recommendation does not apply to August (when the weather is often too hot) and January and February (when it's too cold).*

**Synonyms.**A synonym is a word that means nearly the same as another word. The meaning is close enough so that the thought continues, but different enough so that the idea expands and gains greater definition than it would by simply repeating the same word over and over (which would be pretty boring, too, huh?). Using synonyms when you write is a much better way to help define and refine the meaning of your concept than, say, quoting a dictionary.

* *Fred’s car is fast and powerful. But is such a vehicle legal? And don’t hot rods like that pollute the air?*
* *We hiked from the meadow to the peak on Monday. Then we walked from the peak to the bluff Tuesday. It was quite a trek.*
* *Peters Canyon Lake is really more like a large pond. Actually, it's a small reservoir designed to collect runoff during heavy rains.*

**Demonstrative Pronouns and Adjectives.**Demonstrative pronouns include this, that, these, and those. They are useful for both direction and emphasis. However, using them by themselves can sometimes create an unclear reference, if there are two or more possible referents in the previous sentence. For example:

* *When the man saw the girl begging, he took a picture of her, even though she objected. He thought this was unusual.* [What was unusual, the girl begging or her objecting to being photographed?]

It is a good idea to change demonstrative pronouns to demonstrative adjectives by adding a clarifying noun (so instead of saying, "This is good," say, "This ice cream is good.").

* *Some people suggest giving up salt on popcorn. This idea, however, is ridiculous.*
* *Yes, Air Profit is our best selling shoe. That brand, however, is sold out right now.*