

Transition Words & Phrases

Reference

Transition words and phrases are used to connect ideas in formal writing and speaking.

Addition

- in addition
- moreover
- furthermore
- additionally
- as well
- also

Contradiction

- however
- on the other hand
- on the contrary
- conversely
- nevertheless
- unlike

Comparison

- similarly
- in comparison
- comparatively
- at the same time
- likewise
- like

Order & Sequence

- first / first of all
- next
- then
- finally
- previously
- meanwhile

Example

- for example
- for instance
- such as
- like

Cause & Effect

- therefore
- as a result
- consequently
- thus

Clarification

- in other words
- that is
- as mentioned
- again

Conclusion

- in conclusion
- in summary
- in brief
- overall

Sentence Positions

Most transition words and phrases can appear in three places in a sentence. They can also be placed between two sentences. Note the typical punctuation associated with each position.

Position	Examples
at the beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hurricanes claim many lives each year. Moreover, these powerful storms cause millions of dollars in damage. Initial research seemed to support the theory. However, the latest test results weren't conclusive. Anxiety disorders can manifest in physical symptoms. For example, a patient may become dizzy or have trouble breathing.
in the middle (usually after the subject)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hurricanes claim many lives each year. These powerful storms, moreover, cause millions of dollars in damage. Initial research seemed to support the theory. The latest test results, however, weren't conclusive. Anxiety disorders can manifest in physical symptoms. A patient, for example, may become dizzy or have trouble breathing.
at the end	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hurricanes claim many lives each year. These powerful storms cause millions of dollars in damage, moreover. Initial research seemed to support the theory. The latest test results weren't conclusive, however. Anxiety disorders can manifest in physical symptoms. A patient may become dizzy or have trouble breathing, for example.
between two sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hurricanes claim many lives each year; moreover, these powerful storms cause millions of dollars in damage. Initial research seemed to support the theory; however, the latest test results weren't conclusive. Anxiety disorders can manifest in physical symptoms; for example, a patient may become dizzy or have trouble breathing.

Exceptions

Some transition words don't follow the normal rules for sentence position.

Exception #1

Such as almost always appears after a noun (not at the beginning or end of a sentence).

- There are many ways to improve one's quality of sleep, **such as** no TV before bed and no food after 8:00 pm.

Exception #2

Also can appear at the beginning or end of a sentence. At the end, it is not preceded by a comma.

As well should only come at the end of a sentence with no preceding comma.

- New employees are expected to start at 9:00 am sharp. **Also**, they must dress professionally at all times.
- New employees are expected to start at 9:00 am sharp. They must dress professionally at all times **also**.
- New employees are expected to start at 9:00 am sharp. They must dress professionally at all times **as well**.

Exception #3

Thus, again, likewise, like, and unlike usually only appear at the beginning of a sentence.

- There was no conclusive evidence. **Thus**, the scientists decided to begin testing all over again.
- This essay has demonstrated the relationship between vitamins and good health. **Again**, taking vitamin supplements ensures the body receives proper nutrients.
- Dogs make great pets. **Likewise**, cats are wonderful companions.
- **Like** cats, dogs make great pets.
- **Unlike** snakes, dogs make great pets.

Exception #4

Meanwhile can appear at the beginning of a sentence or after a subject.

- Hiring had begun. **Meanwhile**, interviews were still taking place.
- Hiring had begun. Interviews, **meanwhile**, were still taking place.