

Transition Words and Their Meanings

Transitional words and phrases link ideas in one clause or sentence with those in the next. They help the reader see the relationships between ideas. Think of them as bridges linking one idea to another, or as road signs that lead the way.

Some of these words may be used between independent clauses that have been joined by a semicolon. In that case, they are called adverbial conjunctions, and they are set off by a comma. Note this example: Lara was loud, bossy, and insensitive; consequently, people avoided her whenever possible. Transitional expressions placed elsewhere within the clause are punctuated with commas.

Common Transitions

Adverbial Conjunctions (consequently, furthermore, however, in fact, indeed, likewise, moreover, otherwise, therefore)

Everyone wants a new set of rules. Changes are not possible until next year.

Everyone wants a new set of rules. However, changes are not possible until next year.

Everyone wants a new set of rules. Changes are not possible, however, until next year.

Everyone wants a new set of rules. Changes are not possible until next year, however.

Everyone wants a new set of rules; however, changes are not possible until next year.

Here are some other frequently used transitional expressions and their most common uses:

Example: specifically, for instance, for example, to illustrate, in particular, especially, most importantly

Addition: also, furthermore, besides, likewise, moreover, again, finally, in addition, in the first (second, third) place, what is more, at last, next, beyond that

Comparison and Contrast: Comparison: similarly, likewise, at the same time, in the same way, in like manner Contrast: however, nevertheless, still, nonetheless, conversely, rather, whereas, on the one hand, on the other hand, on the contrary, by contrast, in contrast

Repetition: again, in other words, once again, to repeat, as stated

Cause and Result: therefore, thus, hence, consequently, as a result, all in all, for this/that reason, because

Conclusion: finally, then, thus, hence, therefore, in conclusion, to summarize, in short, all in all, in brief, on the whole

Time: earlier, before, since, subsequently, eventually, gradually, meanwhile, simultaneously, now, immediately, recently, suddenly, currently, during, then, next, after a while, at last, in the meantime, until now

Concession: doubtless, surely, certainly, naturally, granted, no doubt, admittedly

Place: elsewhere, here, there

Things to Avoid

Avoid using **since** when you mean **because**. **Since** had a temporal meaning: from that time until now. **Because** means only one thing: for the reason that. Since the troops returned from the war, boot sales have been increasing. Have boot sales been increasing because the troops returned or only from the time they returned?.

Avoid using **while** when you mean **although**. While senators were on recess, the President was busy writing administrative orders. Do you intend to emphasize the contrast between the vacationing senators (although) and the hardworking President, or do you want to say that the President was busy but just while the senators were on break?