

Transitional phrases

Part of your job as an academic writer is to provide clear direction to your readers. These directions allow others to more easily follow your analysis of sources and your reasoning.

Using **transitional phrases** is one important way to accomplish this task.

Transitional phrases can be used to **signal** the structure of your argument for your reader. For example:

Firstly ...

Secondly ...

For example ...

In particular ...

In conclusion ...

Transitional phrases can also be used to explain relationships between ideas and demonstrate your understanding of the research. For example:

However ...

Significantly ...

In comparison ...

Accordingly ...

Alternatively ...

Counter to this ...



Because these words act like a **roadmap** – directing the reader on how to follow your line of reasoning – it is worth making sure you are selecting the best transitional phrase for the job. Using the wrong word can make reading a confusing experience.

In particular, check your use of common transitional phrases like *However*, *Yet*, *But* or *Moreover*. Due perhaps to their familiarity, these words are often misused, which may prevent your reader from clearly understanding the content of your work.

Make a point to note how other authors in your discipline use transitional phrases when undertaking your readings. As well as helping to build your academic vocabulary, paying careful attention to these language features will improve your understanding of academic content.

In summary ...

- Transitional phrases help readers to navigate complex meanings and relationships between ideas.
- Transitional phrases make the structure of your academic writing clear.
- Make sure you have chosen the most appropriate transitional phrase. If these words are used carelessly, your writing will confuse your reader, even if your content is well researched.

On the next page, learn about some of the more frequent transitional phrases used in academic writing.

Still have questions?

You can discover more about transitional phrases by visiting [the Academic Phrasebank](#) for an extensive glossary of more complex phrases, or:

- Email [Study Support](#)
- Discuss your work with a [Writing Mentor](#) or [Language and Learning Adviser](#)



Some frequent transitional phrases and their uses

Please note, the following is a list of **language functions** and *not* a thesaurus. Remember to double-check the individual meanings of these phrases before including them in your work. For example, while *similarly* and *alternatively* both serve the function of comparing ideas, their meanings are clearly different. Even when meanings are close, each transitional phrase will have its own nuance. Paying attention to these details will help you produce clearer and stronger writing.

Note: many of these phrases can go at the beginning of a sentence, or they may link ideas or sources within a sentence.

What you want to do as a writer	Transitional phrases
<p>Listing the order in which things occur.</p> <p>These phrases are commonly used in introductions and to orient your reader in the body text.</p>	<p>At first... To begin with... First... Firstly... In the first place... In the second place... Later... Next... Second... Secondly... Then... Lastly... Finally...</p>
<p>Indicating importance</p>	<p>Above all... Foremost... Most importantly... Significantly... Primarily... The next most significant... Less importantly...</p>
<p>Comparing ideas</p>	<p>In comparison... In the same way... Similarly... Alternatively... Also...</p>
<p>Signaling a contrasting idea or different aspect of an idea</p>	<p>...however... In contrast... In spite of... ...yet... In opposition... Even so... Nevertheless... On the contrary... ...whereas... Alternatively...</p>



Referencing explained | Transitional phrases

Deakin guide to referencing

Signaling a similar idea	...as well as... Besides... Furthermore... In addition... Moreover... ...not only Xbut also Y... Similarly, both Xand Yindicate... Just as Xso too Y..
Indicating cause and effect	Accordingly... As a consequence... As a result... Because... Because of this... Consequently... For this reason... Due to this... Hence ... In consequence... In order to... It follows that... Since... So... So that... Therefore... Thus...
Providing an example	For example... For instance... ...such as... Thus... To illustrate this... An example of this is... This is evident in...
Emphasising or clarifying a point	In fact... ...whereas in fact... Indeed... Actually... ... chiefly... ... especially... ... in particular... ...particularly... This means... To be more precise... It should be noted that...
Providing further support for an idea	Namely... That is to say... Mainly... Notably... In other words...
Indicating you are generalising	As a rule... For the most part... Generally... In general... Normally... On the whole... In most cases... Usually...
Expressing an attitude. <i>Use these with caution in academic writing!</i>	Admittedly... Certainly... Undoubtedly... Fortunately... Luckily... Strangely... Unfortunately...
Summarising. Often used in conclusions.	Finally... In brief... In conclusion... In short... Overall... So... Then to conclude... To sum up... In summary...