

Transitions

To use this handout, you must first understand the difference between an independent clause and a dependent clause.

- An independent clause is a phrase that contains a subject and verb and that can stand alone as a complete sentence.
- A dependent clause is a phrase that does not contain a subject and a verb, cannot stand alone as a complete sentence, and must be reworded or attached to an independent clause to form a complete sentence.

Transitions are used to:

- help readers connect sentences within paragraphs, paragraphs within sections, and sections within the entire document;
- help readers follow your ideas easily; and
- help the writer lead the reader from one sentence, paragraph, and section to another.

What are transitions?

- single words within sentences (like *therefore*, *however*, and *consequently*);
- sentences at the beginning of paragraphs (to introduce the main idea);
- sentences at the end of paragraphs (to preview the next paragraph);
- sentences at the beginning of sections (to introduce the main idea of the section); and
- sentences at the end of sections (to preview the main idea of the next section).

Example: Becoming a good writer takes practice; therefore, you should spend time on drafting and revising your written assignments.

Example: The following section discusses the causes of cell division by explaining the differences between meiosis and mitosis.

The following example highlights to important tips for using transitions:

1. Use parallel grammatical structure to tie sentences to the single idea of the paragraph.
2. Repeat key words and phrases to emphasize major points and carry the main thought from sentence to sentence.

Example: I stand among you as one who offers a small message of hope that first, there are always people who dare to seek on the margin of society, who are not dependent on social acceptance, not dependent on social routine. Among these people, if they are faithful to their own calling, to their own vocation, and to their own message. Communication on the deepest level is possible. The deepest level of communication is not communication, but communion. It is wordless. It is beyond words, and it is beyond speech, and it is beyond concept. Not that we discover a new unity. We discover an older unity...

— (Thomas Merton quoted in *Voluntary Simplicity* by Duane Elgin)