



Which Way to the Point?

Signposts Through Your Prose

Few writers will question the need for transitions as a technique for leading readers through a piece of writing. One of the easiest ways to move from one idea to the next is to use words or phrases that indicate relationships between thoughts.

Because thoughts can be related to one another in a variety of ways, you will want to select the word(s) or phrase(s) that best suit the relationships you are trying to express. Below is an extensive list of words or phrases you can use to signal those relationships.

To indicate comparison:

again	corresponding	in the same way	similarly
and	equally	like	too
also	furthermore	likewise	
as well (as)	in addition (to)	moreover	
comparably	in effect	resembling	

To indicate contrast:

after all	even so	in spite of	or
although	even though	nevertheless	otherwise
at least	for all that	not only	still
but	granted	notwithstanding	unlike
by contrast	however	on the contrary	whereas
conversely	in contrast (to)	on the other hand	yet

To indicate sequence or time:

after	eventually	lately	subsequently
afterward	finally	meanwhile	temporarily
all this time	first, second, etc.	next	then
as soon as	following	not long after	thereafter
at last	formerly	now	thereupon
at length	immediately	presently	until
at the same time	in the first place, etc.	previously	when
before	in the future	shortly	while
currently	in the meantime	simultaneously	
during	last	since	
earlier	later	soon	

To indicate place:

above	close by	in the foreground	opposite
adjacent to	far away	near at hand	there
below	further back	nearby	to the right, etc.
beneath	here	next door	to the west, etc.
beside	in the distance	on the other side	under

To indicate cause and effect:

accordingly	consequently	resulting from	therefore
as a consequence	due to	since	thereupon
as a result (of)	hence	so	thus
because (of)	it follows that	then	

To indicate emphasis:

assuredly	furthermore	moreover	to be sure
certainly	in addition to	perhaps	truly
chiefly	in fact	naturally	understandably
clearly	in particular	obviously	undoubtedly
equally	in truth	of course	very likely
especially	incidentally	really	without doubt
even more important	indeed	similarly	
evidently	it is true	surely	

To indicate summary:

consequently	in effect	in sum	to conclude
finally	in fact	on the whole	to put it another way
in a word	in other words	that is	to sum up
in brief	in short	therefore	to summarize
in conclusion	in simpler terms	thus	

To indicate examples:

an illustration	for instance	namely	that is
as an example	in particular	specifically	thus
for example	like	such as	to illustrate

To indicate qualification or concession:

after all	granted	mainly	sometimes
by and large	I admit	naturally	to be sure
for the most part	in most cases	of course	with few exceptions

You may have other favorite transitional words; the key is to use them to lead the reader effortlessly through your paper.

For a discussion of other transitional devices, please consult our handout, *Navigate the River of Your Ideas: Let it Flow*.

K. Jagu