The Use of Transitional Markers in Writing
What are Transitional Markers?

• They are words and phrases that are used to connect sentences and paragraphs.

• They help ideas flow smoothly from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph.

• They are also called transitions, transitional words or linking words.
Place of Transitional Markers

• Transitional markers are usually placed at the beginning of sentences and paragraphs, and they are always followed by a comma.
Types of Transitional Markers

• Transitional markers can indicate:
  • Additions
  • Cause & Effect
  • Time (Chronology & Order of importance)
  • Comparison and Contrast
  • Summary & Conclusion
Additions

• This type of transitional markers indicate additional ideas, points and/or arguments as well as more information.

  ▪ **Additionally,**
  ▪ **In addition,**
  ▪ **Moreover,**
  ▪ **Furthermore,**
  ▪ **Besides,** etc.
• **Example 1:** Sara is a brilliant student. *In addition,* she is a responsible mom.

• **Example 2:** The Ministry of Education is in the process of drafting a new policy that could enhance the quality of tertiary education. *Moreover,* the policy is believed to address issues of unemployment in the country.
Cause & Effect

- This type of transitional markers indicate causes and effects of things and situations.
  
  - *As a result,*
  
  - *For this reason,*
  
  - *Consequently,*
  
  - *Hence,*
• *Example 1:* Traffic congestion has become a major problem in Qatar. **As a result,** the State is considering railway transport as an alternative.

• *Example 2:* Many people felt strongly about the railway construction saying that it is very expensive. **Consequently,** the government is forced to call-off the contract for the construction of the railway.
Time

- Transitional markers can also be used to indicate time as well as order of importance. This includes:

  - First, firstly, first of all
  - Second, secondly,
  - Third, thirdly,
  - Meanwhile, in the mean time,
  - Lastly, finally,
  - Next,
• *Example: Firstly,* the rail transport system could reduce the accident rate as it is a safe means of transportation. *Secondly,* it could also help people save the running cost of private vehicles.

*[Here the transitional markers are used to show the reasons for constructing a rail system based on their order of importance]*
Compare and Contrast

• Comparisons

Transitional markers that are used to show comparisons include:

▪ Similarly,
▪ Likewise,
▪ In the same way,
▪ Equally,
• **Example 1:** Nowadays, illegal migration is posing a life-threat on the people who are migrating. **Similarly,** it is putting a serious economic pressure on the receiving countries.

• **Example 2:** We can get calcium from milk. **Likewise,** cheese is a good source of calcium.
• **Contrasts**

Transitional markers that are used to show contrasts include:

- *In contrast,*
- *However,*
- *Nevertheless,*
- *On the other hand,*
• *Example 1:* In the year 2010, the international price for coffee export was only $X per kilo. **In contrast,** by the year 2014, it had gone up to $Y per kilo.

• *Example 2:* Exercising has enormous health benefits besides its contribution to physical fitness. **On the other hand,** it could also have an adverse effect when it is overdone.
Summary/Conclusion

• Types of transitional markers that indicate a summary or a conclusion include:
  
  ▪ *In conclusion,*
  
  ▪ *To conclude,*
  
  ▪ *To summarize,*
  
  ▪ *In sum,*
  
  ▪ *Therefore,*
• **Example 1:** *To summarize,* social media has many negative consequences such as weakening people’s real life social skills.

• **Example 2:** *Therefore,* as the research findings show, people’s wasteful use of water can result in a serious environmental hazard in the years to come.
Overuse of Transitional markers

• As important as transitional markers are, they **should not be** overused.

  **Example:** Studying for midterms is challenging. **However,** there are techniques that can make the process easier. **For example,** organize each subject in a folder. **Next,** create outlines for each chapter. **In addition,** organize all handwritten notes and test papers separately.

• This example uses transition words and phrases in almost every sentence. This has a tendency to distract your readers, and the use of transitions at the beginning of so many sentences is bothersome to read. In this case, less is more.
...cont’d

• Revised Example

Studying for midterms is challenging. However, there are techniques that can make the process easier including organizing each subject in a folder, creating outlines for chapters, and merging your handwritten notes and tests into the folders.
Incorrect Use of Transitional Markers

• Incorrect use of transitional markers creates confusion.

• The meaning and function of transitional markers should clearly be known before using them.

Example:

Oranges are good for health. However, they are good for skin. [Incorrect]

Oranges are good for health. In addition, they are good for skin. [Correct]
Worksheet I.

Fill in the blank spaces with the correct transitional marker

As a result    First    In addition
Similarly    However    In sum

1. The exam was difficult. ______, we all passed.
2. My cat loves to play with toys. ______, it likes to sleep on my feet.
3. The company is laying off staff. _____, it is closing its branch on Salwa Road.
4. The summer has been exceptionally hot; ______, we couldn’t go swimming as much as we wanted to.
5. Cooking pasta dishes is not that difficult. _____, you should get everything you need ready.
6. ______, the above paragraphs show that there is a strong link between poor diet and a weakened immune system.
Answer key

1. However
2. Similarly
3. In addition
4. As a result
5. First
6. In sum
Worksheet II.

Correct the misused transitions in the following sentences

1. Their mother had a cold; **however**, the entire family cancelled their boat trip.
2. The book was interesting. **As a result**, it was hard to read.
3. Mariam earned an A on the test. **In sum**, her friend Iman earned an A.
4. John and Mark are brothers. John is tall and sportive. **Similarly**, Mark is short and chubby.
5. We moved the chairs before the rain started. **In contrast**, we covered them with plastics in case of leakage.
Answer Key

1. As a result
2. However
3. Similarly
4. In contrast
5. In addition
I work for a private business company. I have a part-time teaching job at a primary school. I am happy that I have two jobs. My family doesn’t like the fact that I am very busy. They say that I don’t have enough time to spend with them. Every time I get home, almost everyone in the family complains. I have now decided to give up my part-time job.
I work for a private business company. **In addition,** I have a part-time teaching job at a primary school. I am happy that I have two jobs. **However,** my family doesn’t like the fact that I am very busy. They say that I don’t have enough time to spend with them. Every time I get home, almost everyone in the family complains. **Therefore,** I have now decided to give up my part-time job.
Language Support Services

✓ No appointment necessary
✓ Language consultations with Language Specialists and/or Peer Tutors
✓ Language workshops on how to improve your English language skills (speaking, listening and reading)
✓ Revision sessions before exams
✓ Language programs designed to improve listening, speaking, reading and grammar

Writing Support Services

✓ Easy-to-use online appointment system
  (http://writinglab.qu.edu.qa)
✓ Writing consultations for all majors, levels, and writing skills with Writing Specialists and/or Peer Tutors
✓ Writing workshops on basic yet important writing skills
✓ Writing programs designed to improve writing skills
Thank you