

## **Transitions and Transitional Devices: How'd I Manage to Get Here?**

### **Using Built-In Signposts:**

If the goal of writing a paper is to offer a cohesive argument, then unity of your ideas is crucial for success. Sometimes, though, a well orchestrated set of points just falls flat—but why?

Assuming you've outlined your paper, mere disorganization isn't the problem. The true culprit likely is how you've presented your argument. To correct such an issue, you should use transitions and transitional devices.

A good transition spells out the logical step you've used to arrive at your next point. Therefore, a transition acts as a signpost, alerting your reader to a shift in logic; once properly informed, your reader can follow along in the same line of thought.

### **How to Improve Transitions:**

**Example:** Fearing for the loss of Danish lands, Christian IV signed the Treaty of Lubeck, effectively ending the Danish phase of the 30 Years War.

But then something else significant happened. The Swedish intervention began.

**To Revise:** Fearing for the loss of Danish lands, Christian IV signed the Treaty of Lubeck, effectively ending the Danish phase of the 30 Years War.

Shortly after Danish forces withdrew, the Swedish intervention began.

**Example:** Overall, Management Systems International has logged increased sales in every sector, leading to a significant rise in third-quarter profits.

Another important thing to note is that the corporation had expanded its international influence.

**To Revise:** Overall, Management Systems International has logged increased sales in every sector, leading to a significant rise in third-quarter profits.

These impressive profits are largely due to the corporation's expanded international influence.

### **Establishing Connections:**

As the above examples show, how you transition from paragraph to paragraph—or even sentence to sentence—can convey your thought process. When you make a coherent link from the previous idea to the next, you show how you are building your argument.

In order to draw this connection, pick up a key phrase from the previous paragraph or a crucial idea from the previous sentence so that you can segue into your clarification, augmentation, expansion, or refutation of that point.

By establishing a connection between ideas, you will orient your reader to the next stage of your argument. Another important aspect in using transitions to link related ideas is to incorporate transitional devices. These are those words or phrases that cue your reader to assume a certain type of relationship between preceding information and the idea that follows.

### **Examples of Transitional Devices:**

**To Add:** and, again, furthermore, next, in addition

**To Compare:** whereas, but, however, nevertheless, on the contrary, although, conversely, although this may be true

**To Prove:** because, for, since, indeed, in fact, that is, moreover

**To Show Exception:** yet, still, however, nevertheless, despite

**To Show Time:** immediately, thereafter, finally, then, formerly

**To Show Sequence:** consequently, next, at this point, thus, hence

**To Summarize:** accordingly, hence, therefore, as a result, in brief

### **Tying Things Together with a Tidy Bow:**

When writing transitions, think of how your reader might react upon coming to a significant leap in logic. Sometimes, it's better to hold the reader's hand and spell out where your argument is headed—let them hold onto the thought.