

## Some Common English Transition Words and Phrases

<p><b>Adding Information</b></p> <p>and not only . . . but also also moreover (more formal) furthermore (more formal) in addition (more formal)</p>	<p><b>Examples</b></p> <p>We have seen the movie twice, <b>and</b> now we want to see it again. <b>Not only</b> did my brother break his leg, <b>but</b> he <b>also</b> bruised his rib. My friend speaks Korean and English. She <b>also</b> speaks Chinese. Cheating is dishonest. <b>Moreover</b>, it hinders students from learning. Students should be on time. <b>Furthermore</b>, they must be prepared. You must complete this essay by 5 p.m. <b>In addition</b>, you must do the exercises on page 47.</p>
<p><b>Giving Examples</b></p> <p>for example for instance specifically in particular The first (second, another, etc.) example/reason is . . .</p>	<p><b>Examples</b></p> <p>I have been to many countries. <b>For example</b>, I have been to Russia, Canada, Mexico, and Spain. He often eats strange foods. <b>For instance</b>, he once ate cow brains. I like to travel. <b>Specifically</b>, I enjoy places with old cathedrals. I love fruit. <b>In particular</b>, I like bananas, pineapple, and berries. My friend hates skiing for several reasons. <b>The first reason</b> is that she dislikes being cold. <b>Another reason is</b> that she often falls.</p>
<p><b>Showing a Contrast</b></p> <p>but however on the other hand otherwise instead in contrast (more formal)</p>	<p><b>Examples</b></p> <p>Bill earned an A on his essay, <b>but</b> Susan got a B. We wanted to leave at 8:00. <b>However</b>, Mike arrived too late. She hates housecleaning. <b>On the other hand</b>, she doesn't mind cooking. Students should attend class. <b>Otherwise</b>, they may lose their status. I am not going out tonight. <b>Instead</b>, I will stay home</p>

	<p>and watch a video.          Women usually enjoy shopping. <b>In contrast</b>, men often dislike it.</p>
<p><b>Showing a Concession</b></p> <p>yet          nevertheless (more formal)          even so          however          although          even though          despite the fact that . . .          .          despite</p>	<p><b>Examples</b></p> <p>He knows that he should do his homework, <b>yet</b> he never does it.          I need to wear reading glasses. <b>Nevertheless</b>, I hate how I look in them.          I know you don't like to study. <b>Even so</b>, you must pass your exam.          There are many benefits to exercising. <b>However</b>, you must take some precautions to avoid injury.  <b>Even though</b> the book is difficult to read, it is very interesting.  <b>Although</b> the book is difficult to read, it is very interesting.  <b>Despite the fact that</b> Kate is good at tennis, she lost the match.  <b>Despite</b> Kate's skill at tennis, she lost the match.</p>
<p><b>Showing a Similarity</b></p> <p>likewise (more formal)          similarly (more formal)          in the same way</p>	<p><b>Examples</b></p> <p>Math was hard for me in high school. <b>Likewise</b>, it is hard in college.          Houseplants require much care and attention.  <b>Similarly</b>, outdoor plants must be cared for properly.          Rock climbing takes much practice and skill. <b>In the same way</b>, learning to write well requires a great deal of practice.</p>
<p><b>Showing a Result</b></p> <p>so          as a result          therefore          thus (more formal)          as a consequence          consequently (more formal)</p>	<p><b>Examples</b></p> <p>Janet passed her exam, <b>so</b> she is very happy.          Tim was late. <b>As a result</b>, we could not go to the concert.          James is not feeling well. <b>Therefore</b>, he will not be here today.          The committee voted against the proposal. <b>Thus</b>, we must consider another idea.          I forgot that the cake was in the oven. <b>As a consequence</b>, it burned.</p>

	Tina lost her keys. <b>Consequently</b> , she could not drive home.
<b>Establishing Time Relation or Sequence</b>  first second finally in conclusion in summary meanwhile	<b>Examples</b>  <b>First</b> , I think that she is studying hard. <b>Second</b> , I believe that she is a bright student. <b>Finally</b> , I know that she has great potential. <b>In conclusion</b> , I feel that she deserves to win the scholarship. <b>In summary</b> , we should offer her some financial help. Jeff was working hard to clean the house. <b>Meanwhile</b> , his brother was watching television.
<b>Showing a Condition</b>  or whether . . . or if . . . (then)	<b>Examples</b>  I must study hard, <b>or</b> I will fail my exam. <b>Whether</b> you are coming <b>or</b> not, I am still going to Amy's party. <b>If</b> you want to get good grades, <b>then</b> you must do your homework.
<b>Explaining or Emphasizing</b>  in fact actually in other words namely (more formal)	<b>Examples</b>  The bookstore sells cards. <b>In fact</b> , they have the best cards around. James is <b>actually</b> the first person I have known who has been to Africa. He was late to class again. <b>In other words</b> , he didn't wake up on time. The plan needed only two things to succeed— <b>namely</b> , time and money.
<b>Giving an Alternative</b>  or either . . . or neither . . . nor (more formal)	<b>Examples</b>  We can go to the beach, <b>or</b> we can go to the mountains. You can <b>either</b> ride the bus <b>or</b> walk to my apartment. I like <b>neither</b> that person <b>nor</b> his brother.

### Punctuation Rules

1. Coordinating Conjunctions (and, but, or, yet, so):
2. Put a comma before these conjunctions. (Don't use them at the beginning of a sentence in more formal writing.)

3. **example:** The movie has already started, **but** my friend has not arrived yet.
- 4.
5. Correlative Conjunctions (These have two parts: either . . . or):
  - Put a comma before the second part if it connects 2 clauses (complete sentences).
  - **example:** Eric is **not only** an outstanding teacher, **but** he is **also** a gourmet cook.
  - You don't need a comma if it only connects words or phrases.
  - **example:** Eric is **not only** an outstanding teacher **but also** a gourmet cook.
- 6.
7. Transitional Words and Phrases:
  - Put a comma after these if they are at the beginning of a sentence.
  - **example:** I like to travel. **Specifically,** I enjoy places with old cathedrals.
  - Use a semicolon to connect the two sentences.
  - **example:** I like to travel; **specifically,** I enjoy places with old cathedrals.
  - Use a comma before and after the transitional word/phrase in the middle of a clause.
  - **example:** I like to travel, and, **specifically,** I enjoy places with old cathedrals.

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## List of Transition Words for Essays

This structured [list](#) of commonly used English transition words (approximately 200, so the list can be considered as quasi complete) 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 (also called devices) have been assigned only once to somewhat artificial categories, although some words belong to more than one category.

## Transition Words

To improve your [writing](#) (in essays, (scientific) reviews, ([research](#)) papers, letters, abstracts, reports, thesis, etc), it is essential to understand how, transition words can be used to combine ideas in writing. It is also fundamental to be aware of the sometimes subtle **meaning** of transition words within the English language.

## Agreement / Addition / Similarity

The transitional devices 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  
on the other hand  
on the contrary  
at the same time  
in spite of  
even so / though  
be that as it may  
then again  
above all  
in reality  
after all  
but  
(and) still  
unlike  
or  
(and) yet  
while  
albeit  
besides  
although  
instead  
whereas  
despite  
conversely  
otherwise  
however  
rather  
nevertheless  
regardless  
notwithstanding

## **Examples / Support / Emphasis**

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  
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 / negative side  
with this in mind  
notably  
including  
like  
to be sure  
namely  
chiefly  
truly  
indeed  
certainly  
surely  
markedly  
especially  
specifically  
expressively  
surprisingly  
frequently  
significantly  
in fact  
in general  
in particular  
in detail  
for example  
for instance  
to demonstrate  
to emphasize  
to repeat  
to clarify  
to explain  
to enumerate

such as

## **Cause / Condition / Purpose**

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

If

... then

unless

when

whenever

since

while

because of

as

since

while

lest

in case

provided that

given that

only / even if

so that

so as to

owing to

inasmuch as

due to

## **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

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 a 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

as shown above

in the long run

given these points

as has been noted

in a word

for the most part

after all

in fact

in summary

in conclusion

in short

in brief

in essence

to summarize

on balance

altogether  
overall  
ordinarily  
usually  
by and large  
to sum up  
on the whole  
in any event  
in either case  
all in all

## **Time / Chronology / Sequence**

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*.

at the present time  
from time to time  
sooner or later  
at the same time  
up to the present time  
to begin with  
in due time  
until now  
as soon as  
in the meantime  
in a moment  
without delay  
in the first place  
all of a sudden  
at this instant  
immediately  
quickly  
finally  
after  
later  
last  
until  
since  
then  
before  
hence  
since  
when

once  
about  
next  
now  
formerly  
suddenly  
shortly  
henceforth  
whenever  
eventually  
meanwhile  
further  
during  
first, second  
in time  
prior to  
forthwith  
straightaway  
instantly  
presently  
occasionally

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  
to the left/right  
in front of  
on this side  
in the distance  
here and there  
in the foreground  
in the background  
in the center of  
adjacent to

opposite to  
here  
there  
next  
where  
from  
over  
near  
above  
below  
down  
up  
under  
further  
beyond  
nearby  
wherever  
around  
between  
before  
alongside  
amid  
among  
beneath  
beside  
behind  
across

## 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 are a complete sentence each (both must have a subject and a verb, and could thus stand alone as a complete thought).

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Please feel free to download the corresponding and comprehensive 2 page cheat sheet » [Transition Words and Phrases](#) (and "Conjunctions") as a PDF (approx. 30 KB). It contains all the **transition words** listed on this site.