

# **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



# Worksheet III

## **Rewrite the paragraph by adding transitional words**

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.





# Revised

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



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Student Learning Support Center

Thank

you

