Transition Words

As a "part of speech" transition words are used to link words, phrases or sentences. They help the reader to progress from one idea (expressed by the author) to the next idea. Thus, they help to build up coherent relationships within the text.

Transitional Words

This structured list of commonly used English transition words — approximately 200, can be considered as quasi complete. It can be used (by students and teachers alike) to find the right expression. English transition words are essential, since they not only connect ideas, but also can introduce a certain shift, contrast or opposition, emphasis or agreement, purpose, result or conclusion, etc. in the line of argument.

The transition words and phrases have been assigned only once to somewhat artificial categories, although some words belong to more than one category.

There is some overlapping with » prepositions and postpositions, but for the purpose of usage and completeness of this concise guide, I did not differentiate.

Agreement / Addition / Similarity

The transition words like also, in addition, and, likewise, add information, reinforce ideas, and express agreement with preceding material.

- in the first place
- not only ... but also
- as a matter of fact
- in like manner
- in addition
- coupled with
- in the same fashion / way
- first, second, third
- in the light of
- not to mention
- to say nothing of
- equally important
- by the same token

- again
- to
- and
- also
- then
- equally
- identically
- uniquely
- like
- as
- too
- moreover
- as well as
- together with
- of course
- likewise
- comparatively
- correspondingly
- similarly
- furthermore
- additionally

Opposition / Limitation / Contradiction

Transition phrases like but, rather and or, express that there is evidence to the contrary or point out alternatives, and thus introduce a change the line of reasoning (contrast).

- although this may be true
- in contrast
- different from
- of course ..., but

- but
- (and) still
- unlike
- or

- although
- instead
- whereas
- despite
These transitional phrases present specific conditions or intentions.

- in the event that
- granted (that)
- as / so long as
- on (the) condition (that)
- for the purpose of
- with this intention
- with this in mind
- in the hope that
- to the end that
- for fear that
- in order to
- seeing / being that
- in view of

These transitional devices (like especially) are used to introduce examples as support, to indicate importance or as an illustration so that an idea is cued to the reader.

- in other words
- to put it differently
- for one thing
- as an illustration
- in this case
- for this reason
- to put it another way

Causes / Conditions / Purpose

Examples / Support / Emphasis
that is to say
with attention to
by all means
important to realize
another key point
first thing to remember
most compelling evidence
must be remembered
point often overlooked
to point out
on the positive side
on the negative side
with this in mind

d to emphasize
certainly
surely
markedly
such as
especially
explicitly
specifically
expressly
surprisingly
frequently
significantly
particularly
as a result
under those circumstances
in that case
for this reason
in effect
for
thus
because the
then
hence
consequently
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Effect / Consequence / Result

Some of these transition words (thus, then, accordingly, consequently, therefore, henceforth) are time words that are used to show that after a particular time there was a consequence or an effect.

Note that for and because are placed before the cause/reason. The other devices are placed before the consequences or effects.

as a result
under those circumstances
in that case
for this reason
in effect
for
thus
because the
then
hence
consequently
therefore
thereupon
forthwith
accordingly
henceforth

Conclusion / Summary / Restatement

These transition words and phrases conclude, summarize and / or restate ideas, or indicate a final general statement. Also some words (like therefore) from the Effect / Consequence category can be used to summarize.

as can be seen
generally speaking
in the final analysis
all things considered
after all
in fact
in summary
in conclusion
by and large
to sum up
on the whole
in any event
These transitional words (like *finally*) have the function of limiting, restricting, and defining *time*. They can be used either alone or as part of *adverbial expressions*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time / Chronology / Sequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at the present time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from time to time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sooner or later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up to the present time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to begin with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in due time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as soon as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as long as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the meantime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in a moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without delay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the first place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all of a sudden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at this instant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first, second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quickly</td>
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<tr>
<td>finally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many transition words in the time category (*consequently; first, second, third; further; hence; henceforth; since; then, when; and whenever*) have other uses.

Except for the numbers (*first, second, third*) and *further* they add a meaning of *time* in expressing conditions, qualifications, or reasons. The numbers are also used to *add information* or *list examples*. *Further* is also used to indicate added space as well as added time.
**Space / Location / Place**

These transition words are often used as part of *adverbial expressions* and have the function to restrict, limit or qualify *space*. Quite a few of these are also found in the *Time* category and can be used to describe spatial order or spatial reference.

| in the middle | here | further |
| to the left/right | there | beyond |
| in front of | next | nearby |
| on this side | where | wherever |
| in the distance | from | around |
| here and there | over | between |
| in the foreground | near | before |
| in the background | above | alongside |
| in the center of | below | amid |
| adjacent to | up | among |
| opposite to | under | beneath |
| | | beside |
| | | behind |
| | | across |

**List of Transition Words**

Transition Words are also sometimes called (or put in the category of) Connecting Words. Please feel free to *download* them via this link to the category page:

» Linking Words & Connecting Words as a PDF.

It contains all the *transition words* listed on this site. The image to the left gives you an impression how it looks like.

**Usage of Transition Words in Essays**

Transition words and phrases are vital devices for *essays*, papers or other literary compositions. They improve the connections and transitions between sentences and paragraphs. They thus give the text a logical organization and structure (see also: a » List of Synonyms).

All English *transition words* and *phrases* (sometimes also called 'conjunctive adverbs') do the same work as *coordinating conjunctions*: they connect two words, phrases or clauses together and thus the text is easier to
read and the coherence is improved.

Usage: transition words are used with a special rule for punctuation: a semicolon or a period is used after the first 'sentence', and a comma is almost always used to set off the transition word from the second 'sentence'.

**Example 1:**
People use 43 muscles when they frown; however, they use only 28 muscles when they smile.

**Example 2:**
However, transition words can also be placed at the beginning of a new paragraph or sentence - not only to indicate a step forward in the reasoning, but also to relate the new material to the preceding thoughts.

Use a semicolon to connect sentences, only if the group of words on either side of the semicolon is a complete sentence each (both must have a subject and a verb, and could thus stand alone as a complete thought).

Further helpful readings about expressions, writing and grammar: Compilation of Writing Tips » How to write good » Correct Spelling » Study by an English University

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