

Tikrit University

College of Education for Humanities

English Department



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Writing in Paragraphs

(Using Transitional Expressions )

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## Using Transitional Expressions

Transitional expressions function to connect one idea to another between or within sentences and to alert readers to connections between paragraphs or blocks of the text. They are signals that help readers follow the direction of your thoughts as a writer. Transitional expressions include conjunctive adverbs used to join or to connect independent clauses such as **however, hence, also, consequently, meanwhile, nevertheless, moreover, and furthermore** as well as transitional phrases such as **after all, even so, in addition, on the other hand, for example, as a result, and in conclusion**. When a transitional expression appears at the beginning of a sentence or within an independent clause, it is generally set off with commas.

**Meanwhile**, we had little choice but to wait for him to make his decision.  
(conjunctive adverb)

**As a result**, the department made the following recommendations.  
(transitional phrase)

Many of our competitors, **on the other hand**, are reluctant to bid for the project.

The first speaker, **for example**, was both professional and entertaining.

When a transitional expression links two independent clauses in a compound sentence, it is preceded by a semicolon and usually set off with commas.

The first speaker was both professional and entertaining; **nevertheless**, the full program was disappointing. (conjunctive adverb)

The annual report was critical of budgetary spending; **as a result**, the department made the following recommendations. (transitional phrase)

Depending on where you want to place the emphasis in communicating the direction of your thoughts, you have some flexibility as a writer in how to structure the sentences and in the placement of transitional expressions either before or within a particular clause.

- It was a long and difficult journey; **however**, once we arrived, we were able to relax and to enjoy ourselves.

- It was a long and difficult journey; once we arrived, **however**, we were able to relax and to enjoy ourselves.

- It was a long and difficult journey. **However**, once we arrived, we were able to relax and to enjoy ourselves.

- It was a long and difficult journey. Once we arrived, however, we were able to relax and to enjoy ourselves.

It is important not to confuse transitional expressions with coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, nor, so, for, yet) when connecting two independent clauses into one sentence. Transitional expressions appear between independent clauses preceded by a semicolon and usually followed by a comma. Coordinating conjunctions are preceded by a comma when they link independent clause.

- I wanted to attend the lecture. However, I had a previous commitment.  
(transitional expression)

- I wanted to attend the lecture; however, I had a previous commitment.  
(transitional expression)

- I wanted to attend the lecture, but I had a previous commitment.  
(coordinating conjunction)

## USING CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

Functioning as transitional expressions, conjunctive adverbs are used to connect independent clauses and indicate the relation between the clauses. Similar to transitional phrases, conjunctive

adverbs can be used with a semicolon to join two independent clauses into one sentence or set off with commas to stand alone with an independent clause.

- The flight was delayed for two hours; **consequently**, we missed our connecting flight.

- The flight was delayed for two hours. **Consequently**, we missed our connecting flight.
- We wanted to win first prize in the competition. **Instead**, we finished in second place.
- We wanted to win first prize in the competition; **instead**, we finished in second place.

### **Common Conjunctive Adverbs**

Accordingly ,also, besides, certainly, consequently, conversely, finally, furthermore, hence, however ,incidentally, indeed, instead, likewise, meanwhile, moreover, next, nevertheless, now, otherwise, similarly, specifically, still, subsequently, then, therefore, thus

Transitional words and phrases are also known as cohesive devices. They strengthen writing by improving flow and clarifying the relationships between ideas, sentences, and paragraphs.

Using transitional phrases is one important way to accomplish this task. Transitional phrases can be used to signal the structure of your argument for your reader. For example:

Firstly ... Secondly ... For example ... In particular ... In conclusion ...

**Transitional phrases** can also be used to explain relationships between ideas and demonstrate your understanding of the research. For example:

However ...

Significantly ...

In comparison ...

Accordingly ...

Alternatively ...

Counter to this ...

Because these words act like a roadmap – directing the reader on how to follow your line of reasoning – it is worth making sure you are selecting the best transitional phrase for the job. Using the wrong word can make reading a confusing experience. In particular, check your use of common transitional phrases like **However, Yet, But or Moreover**. Due perhaps to their familiarity, these words are often misused, which may prevent your reader from clearly understanding the content of your work. Make a point to note how other authors in your discipline use transitional phrases when undertaking your readings. As well as helping to build your academic vocabulary, paying careful attention to these language features will improve your understanding of academic content.

In summary ...

- Transitional phrases help readers to navigate complex meanings and relationships between ideas.
- Transitional phrases make the structure of your academic writing clear.
- Make sure you have chosen the most appropriate transitional phrase.
- If these words are used carelessly, your writing will confuse your reader, even if your content is well researched.

**Transitional expressions** are like bridges between parts of your paper. They are cues that help the reader interpret the ideas in a paper. Transitional expressions are words or phrases that help carry a thought from one sentence to another, from one idea to another, or from one paragraph to another. And, finally, transitional devices link sentences and paragraphs together smoothly so that there are no abrupt jumps or breaks between ideas.

There are several types of transitional expressions, and each category leads a reader to make certain connections or assumptions. Some lead the reader forward and imply the building of an idea or thought, while others make the reader compare ideas or draw conclusions from the preceding thoughts.

### **To show cause or effect**

accordingly ,as a result , because ,consequently, for this purpose, hence, otherwise, since, then, therefore, thereupon, thus, to this end ,with this object, in mind

### **To repeat, summarize, or conclude**

all in all, altogether, as has been noted , as noted above, as the evidence shows, as has been said, finally, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, in simpler terms, in summary, on the whole, summing up, that is , therefore , to conclude, to put it differently ,to summarize, ultimately

### **To contrast or show exception**

although ,and ,yet ,but ,but at the same time, despite ,even so, even though, for all that, however, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, notwithstanding, of course, once in a while, on the contrary , on the other hand, regardless ,sometimes, still, though ,yet