

Rubric Category	Organization
Grade/Score	Grades 6-12 / Scores 1, 2, and 3
CCSS Writing Standards	W1, W1a, W1c
Argument Type	All arguments

# Using Transitions

*Students will practice applying transitions to their writing to connect ideas.*

## Understanding the Expectations

When building a case, you've got to use connecting words, phrases, and clauses to establish coherence and signal logical relationships among ideas. In short, this means using transitions. The reader relies on the writer to orient him to the key concepts and shifts in an argument.

Always use transitional phrases as you write to connect ideas. Not only do such phrases clarify the connections you are making in your writing, they also demonstrate logical thought. Most papers, no matter the subject area, attempt to prove something. Transitions are key in arguing your case with clarity, logic, and order. Choosing the right transition for your purpose is important. In fact, changing a transition changes the entire line of logic. Consider the two examples below:

**Cause and effect:**

*Reading is an essential skill; therefore, it is heavily emphasized throughout all grade levels.*

**Contrast:**

*Reading is an essential skill; however, many argue that STEM skills are equally important.*

There are hundreds of transitions you could use, but it is best to start with a short list and develop strong habits first. Most importantly, you must know what you are attempting to accomplish with the information you are adding. Review the questions below and the suggested transitions provided for each:

1. Are you adding information to explain something in further detail, or adding an additional point of argument or evidence?
  - » To add information: furthermore, in addition, similarly, moreover
  
2. Are you showing the difference between your position and another? Are you contrasting two characters or two works of literature?
  - » To show contrast: conversely, however, nevertheless, despite, although, while, instead, whereas
  
3. Are you pulling together your point and drawing a conclusion after presenting evidence?
  - » To show cause and effect: consequently, therefore, thus
  
4. Are you trying give weight to a point or highlight an important aspect of your argument?
  - » To show emphasis or support: chiefly, ultimately, significantly

### Directions:

Using one of the following topics, compose 2-3 sentences and connect them with varied transitions. Make sure you use a different one for each sentence.

- Something you are good at
- Someone who is unique
- A time you were scared
- A time you lost or forgot something

If possible, share your sentences with a peer. Consider the sentences your classmates write. Would you edit your work based on any new ideas?

Keep the above list handy when you write essays. In time, if you use it, you eventually won't need it because you naturally will use transitions as part of your writing style. At that point, you should branch out and try to vary your use of transitions.

## Trying it Out

Select a writing piece in progress or one you need to revise. Take a few minutes to scan your work for sentences that would benefit from transitional words or phrases. Use a highlighter to mark the sentences for revision. Use a pen or pencil to write in the logical relationship that is in, or should be added, to the sentence. For example, you might be adding evidence, showing a contrast, giving an example, or emphasizing a point.

Revise your work for another 5-7 minutes, adding transitions where appropriate and applying any other helpful revision strategies as you go. Exchange work with a partner. Be sure to give your partner the original copy along with your revised work. Offer feedback and clarify any questions you have. Apply editing suggestions as fitting.

## Writing it Up

If you are still drafting, keep the list of transitions handy so you can quickly apply them as needed in your writing. If you are at the editing stage, revise by targeting where you might add transitions to improve the logical flow of ideas and to establish critical connections. Continue to work on using transitions and strengthening this as a habit in future writing assignments.