

Effective Transition Terms in Research Papers

Categories of transitions

Transitions accomplish many different objectives. We can divide all transitions into four basic categories:

- **Additive transitions** signal that you are adding or referencing information
- **Adversative transitions** indicate conflict or disagreement
- **Causal transitions** point to consequences and show cause-and-effect relationships
- **Sequential transitions** clarify the sequence of information and overall structure of the paper

Additive Transitions

These terms signal that new information is being added (between both sentences and paragraphs); introduce or highlight information; refer to something that was just mentioned; add similar situation; or identify certain information as important.

Purpose	Common Terms	Common Phrases	Examples in Research Writing
Adding Information	Also; Additionally; Furthermore; Moreover	In addition to; As well as; In fact; Not only...but also; As a matter of fact	"Furthermore, the data shows that X is a significant factor." "In addition to the above-mentioned study, Rogers also presents..."
Introducing/ Highlighting	Particularly; Notably; Especially	For example/instance; To illustrate; In particular; One example (of this is)	"Notably, only two species of this fish survive." "One example of this phenomenon is X." "To illustrate this phenomenon, let's do XYZ."
Referencing	Considering (this); Concerning (this); Regarding (this)	As for (this); The fact that; With regards to (this); On the subject of (this); Looking at (this information)	"Considering the amount of research in this area, little evidence has been found." "With regards to the Blue Whale, its teeth are also the largest of any mammal."
Showing Similarity	Similarly; Likewise; Equally	By the same token; In the same way; In a similar way	"Likewise, the algorithm was applied to Y." "By the same token, this principle can be applied to Z."
Clarifying/ Identifying Important Information	Specifically; Namely	That is (to say); In other words; (To) put (it) another way; What this means is; This means (that)	"There are two factors: namely, X and Y." "In other words, the fall of the Roman Empire was caused by over-expansion."

Adversative Transitions

Authors These terms and phrases distinguish facts, arguments, and other information, whether by contrasting and showing differences; by conceding points or making counterarguments; by dismissing the importance of a fact or argument; or replacing and suggesting alternatives.

Purpose	Common Terms	Common Phrases	Examples in Research Writing
Contrasting/ Showing conflict	But; Still; However; While; Whereas; Conversely; (and) yet	In contrast; On the contrary; On the other hand; ...when in fact; By way of contrast	" <i>However</i> , there is still more research needed." " <i>On the other hand</i> , the 1997 study does not recognize these outcomes."
Distinguishing/ Emphasizing	Indeed; Besides; Significantly; Primarily	Even more; Above all; More/Most importantly	" <i>Indeed</i> , a placebo is essential to any pharmaceutical study." " <i>Most importantly</i> , the X enzyme increased."
Conceding a point	Nevertheless; Nonetheless; Although; Despite (this); However; Regardless (of this); Admittedly	Even so; Even though; In spite of (this); Notwithstanding (this); Be that as it may	" <i>Nevertheless</i> , X is still an important factor." " <i>In spite of this fact</i> , New York still has a high standard of living." " <i>Although</i> this may be true, there are still other factors to consider."
Dismissing an argument or assertion	Regardless (of)	Either way; In any case; In any event; Whatever happens; All the same; At any rate	" <i>Regardless</i> of the result, this fact is true." " <i>Either way</i> , the effect is the same." " <i>In any event</i> , this will not change the public's view."
Replacing/ Indicating an Alternative	Instead (of); (or) rather;	(or) at least	" <i>Instead of</i> using X, the scientists used Z." " <i>Or rather</i> , why not implement a brand new policy?"

Causal Transitions

These terms and phrases signal the reasons, conditions, purposes, circumstances, and cause-and-effect relationships. They can also explore hypothetical relationships or circumstances.

Purpose	Common Terms	Common Phrases	Examples in Research Writing
Showing Cause or Reason	Since; For; As; Because (of the fact that)	Due to (the fact that); For the reason that; Owing to (the fact); Inasmuch as	" <i>Since</i> the original sample group was too small, researchers called for more participants." " <i>Due to budgetary demands</i> , funding will be cut in half."
Explaining the Conditions	If...then; Unless; Granting (that); Granted (that); Provided (that)	In the event that; As/So long as; Only if	" <i>Unless</i> these conditions change, more will need to be done." " <i>As long as</i> there is oxygen, oxidization will occur in all living things."

Showing the Effects/Results	Consequently; Therefore; Thus; Accordingly; Because (of this)	As a result (of this); For this reason; As a consequence; So much (so) that	" <i>Therefore</i> , we can conclude that this was an asymmetric catalysis." " <i>As a consequence</i> , many consumers began to demand safer products."
Showing the Purpose		For the purpose(s) of; With (this fact) in mind; In the hope that; In order that/to; So as to	" <i>For the purpose of</i> following standards, the X rule was observed." " <i>With the current state of pandas in mind</i> , this study focused on preservation."
Highlighting the Importance of Circumstances	Otherwise	Under those circumstances; That being the case; In that case; If so; All else being equal	" <i>Otherwise</i> , this effect will continue into the future." " <i>All else being equal</i> , the economic impact of this law seems positive."

Sequential Transitions

These transition terms and phrases organize your paper by numerical sequence; by showing continuation in thought or action; by referring to previously-mentioned information; by indicating digressions; and, finally, by concluding and summing up your paper.

Purpose	Common Terms	Common Phrases	Examples in Research Writing
Organizing by Number	Initially; Secondly; Thirdly; (First/Second/Third); Last	First of all; To start with; In the (first/second/third) place	" <i>Initially</i> , subjects were asked to write their names." " <i>First of all</i> , no previous study contradicts these findings."
Showing Continuation	Subsequently; Previously; Afterwards; Eventually; Next; After (this)		" <i>Subsequently</i> , subjects were shown to their rooms." " <i>Afterwards</i> , they were asked about their experiences."
Summarizing/ Repeating Information	(Once) again; Summarizing (this)	To repeat; As (was) stated before; As (was) mentioned earlier/above	" <i>Summarizing</i> this data, it becomes evident that there is a pattern." " <i>As mentioned earlier</i> , pollution has become an increasing problem."
Digression/ Resumption	Incidentally; Coincidentally; Anyway	By the way; to resume; Returning to the subject; At any rate	" <i>Coincidentally</i> , the methods used in the two studies were similar." " <i>Returning to the subject</i> , this section will analyze the results."
Concluding/ Summarizing	Thus; Hence; Ultimately; Finally; Therefore; Altogether; Overall; Consequently	To conclude; As a final point; In conclusion; Given these points; In summary; To sum up	" <i>Ultimately</i> , these results will be valuable to the study of X." " <i>In conclusion</i> , there are three things to keep in mind—A, B, and C."

How to Choose Your Transitions

Transitions are common writing elements, but they are also powerful tools that can be abused or misapplied if you aren't careful. Here are some ways to make sure you use transitions effectively.

- Check for overused, awkward, or absent transitions when you are reading through and/or editing your paper—not while writing your paper.
- When you find where a transition might connect ideas, establish relationships, and make it easier for the reader to understand your point, use this list to find a suitable transition term or phrase.
- If some transitions are repeated again and again, find a substitute transition from the list and use that instead. This will help vary your writing and enhance communication of ideas.
- Read the beginning of each paragraph. Did you include a transition? If not, look at the information in that paragraph and of the preceding paragraph and ask yourself: "How does this information connect?" Then locate the best transition from the list.
- Check the structure of your paper—are the order of your ideas clearly laid out? You should be able to locate sequence terms such as "first," "second," "following this," "another," "in addition," "finally," "in conclusion," etc. These terms will help outline your paper for the reader.

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