

Transition Signals in Writing

What are Transition Signals?

Transition signals are connecting words or phrases that act like bridges between parts of your writing. They link your sentences and paragraphs together smoothly so that there are no abrupt jumps or breaks between ideas. Transition signals act like signposts to indicate to the reader the order and flow of your writing and ideas. They strengthen the internal cohesion of your writing. Using transitions makes it easier for the reader to follow your ideas. They help carry over a thought from one sentence to another, from one paragraph to another, or from one idea to another.

There are several types of transition signals. Some lead your reader forward and imply the building of an idea or thought, while others make your reader compare ideas or draw conclusions from the preceding thoughts.

Examples (Transitions are underlined!)

During the early twentieth century, in addition to industrialisation, urban growth and technological development, Australian society was experiencing a transformation of the domestic ideal. At this time, families were subject to an increasing array of government and 'professional' programs and advice aiming to manage and regulate family life. Some of these programs were designed to counter social change, others were designed to engineer them; but they each heralded a growing expert encroachment into the private sphere. Intervention and influence took three forms. Firstly, techniques designed to maximise efficiency were introduced into the home and scientific principles were applied to its design. In addition, housework and parenting methods were scrutinised and subject to unprecedented standards. Secondly, all aspects of reproduction attracted increasing intervention from government and the medical profession. Thirdly, state, professional and philanthropic groups began to usurp the parental role within the family through instruction and policy. Ultimately, the development of 'modern' social ideals brought regulation, intervention and ever-increasing unrealistic standards.

The following words and phrases can be used to indicate transitions and to cue your reader about how ideas are logically connected in your writing.

● To indicate sequence or order

first, second, third	next, last, finally	first of all	next, before, after
meanwhile	followed by	at this point	previously, subsequently
simultaneously	concurrently	and then	at this time

● To introduce an example

for example	for instance	in this case	on this occasion
take the case of	to demonstrate	to illustrate	

● **To logically divide an idea**

first, second, third first, next, finally

● **To indicate time**

immediately	thereafter	formerly	previously
finally, then, later	soon	during	before, after
after a few hours	at that time	prior to	at this point

● **To compare**

similarly	likewise	whereas	similar to
like, just like	conversely	by comparison	while
balanced against			

● **To contrast**

in contrast	on the other hand	however	on the contrary
a different view is	differing from	unlike	balanced against

● **To introduce an additional idea**

in addition	one could also say	also	besides
another	furthermore	moreover	further
nor	and then	finally	additionally

● **To introduce an opposite idea or show exception**

however	on the other hand	instead	in contrast
whereas	nevertheless	despite	even though
while	one could also say	in spite of	but
still	alternatively	yet	

● **To give an example**

for example	for instance	in this case	to demonstrate
take the case of	to illustrate		

● **To summarise or conclude**

in brief	on the whole	summing up	therefore
in other words	thus	consequently	as a result
in summary	in conclusion	to summarise	to conclude
as shown	hence	ultimately	finally

References

Hirsh, E.P. 1996, *Writing About Art*, Longman, Melbourne.
Oshima, A and Hogue, A. 1991. *Writing Academic English* Addison-Wesley.
Illustration from Bate, D. & Sharpe, P., *Writer's Handbook*, Harcourt Brace, Sydney.