

Transitions

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How could a transition improve this paragraph?

The building was engulfed in flames almost immediately. The roof collapsed and the bricks were glowing like hot coals.



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The revised paragraph flows better because the transition helps to show the sequence of events.

ORIGINAL

The building was engulfed in flames almost immediately. The roof collapsed and the bricks were glowing like hot coals.

REVISED

The building was engulfed in flames almost immediately. **By the time the first firefighters arrived,** the roof collapsed and the bricks were glowing like hot coals.



Transitions

**Transitions can signal different types of relationships.
Click the transitional relationship you want to explore.**

MENU

- **Sequential Order**
- **Order of Importance**
- **Cause and Effect**
- **Spatial Order**
- **Comparison and Contrast**

Transitions

Sequential Order

Use transitions like these to show the sequence of time or steps in a process.

first	during	before
second	then	at the beginning
afterwards	soon	at the same time
next	finally	subsequently
last	already	later



Transitions

Sequential Order

Where could you add transitions to help make this sequence clearer?

My pre-race ritual is always the same. I stretch every muscle in my body, slowly and carefully. I run a few warm-up sprints—each just 10 yards or so. I walk slowly down the track, shaking my arms and legs to keep them loose. I walk up to the starting line and get into position.



Transitions

Sequential Order

These transitions indicate the progression of events as the runner gets ready for her race.

My pre-race ritual is always the same. **First**, I stretch every muscle in my body, slowly and carefully. **Then**, I run a few warm-up sprints—each just 10 yards or so. **Afterwards**, I walk slowly down the track, shaking my arms and legs to keep them loose. **Finally**, I walk up to the starting line and get into position.



Transitions

Order of Importance

Use words like these when you are trying to show the relative importance of people, places, things, or events.

- first
- second
- best
- worst
- main
- more important
- most important
- least important



Transitions

Order of Importance

Where could you add transitions to help show the relative importance of these activities and events?

If a fire starts in your house, remember this: don't panic. Everybody should prepare to leave the house immediately. If you see smoke, drop to the floor and crawl toward the nearest door. Before going out the door, feel the door to see if it's hot. Don't try to save your belongings.



Transitions

Order of Importance

These transitions stress the importance of some actions over other actions.

If a fire starts in your house, the **most important** thing to remember is this: don't panic. **First**, everybody should prepare to leave the house immediately. If you see smoke, drop to the floor and crawl toward the nearest door. Before going out the door, feel the door to see if it's hot. The **least important** thing to do is to try to save your belongings.



Transitions

Cause and Effect

Transitional words can also show a cause-and-effect relationship.



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Cause and Effect

Transitional words can also show a cause-and-effect relationship.

In this example, the transition clarifies the effect of the first action (the cause).

I was at the end of a line that stretched around the block.

As a result,



I couldn't get the seats I wanted for the game.



Transitions

Cause and Effect

Use transitional words and phrases like these to show relationships between events and their results.

as a result	because	therefore
consequently	since	thus
so	for	if...then



Transitions

Cause and Effect

What transitions in this paragraph point to the results that followed the invention of the printing press?

The invention of the printing press had a revolutionary impact on European society. As a result, more people could afford to own books. Consequently, literacy rates rose, and ordinary people had an increased knowledge of the world.



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Cause and Effect

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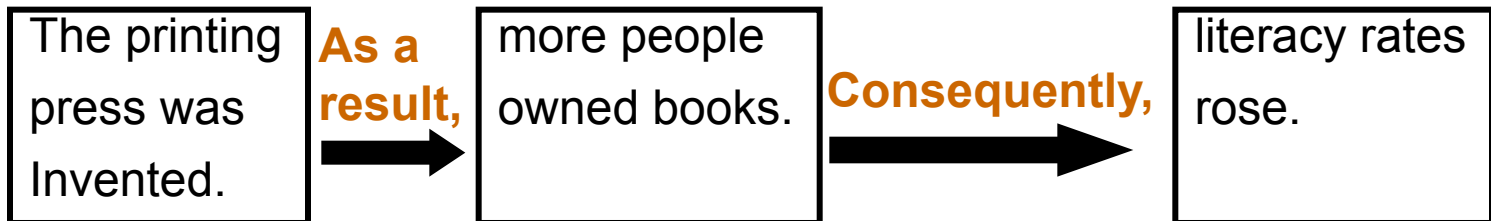
Click to see the cause-and-effect relationships



Transitions

Cause and Effect

The transitions highlight the cause-and-effect relationships.



Transitions

Spatial Order

Use transitional words and phrases like these when describing details according to their position in space (front to back, near to far, top to bottom, and others).

above	beside	to the right of	past
below	down	in the other direction	over
behind	in front of	near	under
beneath	in back of	on top of	to



Transitions

Spatial Order

Which words point out the spatial relationships in this description?

Gardeners have kept the paths that weave in and out of the tall grass maze mowed and ready. At the left, a clearly marked entrance invites walkers to try the maze. At the center, a small clump of clover signals to the careful observer that the path winds toward the exit on the right.

Click to view the transitional words



Transitions

Spatial Order

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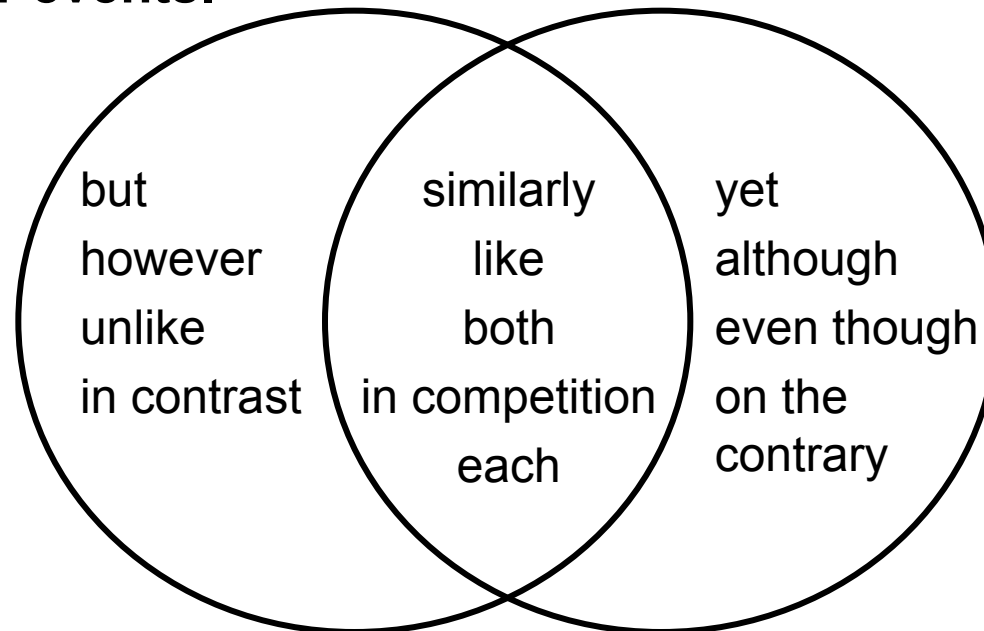
Gardeners have kept the paths that weave in and out of the tall grass maze mowed and ready. **At the left**, a clearly marked entrance invites walkers to try the maze. **At the center**, a small clump of clover signals to the careful observer that the path winds toward the exit **on the right**.



Transitions

Comparison and Contrast

Use comparison and contrast transitions to signal the similarities and differences between people, places, things, or events.



Transitions

Comparison and Contrast

What words in the paragraph signal the comparisons and contrasts?

Many people think downhill skiing and cross-country skiing are similar sports. Although both require specialized ski gear, athletic fitness, and endurance, each requires different skills. A downhill skier travels at high speed down steep slopes and must respond quickly to sudden turns and obstacles. The skier works with gravity. In contrast, a cross-country skier travels over fairly level trails at a relatively slow speed, striving to maintain a steady pace. The skier works against gravity.

[Click to view the transitional words](#)



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Comparison and Contrast

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